

land are the new books to be about? For our country is already pretty well laid out, after the fashion of gold land, in "claims," to each of which the owner alone has rights. North of Inverness? Appropriated by William Black; it is too soon yet for a newcomer to step upon his claim. Argyle and the Isles? These are the exclusive property of Mr. Neil Munro and Miss Fiona MacLeod. Ayrshire? Galt holds undisputed sway here, and the claim of the departed is indeed more sacred than that of the living. Galloway? A brave man he would be who should set foot there, with the stalwart Crockett defending his claim by right of might! The Lothians? Shades of Scott and Stevenson! Forfar? Mr. Barrie is not contentious, I am sure, but still — Central Perthshire? Mr. Ian Maclaren must be consulted first. Aberdeen? Mr. William Alexander has long ago established his claim here. The novelists of the future — the Scotch future — will

have to confine their efforts within a very narrow radius. I think (but I may be mistaken) that the part of Scotland extending between Peebles and Galloway does not belong to any one in especial.

But the Scotch people remain: thousands of men and women, each as different from the others as black is from white, yet each Scotch born and bred, with all the vigor, the intellectuality, the nerve, of their race, and with its vices too; a strenuous people capable of anything. This should be an inspiring thought for the novelist. He need not limit his Scotchman's story to the probabilities of the case; there is that in the composition of the race which makes every man and woman of them capable of extraordinary possibilities, and even of impossibilities, — a sort of outward-going force not to be reckoned with or held in check, not to be contained either, be it said, in all the pages of all the novelists put together.

Jane Helen Findlater.

THE GENESIS OF THE GANG.

JACOB BERESHEIM was fifteen when he was charged with murder. It is now more than three years ago, but the touch of his hand is cold upon mine, with mortal fear, as I write. Every few minutes, during our long talk on the night of his arrest and confession, he would spring to his feet, and, clutching my arm as a drowning man catches at a rope, demand with shaking voice, "Will they give me the chair?" The assurance that boys were not executed quieted him only for the moment. Then the dread and the horror were upon him again.

Of his crime the less said the better. It was the climax of a career of depravity that differed from other such chiefly in the opportunities afforded by an environment which led up to and helped

shape it. My business is with that environment. The man is dead, the boy in jail. But unless I am to be my brother's jail keeper, merely, the iron bars do not square the account of Jacob with society. Society exists for the purpose of securing justice to its members, appearances to the contrary notwithstanding. When it fails in this, the item is carried on the ledger with interest and compound interest toward a day of reckoning that comes surely with the paymaster. We have heard the chink of his coin on the counter, these days, in the unblushing revelations before the Mazet Committee of degraded citizenship, of the murder of the civic conscience, and in the applause that hailed them. And we have begun to understand that

these are the interest on Jacob's account, older, much older than himself. He is just an item carried on the ledger. But with that knowledge the account is at last in a way of getting squared. Let us see how it stands.

We shall take Jacob as a type of the street boy on the East Side, where he belonged. What does not apply to him in the review applies to his class. But there was very little of it indeed that he missed or that missed him.

He was born in a tenement in that section where the Tenement House Committee found 324,000 persons living out of sight and reach of a green spot of any kind, and where sometimes the buildings, front, middle, and rear, took up ninety-three per cent of all the space on the block. Such a home as he had was there, and of the things that belonged to it he was the heir. The sunlight was not among them. It "never entered" there. Darkness and discouragement did, and dirt. Later on, when he took to the dirt as his natural weapon in his battles with society, it was said of him that it was the only friend that stuck to him, and it was true. Very early the tenement gave him up to the street. The thing he took with him as the one legacy of home was the instinct for the crowd, which meant that the tenement had wrought its worst mischief upon him: it had smothered that in him around which character is built. The more readily did he fall in with the street and its ways. Character implies depth, a soil, and growth. The street is all surface: nothing grows there; it hides only a sewer.

It taught him gambling as its first lesson, and stealing as the next. The two are never far apart. From shooting craps behind the "cop's" back to filching from the grocer's stock or plundering a defenseless peddler is only a step. There is in both the spice of law-breaking that appeals to the shallow ambition of the street as heroic. Occasionally the

raids have a comic tinge. A German grocer wandered into police headquarters the other day, with an appeal for protection against the boys.

"Vat means dot 'cheese it'?" he asked, rubbing his bald head in helpless bewilderment. "Efery dime dey says 'cheese it' somedings vas gone."

To the lawlessness of the street the home opposes no obstacle, as we have seen. Until very recently the school did not. It might have more to offer even now. There are, at least, schools where there were none then, and so much is gained; also, they are getting better, but too many of them, in my unprofessional judgment, need yet to be made over, until they are fit to turn out whole, sound boys, instead of queer manikins stuffed with information for which they have no use, and which is none of their business anyhow. It seemed to me sometimes, when watching the process of cramming the school course with the sum of human knowledge and conceit, as if it all meant that we distrusted nature's way of growing a man from a boy, and had set out to show her a shorter cut. A common result was the kind of mental befogment that had Abraham Lincoln murdered by Ballington Booth, and a superficiality, a hopeless slurring of tasks, that hitched perfectly with the spirit of the street, and left nothing to be explained in the verdict of the reformatory, "No moral sense." There was no moral sense to be got out of the thing, for there was little sense of any kind in it. The boy was not given a chance to be honest with himself by thinking a thing through; he came naturally to accept as his mental horizon the headlines in his penny paper and the literature of the Dare-Devil-Dan-the-Death-Dealing-Monster-of-Dakota order, which comprise the ordinary æsthetic equipment of the slum. The mystery of his further development into the tough need not perplex anybody.

But Jacob Beresheim had not even

the benefit of such schooling as there was to be had. He did not go to school, and nobody cared. There was indeed a law directing that every child should go, and a corps of truant officers to catch him if he did not; but the law had been a dead letter for a quarter of a century. There was no census to tell what children ought to be in school, and no place but a jail to put those in who shirked. Jacob was allowed to drift. From the time he was twelve till he was fifteen, he told me, he might have gone to school three weeks, — no more.

Church and Sunday school missed him. I was going to say that they passed by on the other side, remembering the migration of the churches up-town, as the wealthy moved out of, and the poor into, the region south of Fourteenth Street. But that would hardly be fair. They moved after their congregations; but they left nothing behind. In the twenty years that followed the war, while enough to people a large city moved in downtown, the number of churches there was reduced from 141 to 127. Fourteen Protestant churches moved out. Only two Roman Catholic churches and a synagogue moved in. I am not aware that there has been any large increase of churches in the district since, but we have seen that the crowding has not slackened pace. Jacob had no trouble in escaping the Sunday school as he had escaped the public school. His tribe will have none until the responsibility incurred in the severance of church and state sits less lightly on a Christian community, and the church, from a mob, shall have become an army, with von Moltke's plan of campaign, "March apart, fight together." The Christian church is not alone in its failure. The Jew's boy is breaking away from safe moorings rather faster than his brother of the new dispensation. The church looks on, but it has no cause for congratulation. He is getting nothing in place of that which he lost, and

the result is bad. There is no occasion for profound theories about it. The facts are plain enough. The new freedom has something to do with it, but neglect to look after the young has quite as much. Apart from its religious aspect, seen from the angle of the community's interest wholly, the matter is of the gravest import.

What the boy's play has to do with building character in him Froebel has told us. Through it, he showed us, the child "first perceives moral relations," and he made that the basis of the kindergarten and all common-sense education. That prop was knocked out. New York never had a children's playground till within the last year. Truly it seemed, as Abram S. Hewitt said, as if in the early plan of our city the children had not been thought of at all. Such moral relations as Jacob was able to make out ran parallel with the gutter always, and counter to law and order as represented by the policeman and the landlord. The landlord had his windows to mind, and the policeman his lamps and the city ordinances which prohibit even kite-flying below Fourteenth Street where the crowds are. The ball had no chance at all. It is not two years since a boy was shot down by a policeman for the heinous offense of playing football in the street on Thanksgiving Day. But a boy who cannot kick a ball around has no chance of growing up a decent and orderly citizen. He must have his childhood, so that he may be fitted to give to the community his manhood. The average boy is just like a little steam engine with steam always up. The play is his safety valve. With the landlord in the yard and the policeman on the street sitting on his safety valve and holding it down, he is bound to explode. When he does, when he throws mud and stones and shows us the side of him which the gutter developed, we are shocked and marvel much what our boys are coming to, as if we had any right to expect bet-

ter treatment of them. I doubt if Jacob, in the whole course of his wizened little life, had ever a hand in an honest game that was not haunted by the dread of the avenging policeman. That he was not "doing anything" was no defense. The mere claim was proof that he was up to mischief of some sort. Besides, the policeman was usually right. Play in such a setting becomes a direct incentive to mischief in a healthy boy. Jacob was a healthy enough little animal.

Such fun as he had he got out of law-breaking in a small way. In this he was merely following the ruling fashion. Laws were apparently made for no other purpose that he could see. Such a view as he enjoyed of their makers and executors at election seasons inspired him with seasonable enthusiasm, but hardly with awe. A slogan, now, like that raised by Tammany's last candidate for district attorney, — "To hell with reform!" — was something he could grasp. Of what reform meant he had only the vaguest notion, but the thing had the right ring to it. Roosevelt preaching enforcement of law was from the first a "lobster" to him, not to be taken seriously. It is not among the least of the merits of the man that by his sturdy personality, as well as by his unyielding persistence, he won the boy over to the passive admission that there might be something in it. It had not been his experience.

There was the law which sternly commanded him to go to school, and which he laughed at every day. Then there was the law to prevent child labor. It cost twenty-five cents for a false age certificate to break that, and Jacob, if he thought of it at all, probably thought of perjury as rather an expensive thing. A quarter was a good deal to pay for the right to lock a child up in a factory, when he ought to have been at play. The excise law was everybody's game. The sign that hung in every saloon, saying that nothing was sold there to minors, never

yet barred out his "growler" when he had the price. There was another such sign in the tobacco shop, forbidding the sale of cigarettes to boys of his age. Jacob calculated that when he had the money he smoked as many as fifteen in a day, and he laughed when he told me. He laughed, too, when he remembered how the boys of the East Side took to carrying balls of cord in their pockets, on the wave of the Lexow reform, on purpose to measure the distance from the school door to the nearest saloon. They had been told that it should be two hundred feet, according to law. There were schools that had as many as a dozen within the tabooed limits. It was in the papers how, when the highest courts said that the law was good, the saloon keepers attacked the schools as a nuisance and detrimental to property. In a general way Jacob sided with the saloon keeper; not because he had any opinion about it, but because it seemed natural. Such opinions as he ordinarily had he got from that quarter.

When, later on, he came to be tried, his counsel said to me, "He is an amazing liar." No, hardly amazing. It would have been amazing if he had been anything else. Lying and mockery were all around him, and he adjusted himself to the things that were. He lied in self-defense.

Jacob's story ends here, as far as he is personally concerned. The story of the gang begins. So trained for the responsibility of citizenship, robbed of home and of childhood, with every prop knocked from under him, all the elements that make for strength and character trodden out in the making of the boy, all the high ambition of youth caricatured by the slum and become base passions, — so equipped he comes to the business of life. As a "kid" he hunted with the pack in the street. As a young man he trains with the gang, because it furnishes the means of gratifying his inordinate vanity, that is the

slum's counterfeit of self-esteem. Upon the Jacobs of other days there was a last hold, — the father's authority. Changed conditions have loosened that also. There is a time in every young man's life when he knows more than his father. It is like the measles or the mumps, and he gets over it, with a little judicious firmness in the hand that guides. It is the misfortune of the slum boy of to-day that it is really so, and that he knows it. His father is an Italian or a Jew, and cannot even speak the language to which the boy is born. He has to depend on him in much, in the new order of things. The old man is "slow," he is "Dutch." He may be an Irishman with some advantages; he is still a "foreigner." He loses his grip on the boy. Ethical standards of which he has no conception clash. Watch the meeting of two currents in river or bay, and see the line of drift that tells of the struggle. So in the city's life strive the currents of the old and the new, and in the churning the boy goes adrift. The last hold upon him is gone. That is why the gang appears in the second generation, the first born upon the soil, — a fighting gang if the Irishman is there with his ready fist, a thievish gang if it is the East Side Jew, — and disappears in the third. The second boy's father is not "slow." He has had experience. He was clubbed into decency in his own day, and the night stick wore off the glamour of the thing. His grip on the boy is good, and it holds.

It depends now upon chance what is to become of the lad. But the slum has stacked the cards against him. There arises in the lawless crowd a leader, who rules with his stronger fists or his readier wit. Around him the gang crystallizes, and what he is it becomes. He may be a thief, like David Meyer, a report of whose doings I have before me. He was just a bully, and, being the biggest in his gang, made the others steal for him and surrender the "swag," or

take a licking. But that was unusual. Ordinarily the risk and the "swag" are distributed on more democratic principles. Or he may be of the temper of Mike of Poverty Gap, who was hanged for murder at nineteen. While he sat in his cell at police headquarters, he told with grim humor of the raids of his gang on Saturday nights when they stocked up at "the club." They used to "hook" a butcher's cart or other light wagon, wherever found, and drive like mad up and down the avenue, stopping at saloon or grocery to throw in what they wanted. His job was to sit at the tail of the cart with a six-shooter and pop at any chance pursuer. He chuckled at the recollection of how men fell over one another to get out of his way. "It was great to see them run," he said. Mike was a tough, but with a better chance he might have been a hero. The thought came to him, too, when it was all over and the end in sight. He put it all in one sober, retrospective sigh, that had in it no craven shirking of the responsibility that was properly his: "I never had no bringing up."

There was a meeting some time after his death to boom a scheme for "getting the boys off the street," and I happened to speak of Mike's case. In the audience was a gentleman of means and position, and his daughter, who manifested great interest and joined heartily in the proposed movement. A week later, I was thunderstruck at reading of the arrest of my sympathetic friend's son for train-wrecking up the state. The fellow was of the same age as Mike. It appeared that he was supposed to be attending school, but had been reading dime novels instead, until he arrived at the point where he "had to kill some one before the end of the month." To that end he organized a gang of admiring but less resourceful comrades. After all, the plane of fellowship of Poverty Gap and Madison Avenue lies nearer than we often suppose. I set the inci-

dent down in justice to the memory of my friend Mike. If this one went astray with so much to pull him the right way, and but the single strand broken, what then of the other?

Mike's was the day of Irish heroics. Since their scene was shifted from the East Side there has come over there an epidemic of child crime of meaner sort, but following the same principle of gang organization. It is difficult to ascertain the exact extent of it, because of the well-meant but, I am inclined to think, mistaken effort on the part of the children's societies to suppress the record of it for the sake of the boy. Enough testimony comes from the police and the courts, however, to make it clear that thieving is largely on the increase among the East Side boys. And it is amazing at what an early age it begins. When, in the fight for a truant school, I had occasion to gather statistics upon this subject, to meet the sneer of the educational authorities that the "crimes" of street boys compassed at worst the theft of a top or a marble, I found among 278 prisoners, of whom I had kept the run for ten months, two boys, of four and eight years respectively, arrested for breaking into a grocery, not to get candy or prunes, but to rob the till. The little one was useful to "crawl through a small hole." There were "burglars" of six and seven years, and five in a bunch, the whole gang apparently, at the age of eight. "Wild" boys began to appear in court at that age. At eleven, I had seven thieves, two of whom had a record on the police blotter, and an "habitual liar;" at twelve, I had four burglars, three ordinary thieves, two arrested for drunkenness, three for assault, and three incendiaries; at thirteen, five burglars, one with a "record," as many thieves, one "drunk," five charged with assault and one with forgery; at fourteen, eleven thieves and housebreakers, six highway robbers, — the gang on its unlucky day,

perhaps, — and ten arrested for fighting, not counting one who had assaulted a policeman, in a state of drunken frenzy. One of the gangs made a specialty of stealing baby carriages, when left unattended in front of stores. They "drapped the kids in the hallway" and "sneaked" the carriages. And so on. The recital was not a pleasant one, but it was effective. We got our truant school, and one way that led to the jail was blocked.

It may be that the leader is neither thief nor thug, but ambitious. In that case the gang is headed for politics by the shortest route. Likewise, sometimes, when he is both. In either case it carries the situation by assault. When the gang wants a thing, the easiest way seems to it always to take it. There was an explosion in a Fifth Street tenement, one night last January, that threw twenty families into a wild panic, and injured two of the tenants badly. There was much mystery about it, until it came out that the housekeeper had had a "run in" with the gang in the block. It wanted club-room in the house, and she would not let it in. Beaten, it avenged itself in characteristic fashion by leaving a package of gunpowder on the stairs, where she would be sure to find it when she went the rounds with her candle to close up. That was a gang of that kind, headed straight for Albany. And what is more, it will get there, unless things change greatly. The gunpowder was just a "bluff" to frighten the housekeeper, an installment of the kind of politics it meant to play when it got its chance. There was "nothing against this gang" except a probable row with the saloon keeper, since it applied elsewhere for house-room. Not every gang has a police record of theft and "slugging" beyond the early encounters of the street. "Our honored leader" is not always the captain of a band of cut-throats. He is the honorary president of the "social club" that bears his name, and he counts for something in the ward.

But the ethical standards do not differ. "Do others, or they will do you," felicitously adapted from Holy Writ for the use of the slum, and the classic war-cry, "To the victors the spoils," made over locally to read, "I am not in politics for my health," still interpret the creed of the political as of the "slugging" gang. They drew their inspiration from the same source. Of what gang politics means every large city in our country has had its experience. New York is no exception. History on the subject is being made yet, in the sight of us all.

Our business with the gang, however, is in the making of it. Take now the showing of the reformatory,¹ to which I have before made reference, and see what light it throws upon the matter: 71 per cent of prisoners with no moral sense, or next to none, yet more than that proportion possessed of "natural mental capacity," which is to say that they had the means of absorbing it from their environment, if there had been any to absorb. Bad homes sent half of all prisoners there; bad company 92 per cent. The reformatory repeats the prison chaplain's verdict, "weakness, not wickedness," in its own way: "Malevolence does not characterize the criminal, but aversion to continuous labor." If "the street" had been written across it in capital letters, it could not have been made plainer. Twelve per cent only of the prisoners came from good homes, and one in a hundred had kept good company; evidently he was not of the mentally capable. They will tell you at the prison that, under its discipline, 83 per cent are set upon their feet and make a fresh start. With due allowance for a friendly critic, there is still room for the three fourths labeled normal. The Children's Aid Society will

give you even better news of the boys rescued from the slum before it had branded them for its own. Scarce five per cent are lost, though they leave such a black mark that they make trouble for all the good boys that are sent out from New York. Better than these was the kindergarten record in San Francisco. New York has no monopoly of the slum. Of nine thousand children from the slummiest quarters of that city who had gone through the Golden Gate Association's kindergartens, just one was said to have got into jail. The merchants who looked coldly on the experiment before brought their gold to pay for keeping it up. They were hard-headed men of business, and the demonstration that schools were better than jails any day appealed to them as eminently sane and practical.

And well it might. The gang is a distemper of the slum that writes upon the generation it plagues the recipe for its own corrective. It is not the night stick, though in the acute stage that is not to be dispensed with. Neither is it the jail. To put the gang behind iron bars affords passing relief, but it is like treating a symptom without getting at the root of the disease. Prophylactic treatment is clearly indicated. The boy who flings mud and stones is entering his protest in his own way against the purblind policy that gave him jails for schools and the gutter for a playground, that gave him dummies for laws and the tenement for a home. He is demanding his rights, of which he has been cheated, — the right to his childhood, the right to know the true dignity of labor that makes a self-respecting manhood. The gang, rightly understood, is our ally, not our enemy. Like any ailment of the body, it is a friend come to tell us of something that has gone amiss.

¹ Year-Book of Elmira State Reformatory, 1897. The statistics deal with 8319 prisoners received there in twenty-three years. The social stratum whence they came is sufficiently indicated by the statement that 18.3 per cent

were illiterates, and 43.3 per cent were able to read and write with difficulty; 35.2 per cent had an ordinary common school education; 3.2 per cent came out of high schools or colleges.

The thing for us to do is to find out what it is, and set it right.

That is the story of the gang. That we have read and grasped its lesson at last, an item in my morning paper, which I read at the breakfast table to-day, bears witness. It tells that the League for Political Education has set about providing a playground for the children up on the West Side, near the model tenements which I described. Just so! With a decent home and a chance for the boy to grow into a healthy man, his political education can proceed without much further hindrance. Now let the League for Political Education trade off the policeman's club for a boys' club, and it may consider its course fairly organized.

I spoke of the instinct for the crowd in the tenement house boy as evidence that the slum had got its grip on him. And it is true of him. The experience that the helpless poor will not leave their slum when a chance of better things is offered is wearily familiar to most of us. I recall the indignant amazement of my good friend, the president of the Baron de Hirsch Fund, when, of a hundred of the neediest families chosen to be the pioneers in the experiment of transplanting the crowds of the Ghetto to the country, where homes and work were waiting for them, only seven wanted to go. They preferred the excitement of the street. One has to have resources to face the loneliness of the woods and the fields. We have seen what resources the slum has at its command. In the boy it laid hold of the instinct for organization, the desire to fall in and march in line that belongs to all boys, and is not here, as abroad, cloyed with military service in the young years, — and anyhow is stronger in the American boy than in his European brother, — and perverted it to its own use. That is the simple secret of the success of the club, the brigade, in winning back the boy. It is fighting the street with its own weapon. The gang is the club run wild.

How readily it owns the kinship was never better shown than by the experience of the College Settlement girls, when they first went to make friends in the East Side tenements. I have told it before, but it will bear telling again, for it holds the key to the whole business. They gathered in the drift, all the little embryo gangs that were tuning up in the district, and made them into clubs, — Young Heroes, Knights of the Round Table, and such like; all except one, the oldest, that had begun to make a name for itself with the police. That one held aloof, observing coldly what went on, to make sure it was "straight." They let it be, keeping the while an anxious eye upon it; until one day there came a delegation with the proposition, "If you will let us in, we will change and have your kind of a gang." Needless to say it was let in. And within a year, when, through a false rumor that the concern was moving away, there was a run on the Settlement's penny provident bank, the converted gang proved itself its staunchest friend by doing actually what John Halifax did, in Miss Mulock's story: it brought all the pennies it could raise in the neighborhood by hook or by crook and deposited them as fast as the regular patrons — the gang had not yet risen to the dignity of a bank account — drew them out, until the run ceased.

The cry "Get the boys off the street" that has been raised in our cities, as the real gravity of the situation has been made clear, has led to the adoption of curfew ordinances in many places. Any attempt to fit such a scheme to metropolitan life would probably result simply in adding one more dead-letter law, more dangerous than all the rest, to those we have. Besides, the curfew rings at nine o'clock. The dangerous hours, when the gang is made, are from seven to nine, between supper and bedtime. This is the gap the club fills out. The boys take to the street because the home has nothing to keep them there. To lock them up in

the house would only make them hate it more. The club follows the line of least resistance. It has only to keep also on the line of common sense. It must be a real club, not a reformatory. Its proper function is to head off the jail. The gang must not run it. But rather than have it help train up a band of wretched young cads. The signs are not hard to make out. When a boy has had his head swelled by his importance as a member of the Junior Street-Cleaning Band to the point of reproving his mother for throwing a banana peel in the street, the thing to be done is to take him out and spank him, if it is reverting to "the savagery" of the street. Better a savage than a cad. The boys have the making of both in them. Their vanity furnishes abundant material for the cad, but only when unduly pampered. Left to itself, the gang can be trusted not to develop that kink.

It comes down in the end to the personal influence that is always most potent in dealing with these problems. We had a gang start up once when my boys were of that age, out in the village on Long Island where we lived. It had its headquarters in our barn, where it planned diverse raids that aimed at killing the cat and other like outrages; the central fact being that the boys had an air rifle, with which it was necessary to murder something. My wife discovered the conspiracy, and, with woman's wit, defeated it by joining the gang. She "gave in wood" to the election bonfires, and pulled the safety valve upon all the other plots by entering into the true spirit of them, — which was adventure rather than mischief, — and so keeping them within safe lines. She was elected an honorary member, and became the counselor of the gang in all their little scrapes. I can yet see her dear brow wrinkled in the study of some knotty gang problem, which we discussed when the boys had been long asleep. They did not dream of it, and the village never

knew what small tragedies it escaped, nor who it was that so skillfully averted them.

It is always the women who do those things. They are the law and the gospel to the boy, both in one. It is the mother heart, I suppose, and there is nothing better in all the world. I am reminded of the conversion of "the Kid" by one who was in a very real sense the mother of a social settlement uptown, in the latitude of Battle Row. The Kid was driftwood. He had been cast off by a drunken father and mother, and was living on what he could scrape out of ash barrels, and an occasional dime for kindling-wood which he sold from a wheelbarrow, when the gang found and adopted him. My friend adopted the gang in her turn, and civilized it by slow stages. Easter Sunday came, when she was to redeem her promise to take the boys to witness the services in a neighboring church, where the liturgy was especially impressive. It found the bigger part of the gang at her door, — a minority, it was announced, were out stealing potatoes, hence were excusable, — in a state of high indignation.

"The Kid's been cussin' awful," explained the leader. The Kid showed in the turbulent distance, red-eyed and raging.

"But why?" asked my friend, in amazement.

"'Cause he can't go to church!"

It appeared that the gang had shut him out, with a sense of what was due to the occasion, because of his rags. Restored to grace, and choking down reminiscent sobs, the Kid sat through the Easter service, surrounded by the twenty-seven "proper" members of the gang. Civilization had achieved a victory, and no doubt my friend remembered it in her prayers with thanksgiving. The manner was of less account. Battle Row has its own ways, even in its acceptance of means of grace.

I walked home from the office to-night. The street wore its normal aspect of mingled dullness and the kind of expectancy that is always waiting to turn any excitement, from a fallen horse to a fire, to instant account. The early June heat had driven the multitudes from the tenements into the street for a breath of air. The boys of the block were holding a meeting at the hydrant. In some way they had turned the water on, and were splashing in it with bare feet, reveling in the sense that they were doing something that "went against" their enemy, the policeman. Upon the quiet of the evening broke a bugle note and the tramp of many feet keeping time. A military band came around the corner, stepping briskly to the tune of *The Stars and Stripes Forever*. Their white duck trousers glimmered in the twilight, as the

hundred legs moved as one. Stoops and hydrant were deserted with a rush. The gang fell in with joyous shouts. The young fellow linked arms with his sweetheart and fell in too. The tired mother hurried with the baby carriage to catch up. The butcher came, hot and wiping his hands on his apron, to the door to see them pass.

"Yes," said my companion, guessing my thoughts,—we had been speaking of the boys,— "but look at the other side. There is the military spirit. Do you not fear danger from it in this country?"

No, my anxious friend, I do not. Let them march; and if with a gun, better still. Often enough it is the choice of the gun on the shoulder, or, by and by, the stripes on the back in the lockstep gang.

Jacob A. Riis.

THE BOOK REVIEW, PAST AND PRESENT.

WHAT is the value of a book review? The phrase "book review" seems pleonastic; but as there are now many classes of critics in addition to those who are literary, some newspapers awarding the name even to reporters of baseball and kindred matters, it is necessary to be specific in order to be understood. What then is the value of a book review? Measured by the animosities of authors and critics, no doubt, this value is appreciable at a very high rate. The estimate put upon a book review was noteworthy when Brougham cut to pieces the juvenile poetry of Lord Byron, and when the legend arose that the life of Keats had been put out by the malice of Gifford and Croker. Croker had no doubts on the subject when he was hammered flat by Thor-Macaulay. Gifford imagined in his earlier days that reviewers were a breed of venom-spitting

toads, and some said that he lived to exemplify his own theory in the Quarterly. We all know what Izaak Walton's opinion was of worms; we should like to know what the worms thought of Izaak Walton. So we know what author Gifford thought of critics, and what critic Gifford thought of authors. Now, if we only knew what the man Gifford thought, between his two militant attitudes, of himself, we might gain some scientific data for our theme. Hated he may have been; he was not despised. Nor was criticism despised when Sciooppius obliged Henry of Navarre to stop the sale of Thuanus' history, nor when John Dennis irritated Pope and the playwrights, nor when J. B. Mencke in Charlataneria strewed half Europe with the literary remains of his contemporaries, nor when Dryden seconded his verse with profuse and