

**Children's Aid Society.**

We have received the Third Annual Report of this institution; it contains many interesting facts and statements that ought to be widely spread. This Society has for its object the rescuing of children from the haunts and associations of vice and crime, by taking them from the streets of New York, and sending them away to the country, under the care of families, where they may be taught useful employments, and be surrounded by moral influences. During the three years that the Society has been in existence more than two thousand outcast children have been thus provided for. The Report before us contains many letters and statements from children and their employers. No one can read them without being deeply impressed with the importance and nobility of this benevolent enterprise. The general plan is to bind out the boys, who are from 10 to 13 years of age, to an employer until they are 21 years of age. The employer agrees, in consideration of faithful service on the part of the lad, to provide his board and clothing, and pay him a small sum, say \$100, when the term of service expires. Girls are bound out to mistresses in the same way. Most of these children are bright, active, ready, and anxious to work and learn.

Perhaps we cannot convey a better idea of the operations of the Society than by copying from the report a few extracts from the letter of a gentleman who went out West from New York City, not long since, with forty-six of the little ones. He says:—

“On Wednesday evening, with emigrant tickets to Detroit, we started on the *Isaac Newton*, for Albany. Our company consisted of forty-six boys and girls from New York, bound westward, and, to them, homeward. They were between the ages of 7 and 15—most of them from 10 to 12. The majority of them orphans, dressed in uniform—as bright, sharp, bold, racy a crowd of little fellows as can be grown nowhere out of the streets of New York. One, a keen-eyed American boy, was born in Chicago—an orphan now, and abandoned in New York by an intemperate brother. Another, a little German Jew, who had been entirely friendless for four years, and had finally found his way into the News-Boys' Lodging House. Dick and Jack were brothers of Sarah O——, whom we sent to Connecticut. Their father is intemperate; mother died in Bellevue Hospital three weeks since; and an older brother has just been sentenced to Sing Sing. Their father, a very sensible man when sober, begged me to take the boy along, ‘for I am sure, sir if left in New York they will come to the same bad end as their brother.’ We took them to a shoe-shop. Little Jack made awkward work in trying on a pair. ‘He don't know them, sir; there's not been a cover to his feet for three winters.’

Another of the ten, whom the boys called ‘Liverpool,’ defies description. Mr. Gerry found him in the Fourth Ward, a few hours before we left. Really only twelve years old, but in dress a seedy loafer of forty. His boots, and coat, and pants, would have held two such boys easily—filthy and ragged to the last thread. Under Mr. Tracy's hands, at the Lodging House, ‘Liverpool’ was remodelled into a boy again; and when he came on board the boat with his new suit, I did not know him. His story interested us all, and was told with a quiet sad reserve, that made us believe him truthful. A friendless orphan in the streets of Liverpool, he heard of America, and determined to come, and after a long search found a captain who shipped him as cabin-boy. Landed in New York, ‘Liverpool’ found his street condition somewhat bettered. Here he got occasional odd jobs about the docks, found a pretty tight box to sleep in, and now and then the sailors gave him a cast-off garment, which he wrapped and tied about him, till he looked like a walking rag bundle when Mr. G. found him.

As we steamed off from the wharf, the boys gave three cheers for New York, and three more for ‘Michigan.’ All seemed as careless at leaving home for ever, as if they were on a target excursion to Hoboken.

We had a steerage passage, and after the cracker-box and ginger-bread had passed

around, the boys sat down in the gangway and began to sing. Their full chorus attracted the attention of the passengers, who gathered about, and soon the captain sent for us to come to the upper saloon. There the boys sang and talked, each one telling his own story separately, as he was taken aside, till ten o'clock, when Captain S. gave them all berths in the cabin; meanwhile, a lady from Rochester had selected a little boy for her sister, and Mr. B., a merchant from Illinois, had made arrangements to take ‘Liverpool’ for his store. I afterwards met Mr. B. in Buffalo, and he said he would not part with the boy for any consideration; and I thought then, that to take such a boy from such a condition, and put him into such hands, was worth the whole trip.

Landed in Detroit at ten o'clock, Saturday night, and took a first class passenger car on the Mich. C. R. R., and reached Dowagiac, a ‘smart little town,’ in S. W. Michigan, three o'clock Sunday morning. The depot master, who seldom receives more than three passengers from a train, was utterly confounded at the crowd of little ones poured out upon the platform, and at first refused to let us stay till morning, but after a deal of explanation, he consented with apparent misgiving; and the boys spread themselves on the floor to sleep. At daybreak they began to inquire, ‘Where be we?’ and finding that they were really in Michigan, scattered in all directions, each one for himself, and in five minutes there was not a boy in sight of the depot. When I had negotiated for our stay at the American House (!) and had breakfast nearly ready, they began to straggle back from every quarter, each boy loaded down—caps, shoes, coat-sleeves, and shirts full of every green thing they could lay hands upon—apples, ears of corn, peaches, pieces of pumpkins, etc. ‘Look at the Michigan filberts!’ cried a little fellow, running up, holding with both hands upon his shirt bosom, which was bursting out with acorns. Little Mag, (and she is one of the prettiest, sweetest little things you ever set eyes upon,) brought in a ‘nosegay,’ which she insisted upon sticking in my coat—a mulle-stalk and corn leaf, twisted with grass!

Several of the boys had taken a swim in the creek, though it was a pretty cold morning. At the breakfast table the question was discussed, how we should spend the Sabbath. The boys evidently wanted to continue their explorations; but when asked if it would not be best to go to church, there were no hands down, and some proposed to go to Sunday school, and ‘boys’ meeting, too.’

The children had clean and happy faces, but no change of clothes, and those they wore were badly soiled and torn by the emigrant passage. You can imagine the appearance of our ‘ragged regiment,’ as we filed into the Presbyterian church, (which, by the way, was a school house,) and appropriated our full share of the seats. The ‘natives’ could not be satisfied with staring, as they came to the door and filled up the vacant part of the house. The pastor was late, and we ‘occupied the time’ in singing. Those sweet Sabbath school songs never sounded so sweetly before. Their favorite hymn was, ‘Come, ye sinners, poor and needy,’ and they rolled it out with a relish. It was a touching sight, and pocket handkerchiefs were used quite freely among the audience.

At the close of the sermon the people were informed of the object of the Children's Aid Society. It met with the cordial approbation of all present, and several promised to take children.

Monday morning the boys held themselves in readiness to receive applications from the farmers. They would watch at all directions, scanning closely every wagon that came in sight, and deciding from the appearance of the driver and the horses, more often from the latter, whether they ‘would go in for that farmer.’

There seems to be a general dearth of boys, and still greater of girls, in all this section, and before night I had applications for fifteen of my children, the applicants bringing recommendations from their pastor and the justice of peace.

There was a rivalry among the boys to see

which first could get a home in the country, and before Saturday they were all gone. Rev. Mr. O. took several home with him, and nine of the smallest I accompanied to Chicago, and sent to Mr. Townsend, Iowa City. Nearly all the others found homes in Cass County, and I had a dozen applications for more. A few of the boys are bound to trades, but the most insisted upon being farmers, and learning to drive horses. They are to receive a good common school education, and one hundred dollars when twenty-one. I have great hopes for the majority of them. ‘Mag’ is adopted by a wealthy Christian farmer. ‘Smack,’ the privateer, from Albany, has a good home in a Quaker settlement. The two brothers, Dick and Jack, were taken by an excellent man and his son, living on adjacent farms. The German boy from the ‘Lodging House,’ lives with a physician in D——.

Several of the boys came in to see me, and tell their experience in learning to farm. One of them was sure he knew how to milk, and being furnished with a pail, was told to take his choice of the cows in the yard. He sprang for a two-year old steer, caught him by the horns, and called for ‘a line to make him fast.’ None seemed discontented but one, who ran away from a tinner, because he wanted to be a farmer.

On the whole, the first experiment of sending children West is a very happy one, and I am sure there are places enough with good families in Michigan, Illinois, Iowa, and Wisconsin, to give every poor boy and girl in New York a permanent home. The only difficulty is to bring the children to the homes.”

If there are any of our readers who feel willing to give employment to such children, they may address C. L. Brace, Secretary of the Children's Aid Society, New York City.

(For the Scientific American.)

**Model of Ship.—The Speed of the Merrimac.**

MESSRS. EDITORS—In your number for the 22d of March I read an article on the results of an experimental trip made to sea by the new frigate *Merrimac*, and was surprised at having my fears verified almost beyond improbability. Your information concerning the causes of failure bore particular weight against the machinery, leaving it to be inferred by shipbuilders that engineering must have been the profession of your correspondent. Permit me to say that every man, whether of a trade or profession, is best qualified to discover the faults lying in his own line, and while engineers would, perhaps, condemn the machinery, shipbuilders and marine architects would condemn the model. This has been done by the best authorities on improved naval architecture in the United States for the whole number of five of the new frigates which have been built from the same model; in this respect if one fails all will fail. The responsibility must be laid at the door of the Bureau of Construction.

“What does it mean,” you inquire, in relation to the model. It means this: Our Naval Constructors (and Engineers too) make very few models and build very few vessels, consequently, their “hand is not in,” their mind is not up to the keen tension required for master-pieces of molding skill. The government employs seven Naval Constructors at the various dockyards, and one Chief Naval Constructor. The limited scope for practice in designing vessels of war may be seen at a glance. The government demand for naval vessels has not amounted to an average of two per annum during any period of peace. On the contrary, some of our naval hulks have been from 10 to 20, and even 30 years on the stocks in progress of building.

The practical duties of our Naval Constructors have consisted, for the most part, in repairing and rebuilding old vessels. Practice makes perfection in every art of man. This solution is a practical one, and the only one that can be entertained without arraignment the abilities of our Naval Architects—a disagreeable thing to do.

The Naval Constructor who makes a model but once in five years, perhaps, cannot be expected to keep pace with the mercantile architect who prepares a model, with drafts, for a ship every month in the year; and we can cite an instance where the press of orders from

shipbuilders, at home and abroad, has tasked J. W. Griffiths, of New York, to produce new a model and draft every week for the greater portions of two or three years. How can it be possible for the unexercised heads of naval architects to maintain their places by the side of mechanics who carry forward the standard of the age with a practice like this? Experience teaches school; it is scholars only who advance. The government keeps her children at home, or sets them to work to break up hulks and rebuild them. Similar remarks will apply to similar cases. Progress in modeling passes from one type of model to another, and more perfect one for utility. When a Naval Constructor is called upon to lay down a ship, a model first comes to light that he designed, perhaps, twenty years before. Few mechanics carry more than one model in their head at one time. The man whose active and employed brain teems with weekly or monthly productions of models, smiles to find on the government stocks types of ships which his own mind has outgrown. Does Congress know it? Shipbuilders are very few in offices of government. What is the remedy? The mildest and least radical is the establishment of an office of Consulting Naval Constructor, the incumbent to be appointed from among our most eminent mercantile architects—one acquainted also with naval construction preferred, whose counsel shall be incorporated in the design and model of every war vessel to be constructed or rebuilt. We have now a Consulting Naval Engineer; is not the ship of equal importance with the engine?

W. W. B.

**A Different Story About the Merrimac.**

Excuse me for referring to a Philadelphia paper which quotes some disparaging remarks from you on the U. S. steamer *Merrimac*. I do not believe that you wilfully intended to do injustice to the builders and contractors of that noble ship. You have been misled by wrong information. One of the lieutenants writing to me says:—

“She (the *Merrimac*) is really a magnificent craft. We are proud of her. We tried her every way. Under sail we logged 15 knots, and I hope to see 17 noted. The engine works to a charm. Furnaces consume but 32 tons per diem, and give us 10 knots and over with the propeller. I believe no screw in the Allied navies can do this. When the engine is polished by use we shall get more. The Chief Engineer is proud of it. What more can I say? She is a successful experiment.”

Perhaps the writer in your paper forgets that the *Merrimac* is a screw frigate, and, in fact, a sailing ship, the screw being an auxiliary motor. In the British navy the *Duke of Wellington*, the *James Watt*, and *Prince Albert*, screw line-of-battle ships, have steam power for only six, seven, and eight knots.

INVESTIGATOR.

**Revenue Steam Cutters.**

A bill is now before Congress, containing provisions for employing a Revenue Steam Cutter for the Port of New York, and which can be used for the relief of vessels in distress on the coast. Not one, merely, but two or three such cutters should be kept in this port, and there are a number of other ports where such cutters should also be stationed. We hope the bill will pass with the amendments suggested. With such vessels, relief to ships in distress would be prompt and effective, whereas, with the common sailing cutters, relief in most cases required, is impossible. With such an immense revenue as is obtained at the port of New York, it is wrong that so little of it is devoted to the relief and safety of the shipping which brings the money in.

**Curious Effects of Cedar.**

Professor Fleming, of Edinburg, says that in examining the conchological collection of Lady Agnew, placed in drawers of cedar wood, he discovered that the texture of many shells had changed, as though a coating of caoutchouc had been supplied. The pernicious cedar was from Havana. Watches placed in cedar drawers in the Royal Observatory, in King George the Third's time, stopped, and the oil that lubricated them was changed into gum.