

THE GANG IN EMBRYO

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HE "Honest Club" was Twinsie's own original idea. The credit for its organization, as well as the responsibility for its rather shocking subsequent development, I regret to add, belonged exclusively to him, for the other members of his gang always followed like sheep when Twinsie led the way.

As a matter of fact, I believe that his Christian name was James or John, or something equally respectable, but he himself had discarded it at an early age. Having been favored by fate with a twin brother, he firmly decided as soon as he was able to articulate, that he himself should be known in the future as "Twinsie," and that his brother, who lacked his aggressive personality, should respond to the less intimate but possibly the more staid and dignified appellation of "Twin." Twinsie was a born leader of men—or, considering his age, which was twelve, perhaps I should say, of boys. Very likely the fact that he had a twin brother, like a familiar spirit to echo his orders and to follow him in all of his projects and adventures with blind devotion, gave him a position and prestige among his friends which was rather out of the ordinary.

Twinsie must have been in a particularly beatific frame of mind when he resolved to organize the "Honest Club." Possibly some good angel had been whispering in his ear, or perhaps his teacher had inspired him to the doing of noble deeds. Another inference (though I hate to suggest it) was that he was feeling the reaction resulting from the administration of some punishment for past misdeeds. But, whatever the reason, he unquestionably was fired on this momentous occasion with the desire to stamp out delinquency in general, and to employ his forces in the cause of righteousness. So he called his followers around him and unfolded his plan for the formation of what he was pleased to call the "Honest Club."

Taking the chair, as it were, he outlined the high purposes of this fellowship, and briefly sketched an attractive programme for the activities of its members. They were to avoid temptations of the baser sort, and eschew all evil, especially the sin of dishonesty. They were to be obedient to their parents, sympathetic with their teachers, and helpful in assisting and running errands for their neighbors. By closely following this high-minded policy Twinsie asserted that they would reap substantial rewards. Not only would they gain that satisfaction which always flows from the consciousness of virtuous living, but it was to be hoped that their parents, their teachers, and their neighbors might feel impelled to bestow some small remuneration, preferably in the form of cash, in return for their good deeds and acts of devotion. These proceeds, Twinsie explained, should be turned into the club treasury impartially by all concerned, and pooled into one fund for their common benefit. Then, when the receipts had grown to respectable proportions, the club could provide an outing, a feast, or some other form of entertainment acceptable to its members, under the direction of some competent adviser, preferably their teacher. The unregenerate among their small friends, unbidden to this spread, would be consumed with envy and jealousy, and would soon be clamoring for admission to the "Honest Club." In fact, its potentiality for good would be unlimited, and life would be very pleasant indeed for all within the charmed circles. No more punishments, no more scoldings, no more bad marks! Instead, their parents, teachers, and neighbors would point them out with pride, and hold them up as examples to the youth of the community. "See those boys?" they would say, "they are fine fellows. That's because they're members of the 'Honest Club.'"

Twinsie's suggestion met with enthu-

siastic response. His convincing statements and assurances stifled any possible opposition, and the club sprang into existence then and there. His cronies pronounced the idea a grand one, for how could it possibly be anything else, since Twinsie himself had proposed it?

For a while all went well. The school and the neighborhood were a little startled by the sudden transformation in the habits of Twinsie and his friends, but they were none the less pleased. Much of Twinsie's predictions proved true. There were no more punishments, no more scoldings, no more bad marks. Life for its members was at least more calm and conventional if less exciting.

But as the weeks passed by a situation began to develop which threatened disaster to the whole project. While every one appreciated the efforts of the members of the "Honest Club" to walk in the straight and narrow path, this recognition of their virtues failed to produce the expected cash. No matter how helpful they proved themselves to be at home, no matter how diligently they worked at school, and no matter how many errands they ran, or chores they performed for others, the longed-for pennies and nickels failed to materialize. No funds poured into the club treasury, and consequently there was no prospect at all for the feast or excursion so graphically pictured by Twinsie, and which was to have made all non-members of the club gnash their teeth in envy. Alas! the material rewards of virtue sometimes are slow—so very slow in coming!

Twinsie sensed this situation before any actual revolt occurred among his followers. But there were warnings a-plenty and murmurings enough among his friends to show the need of immediate action. Now there is one thing which leaders like Twinsie cannot submit to, and that is loss of authority. They may fight a losing battle, they may lead their henchmen into danger and possible defeat, but they can never survive desertion.

Accordingly, he resolved to meet the situation at once and to destroy the seeds of revolt before his leadership could be threatened. Calling his little gang around him, he explained that while the experience of the "Honest Club" had not

fulfilled all of his expectations, the fault lay not with the original idea itself, which was an excellent one, but with those whom they had hoped to please. They, the members, had done their part, but their parents, teachers, and neighbors had wofully fallen down in showing the proper and expected appreciation for their virtues. Now he had a new plan to propose. If no one cared for an honest club, why continue it? There were plenty of other ways to enrich the club treasury, and more exciting ones at that. Virtue was all very well, in its way, but vice had its alluring side as well. In short, he for one was tired of the "Honest Club" and all that it implied. He suggested, therefore, that its name be changed into the "Crooking Club," and that its members as a body should plunge boldly into a life of infamy and crime.

Twinsie had unwittingly pulled off a very successful *coup d'état*, and it won because of its audacity. Up to that time none of his friends had been "crooks," even if they had been a little mischievous and unruly. To become a band of marauders and criminals was more than they had expected or bargained for, but none raised his voice in opposition. They all, I am sure, must have experienced some queer sinking feelings in their little insides as they listened to Twinsie's programme for their future activities, but, to a boy, they pledged their allegiance to the new and evil cause. So it was that the "Honest Club" ceased to exist and the "Crooking Club" came into being.

I wish I could tell you that the new organization failed to accomplish any of its reprehensible objects, and that it died out as quickly as its more worthy predecessor, but unfortunately that would not be the truth. Besides, how should I have known of these things, or how should I have made the acquaintance of these boys unless they had come into conflict with the law?

As a matter of fact, under Twinsie's leadership the "Crooking Club" had a wild, tempestuous, and evil career. Each and every one of its members sought to live up to its name, and they spared neither themselves nor others in the effort. They played truants from school, and they stayed away from home. They pil-

tered from stands, and they held up and robbed other small children on the streets. Burglary became an ordinary occupation for them, and the stores and shops which they looted were too many to count. They established innumerable bunks,* made use of fences,† and pal'd up with older criminals. In a short time they made their gang notorious and its very name a terror in the neighborhood.

The inevitable reckoning was not long in coming. One night the whole lot attempted a daring raid on a poultry market, and effected an entrance through a skylight on the roof. To reach the floor, a drop of about twenty feet, they slid down a rope which they had brought with them for this purpose, and which they had fastened around the chimney. As the last one let himself down he crashed through some of the glass, making a racket which brought the police, and Twinsie and his friends were caught, one and all, like rats in a trap.

The members of the "Crooking Club" presented a sorry appearance when they were arraigned before me the next morning in the Children's Court. Twinsie did most of the talking for them, but even he lacked his usual self-assurance. I imagine all of them would have given anything in the world to have become members of the "Honest Club" once more, and to have had the memory of their subsequent depravities blotted out, as one might dispel the recollection of an abominable nightmare.

A favorable thing which I noticed at once about the boys was their disposition to be absolutely frank and truthful about themselves and their actions. After a brief talk about the facts of the offense, and following my usual custom, I put the case over for a week to permit a full investigation to be made of the affair and the boys' characters and environment.

This investigation when completed presented food for serious thought. Through it we learnt of the establishment of the "Honest Club" and the evolution of the "Crooking Club." We found also that the reputation of all of the boys, up to a short time before, had been fairly good.

As a whole the incident simply proved

the tragedy of misdirected effort. Had these boys, when they first got together, been guided with intelligence and common sense, they probably would have stuck to a normal, clean, healthy line of conduct. Their natural instinct in the beginning urged them toward good behavior and right living. It was only when virtue became flat and insipid through lack of excitement, interest, and appreciation by those to whom they naturally looked for guidance, that they decided to abandon it and to play a dangerous game. So does a gang often begin. At first the members band themselves together for pleasure and adventure, and it is only when normal interests fail to attract, or to fulfil their needs, that lawlessness enters in and leads them far afield.

In the case of these particular boys I am glad to say that I felt justified, after a thorough review of all the circumstances, in giving them a chance on probation. Most of them have responded very satisfactorily to this form of treatment, although one or two have since fallen from grace. The majority, however, have had their fill of criminality, and I do not expect any of them to feel again any attraction toward a gang.

What is going to become of Twinsie I do not know. He is a character now, and will be one in the future. I sincerely hope that his qualities of leadership will be turned in the right direction, and that later on he will qualify himself as a good citizen. He has an active little brain, and it is teeming over with all kinds of plans and projects. A short time ago he and Twin reported to me on probation, and I had the pleasure of an extended talk with them on that occasion.

"What do you want to do when you grow up?" I asked Twinsie.

"Go into the movies," he answered, without the slightest hesitation.

"What made you think of that?" I inquired.

"Why, it is a grand scheme, judge," he replied. "When you have a twin you can do all kinds of things. Just think, Twin could commit a murder and I would be accused, and then there would be all kinds of mix-ups. Me and Twin could do lots of things other people couldn't

* Secret hiding-places for stolen goods.

† Receivers and dealers in stolen goods.

do!" The placid Twin nodded a silent assent. Anything which Twinsie proposed was all right as far as he was concerned.

"Now I come to think of it," I remarked, "I don't think that you and your brother really do look very much alike after all."

"Oh, that's just because of the way he has his locks clipped," Twinsie asserted with a rather contemptuous gesture toward his brother's closely shaved head. "Wait till his hair grows out again like mine, and there ain't a soul who could tell us apart."

I have been trying to turn Twinsie's thoughts into other channels, but no one can tell what he is going to become, or what part he is really going to play in the years which lie before him.

Somewhat similar in many respects to the episode of the "Honest Club" was another case which recently came to my notice, and which I have recorded in my files under the title: "The Robbery of Ikey C." Indeed the original motives and causations were very much alike in both incidents, but I am glad to say that in this latter case the final result was infinitely less painful and serious.

Three young boys were brought before me charged with an act of juvenile delinquency, having been arrested for holding up Ikey in the street and robbing him of twenty-five cents. When I glanced first at the three youthful defendants and then at the complainant, I received something of a shock. It seemed as if there must have been some mistake, and as if their positions should have been reversed, for the three juvenile robbers were the cleanest, brightest, and nicest-looking boys one could possibly imagine, while Ikey's appearance and general attitude were enough to awaken suspicion at first glance. However, suppressing my misgivings for the moment, I proceeded with the case, and turning to the boys asked whether the charge was true.

"Sure," they all answered in chorus. "We took the quarter from him."

"Well, I never would have thought it," I murmured to myself, and then I inquired of the boys how it all happened.

"Well, you see it was this way, judge,"

replied one of the number, who acted as spokesman. "We belong to a club in our church, and some of the things we have promised to keep away from are playing craps and swearing. We promised to try to make our friends good, too, and to stop all gambling around the block. Most of the boys have given it up, but Ikey's the worst of the lot, and he's shooting crap all the time. Yesterday we seen his mother hand him a quarter and tell him to go and get some milk for the baby, but Ikey just sneaked around the corner and started up a crap game. So we all got together and jumped on him. We got back the quarter all right, we did!"

The other two boys nodded assent, and the faces of all three glowed with righteous enthusiasm, as if in the consciousness of a duty well performed. They looked up at me with angelic expressions in the certain expectancy that I could do nothing less than give my approval to all that they had done. Before commenting on their actions, however, I thought it best to hear what Ikey had to say, so turning to him I asked whether this particular quarter did not belong to his mother. Ikey of the guilty conscience squirmed around in the witness-chair in which he was sitting, and looked thoroughly miserable.

"Yeh," he admitted reluctantly. "She gived it to me. But, judge, don't yer believe that story they're tryin' to hand yer. They wasunt going to give it back to mommer. Oh! no! They stole it from me cause they wanted to go to the movies with it," and Ikey grinned slyly, happy in the momentary belief that he had turned the tables on his traducers. Vigorous denials to this accusation, however, were entered by the three defendants, and they all asked me to look into the case to see if their story was not true in every particular.

This I did, and the subsequent investigation proved the accuracy of all of their assertions. Their characters were found to be of the best, while Ikey's reputation was discovered to be very shady indeed.

It took me some time, however, to convince my three young friends that their action in jumping on the wretched Ikey was scarcely within the law. I told them of the Vigilantes of the early Californian

days, but pointed out that their operations could hardly be tolerated to-day in a city like New York. (Of course I did not add that sometimes one couldn't help having a sneaking sympathy for vigilantes in general!) It was not difficult, however, to suggest other and better methods of reaching the same end, and we discussed the various ways in which they could make themselves and their club a real power for good in the community.

As a matter of fact, their arrest, which was really accidental, and simply due to the commotion which they were making in the street, turned out to be rather timely and fortunate in the end. For these boys, like the members of the "Honest Club," originally banded together for really decent purposes, might have turned their energies through misdirection and lack of realization into more dangerous channels, and having discovered force as an easy weapon by which to work their will, might have been induced to use it later on for more sinister purposes.

Of all the incipient young gangsters who ever came before me, the case of David B. was one of the most extraordinary.

David, who was fifteen years of age at the time of his arrest, was caught red-handed in the act of forcing an entrance from a fire-escape into a third-story apartment. As he was cornered by the janitor and one or two others he dropped a revolver into the area, which when examined was found to be fully loaded. Another boy or man had been seen in his company when he first had been observed, but this individual had succeeded in getting away by climbing up the fire-escape and disappearing over the roof before David was caught.

These were the only facts known to the police when David was first brought into court, and I could get nothing more out of him at my initial hearing, save an admission that he was indeed trying to break into the apartment for the purpose of burglary. To my inquiry as to the identity of the individual seen in his company, he replied that he was a young fellow known as Tony the Wop, whom he had met only an hour before, and who had

suggested to him the commission of this particular offense, at the same time handing him the loaded revolver. I remarked that the name Tony the Wop sounded suspiciously generic, but David emphatically denied any further knowledge of the fellow.

As we proceeded with our investigation of the case, however, we found out many things of David and his associates, which he had omitted to tell us. So much, in fact, that finally David recognized the futility of lying any further about his actions, and offered to tell us everything concerning himself and his companions. The boy, I had every reason to believe, had been anxious all along to tell the truth, yet had been restrained, partly by an innate feeling of loyalty toward those with whom he had been acting, but principally by sheer terror at the thought of their possible revenge.

David, it appeared, lived alone with his widowed mother, and had passed through several terms in high school, but during the past year he had become restless and discontented, and had drifted away from his former associations. A few months before his arrest he had fallen in with a particularly vicious gang of criminals, who had craftily led him on from one small offense to another, until having obtained complete domination over him they had used him for crimes of the most daring and nefarious description.

As David gave us the names of his companions we discovered them all to be well-known characters in the underworld, and possessors of criminal records. One at that very time was being earnestly sought by the authorities in a murder case. A general round-up by the police resulted in the arrest of seven of these individuals, and a search in their respective rooms led to the discovery of a large number of revolvers, blackjacks, masks, jimmies, and burglars' tools which alone were enough to obtain convictions against them all. The alleged Tony the Wop, whose name, of course, was not Tony at all, turned out to be a notorious character who had indeed planned the burglary which led to David's arrest. Incidentally two receivers of stolen goods were located and an investigation of their premises disclosed a vast amount of stolen property,

and solved the mystery of a number of crimes hitherto unexplained.

Then David told us other facts which led to more discoveries. One of the members of the gang had obtained employment in a well-known building in the city as a night-watchman. In the basement he had rigged up a gallery for pistol practice, which was freely made use of by all of his friends, and where, as David informed us, the young apprentice was taught how to shoot to kill. He also said that a plot had been hatched there to blow up the safe in the office of the building, and that the explosives for this purpose would be found hidden in a certain spot in the basement. Both the pistol-gallery and the explosives were found precisely as described by David.

Taking it all in, the arrest of this boy led to the punishment, and we hope the destruction, of one of the vilest bands of which one could conceive. As to David himself, he has remained under our supervision for considerable time, and has formed new associations of a far different character than those which defiled his life awhile ago. He is learning an excellent trade, and there is every prospect that in the future he will acquit himself with success and honor.

The gang instinct is not an easy thing to overcome. Once it gets into the blood it often reasserts itself after the lapse of time and long periods of apparent inaction. Its call, like the passion for strong drink, draws men back again to the habits of the past, and its bonds are hard to break.

The case of Robert Shore was a striking instance in point. (Here I use his true name, for his record has already received wide publicity.) The tragedy of his latter life, it is needless to say, came as a distinct shock and disappointment to us all, but the fact that in this case our efforts proved unavailing is no reason for avoiding reference to his brief but eventful career.

Shore was but a boy of fourteen when he was picked up by the police for having a pistol in his possession. There was nothing of peculiar interest in the incident of his arrest, as the boy claimed that he found the weapon, and the officer could

offer no proof to the contrary. The circumstances were such, however, that an investigation seemed desirable, and through it we discovered that Shore had been keeping questionable company. He apparently had an irresistible craving for gangs and gangsters, and although he was too young to qualify as a full-fledged member of their circles, his one idea appeared to be to fit himself for such associations later on. While he was detained pending our investigation, a letter was found in his possession addressed to one Thomas Francis Smith, at Sing Sing prison. Smith, generally known as "Tanner" Smith, was a well-known gangster, the possessor of a criminal record, and an operator in those districts which produced the "Terrible Nine," the "Hudson Dusters," the "Gophers," and the "Guerillas." The meeting-places of some of these bands were euphoniously known as "Tubs of Blood." Shore's letter was a human document of considerable interest, and its phrases were redolent with the argot of the gang. In part it read as follows:

"DEAR THOMAS:

"I am taking great pleasure in writing you these few lines to let you know how every little thing is. The other Saturday Sullivan from 27th did a little carving on Hawkie. Sullivan was with your friend Rogers and a dummy* past. On the dummy was Hawkie. Sullivan got on the opposite side in the engine so Rogers seen Hawkie making his way and pumped five at Hawkie, but got a surprise when Hawk ran over to him and shoved him through a hall in Tenth. Now Rogers is trying to have it over and get out of it but there is no fear. He'll get all that is coming. Our friend Mack grabbed Larkin Sunday night and put it to him. Lark pigged like a baby and said he had nothing to do with it, so they took that stuff and let him go without giving him his.

"Tom has been with Jackie McG in 16th Street all the time since you been away and also with Richmond and Cassidy Pete. How are they with you, aces? If so let me know cause I won't have

* A dummy engine on the Eleventh Avenue tracks of the New York Central Railroad Company.

anything to do with any one you have no use for. Owney Madden* is getting quite familiar with this neighborhood. He passes here often but it won't last when they hear you're here. They'll get pinched to be in safe keeps for life. . . .

"I went back to work Monday last November 9th, and I feel fine. My muscles were stiff from being home a month, so next time I fall the doctor told me to fall on my back and not on my face, as it is bad for the eyes and chin and wrists.

Your friend,

ROBERT SHORE."

I was quite willing to give Shore a chance on probation provided that he would break completely away from the company which he had begun to cultivate so assiduously. This the boy agreed to do, and I believe that, at the time, he was sincere in his promise. He seemed anxious to turn over a new leaf and to interest himself in other directions. While he remained under our supervision he acquitted himself creditably in all respects, and at the time of his final discharge from the Children's Court, we had every reason to believe that he would prove himself to be a useful member of society.

That was more than six years ago. How long he continued to resist the influences of his former associates I cannot say. Perhaps he went back to them just as soon as our legal jurisdiction over him came to an end. Possibly he continued to struggle for a short time after that, until the call became too strong for him to resist, and the old lure dragged him back in spite of all his better resolutions.

That he did go back, however, there unfortunately can be no question. He was arrested several times later on and served a term in the penitentiary for a similar offense to that which led to his initial appearance in the Children's Court—the carrying of a revolver. Finally, one day in the summer of 1919, his old friend "Tanner" Smith was killed in a fight, and the press mentioned very prominently the name of Robert Shore (now known as "Rubber" Shore) in connection with the affair. Before Shore could be taken into custody, however, a

second tragedy took place, and Shore himself was killed by a friend of Smith, it was thought, in revenge for the death of his chieftain. What led to the falling out between Shore and Smith has never been fully explained, and even at the present writing a judicial inquiry is pending as to the complicity of others in the affray. Thus ended a young life which seemed to promise better things only six years before.

Of course there are gangs and gangs. Some are made up merely of boisterous youths who band themselves together for the purpose of mutual protection, and whose acts of lawlessness are mostly confined to street fights with their rivals and enemies. In a sense the purpose of such organizations is defensive, and the offenses which they commit are generally incidental to their combats or their quest for adventure. But later on such associations are apt to undergo a dangerous and ominous development, and we often find that the more hardened of their members throw aside all restrictions of law and order and organize themselves into groups to prey upon society. In their ranks can be found the typical gangsters, the gunmen and the criminals of whom we hear so much, and who hesitate at nothing, not even at murder itself, in the carrying out of their objects.

The finished gang is the product of evolution. Its embryonic germ is innocent enough in itself, and in many cases its origin can be traced to the natural desire of boys to associate together for pleasure and adventure. These associations, if properly directed and guided, will never lead to any harm, and are often productive of good results in teaching boys manliness, self-reliance, and loyalty to others. The poison only sets in when, through thoughtlessness or misdirection of their activities, they are led into folly and mischief. Then again, groups of this kind in the same neighborhood are frequently known to clash. At first their rivalries may be more or less friendly, but the temptation to overstep the mark is ever present, and when one side indulges in disorderly acts, the others are forced to do the same thing in retaliation. "The descent to Avernus is easy," and once

* A notorious gang leader, afterward sentenced to State's prison for manslaughter.

boys lose their respect for law and order, other transgressions and delinquencies will follow in logical succession.

We constantly encounter the embryo gang in those street fights which bring so many boys into the Children's Court. In nine cases out of ten when boys are picked up for throwing stones or indulging in other forms of combat in public places, it is safe to assume that it is the result of warfare between the denizens of two streets or avenues. Indeed, one of my first questions in such a case is to ask a boy to which street he belongs.

A short time ago we received so many complaints of fighting in a certain section of the city that a probation officer was assigned to the special task of trying to restore order. A large number of boys had been arrested in the neighborhood, and all of them had pleaded guilty to taking part in these outbreaks, but still the warfare went on. The police seemed powerless to stop it, and mere punishments appeared to have no effect whatever. From our investigations we found that the boys living on Ninth Avenue and those on Tenth, within a given area, had organized themselves into two rival bands and that the young inhabitants of the side streets included within this zone had affiliated themselves with one or the other of these main bodies. They fought incessantly, and whenever they had an occasion to meet they indulged in their feud to the danger of all passers-by and to the injury of many windows in the vicinity.

Our probation officer, starting with those lads who had been arrested and placed on probation by the court, gained the interest and friendship of many others in the two groups, and in a short time learnt much of the doings of all of the boys involved as well as of the activities and identities of their leaders. He also aroused the interest of the local churches, schools, and settlements in the situation. Finally, when he thought the time ripe, he called a conference of both sides for the purpose of adopting an appropriate treaty of peace. At the hour set, a number of boys gathered at the appointed rendezvous, and our officer started to address them. But as he proceeded to describe his proposition the crowd continued to increase so rapidly that an

adjournment had to be taken, and the meeting postponed until a larger place could be found to accommodate his eager listeners. A little while later he obtained permission to use a school auditorium, to which the crowd moved in a body, and where he was able to continue his talk. When he finished, his suggestions were received with uproarious applause, and every resolution which he proposed was carried with a storm of enthusiasm. It was then that he began to feel that something was wrong, for he knew that the two gangs would never assemble together so amicably or agree so quickly.

"How many of you here belong to Ninth Avenue?" he asked. The whole conference arose *en masse*, and in a wild uproar affirmed their loyalty to their native thoroughfare.

"And how many are there from Tenth Avenue?" he queried anxiously, with a premonition of failure. Not a hand was raised or a voice heard in answer.

Then the whole crowd broke out into a bedlam of hisses, groans, and catcalls, which told the probation officer plainly what had happened. Tenth Avenue had deserted him, and he had wasted all his persuasive eloquence on Ninth alone.

Undismayed, however, at his first setback, he immediately started to find out why the Tenth Avenue crowd had proved recalcitrant, and in a short time he discovered the reason. They had been led to believe by some false report that the meeting was a fake one, and that it was a trap set by the Ninth Avenuers for their undoing. Fearing an ambush, they had resolved to stay away, but in so doing had intended no disrespect to our peace-maker. A little later on, after the situation was better understood, he succeeded in bringing the leaders of both sides together, and a peace treaty was actually signed, which was honored and observed by all concerned. The warfare came to an end, and the two groups gradually mingled and fraternized in a spirit of friendship. It was really a fine piece of work on the part of our probation officer, and he succeeded in permanently eliminating a disorder which the police by strong-arm methods had failed to suppress.

It is often curious and gratifying to find how ready and willing boys are to help in improving conditions if they can be made to understand just why and how their assistance might be of value. But the appeal must be made to them in full sincerity, as man to man, for a maudlin plea or a harsh command would be equally ineffectual in arousing their interest or enlisting their sympathy. I have found in certain cases no more effective agents for the maintenance of law and order than boys themselves, if they are properly handled and guided.

Recently a group came before me charged with stone-throwing. As usual, I found that it was a fight between two street gangs. I talked over the matter with the boys in detail, and as they were an intelligent lot it was not difficult to make them understand the error of their ways. Finally I asked them all to assist our probation officers in putting an end to the nuisance. I explained that each boy was usually able to influence a friend or two, and that although I did not want any of them to undertake more than he was able, I felt that great good would result if each one did his best.

"How many other boys can you get to stop this fighting?" I asked one of the largest of the group.

"Two or three," he responded.

"How many could you?" I inquired of another.

"I don't quite know," he answered with some hesitation. "I think I could get hold of one."

"That's fine," I replied. "I only want you to do what you can. Don't make any promise which you cannot keep."

"And what can you do, Jimmie?" I said, turning to one of the smallest of the lot.

"Oh! I'll get thirty or forty," he asserted with an air of confidence.

"Isn't that a great many for you to control?" I exclaimed in wonder.

"Oh! no," answered Jimmie. "I guess I can get the other kids to stop, all

right. There won't be no more battles, judge."

To my amazement Jimmie's word was as good as his bond, for he turned out to be the leader of all the small boys in his block, and he loyally kept the pledge which he gave me. On his return to his neighborhood after his appearance in court he gave the command for the cessation of warfare, and the locality in consequence enjoyed a spell of peace and quiet for many months while Jimmie ruled the roost.

After all is said and done, the gang instinct is a quality which cannot be ignored or overlooked. Its existence is a natural characteristic of our social order, and it would be impossible to uproot or destroy it, even if it were desirable to do so. In its origin it is but a form of comradeship and social activity which binds youth together in a communion of brotherhood, and as I have pointed out before, it is only in its later development, due to modern conditions and environment, that the gang becomes a menace and a thing of evil.

The task before us is to guide this tendency and instinct in the right direction before it is too late. Constancy and loyalty are virtues to be fostered, and a boy who can lead a crowd, or who will stick to his friends through thick and thin, is too valuable a potentiality to be neglected. Already many organizations have recognized the wisdom of enlisting and putting into play these very qualities in the training of youth. The achievements and ideals of the Boy Scouts show, for example, what can be accomplished in this connection by proper direction and intelligent leadership.

For the hardened gangster no one can have the slightest sympathy or respect. But just because a number of boys choose to band themselves together into what they are pleased to call a gang, don't lose hope for them, or believe that they are necessarily on the path to perdition.



The rabbits, borrowing some little Hawaiian ukeles . . . entertained the neighborhood.—Page 160.

HOW I SPENT MY VACATION

By F. S. Church

ILLUSTRATIONS FROM DRAWINGS BY THE AUTHOR

I WAS a sick man. The doctor said I must have a rest, but I kept struggling on, hoping for a change for the better.

The wife of an old friend called in to see me. "Jim," she remarked, "you're dead, but you don't know it. You have got to get out of this and be resuscitated; my husband wants you to come up and make us a visit. I know how you hate that word visit, but we will put you up at our hotel, where you will be under no restraint and you'll stay till you get well. I am in the city till to-morrow at five; pack your trunk and be ready at that time, and don't fail, for if you do, I will send down some of my men who will drag you to the depot."

I had visited them once or twice before, but some years had passed and I had heard more or less about what they were doing for the preserva-

tion of the wild life in their neighborhood.

They were living, at the time of my first visit, at his hunting-lodge on a mountainside, in the wildest part of the State, abounding in game of all sorts indigenous to the locality.

He had purchased some ten thousand acres. It was a forest primeval, you could almost say, having been practically untouched by the axeman, abounding in grand old trees, and occasionally one might see a black bear or a timber-wolf skulking along the banks of the river; blue and white herons, cranes, and eagles were common sights.

He had wired off five thousand acres and stocked it with deer, and there was a lovely lake on the mountain-top which, with the river that flowed along his land, made it an ideal place for fishing.

It had been his custom to entertain his friends during



I noticed . . . a good-sized black bear carrying . . . two dishes of berries.—Page 158.