

75.12

SUNSET



THE MAGAZINE OF THE PACIFIC AND
OF ALL THE FAR WEST

EDITED BY CHARLES SEDGWICK AIKEN
CHARLES K. FIELD, ASSOCIATE EDITOR

VOLUME TWENTY-FIVE

JULY—DECEMBER

1910

**SAN FRANCISCO
SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY
PUBLISHERS**

Making the All-Round Boy

The Story of the Columbia Park
Boys' Club

By SIDNEY S. PEIXOTTO
Founder and Director of the Club

Most men have been boys. The man reflects the boy. Recognition of this fact makes charitable and educational work among boys one of wide interest to thinking people. The Columbia Park Boys' Club in San Francisco has accomplished some results along original lines. Major Peixotto, who tells here of his work with boys, is one of the leaders of this work in America. He has recently been chosen to lead the American Boy Scout movement in San Francisco. He is leader of the Pacific Athletic Association, second in size in the United States and first in accomplishment. He organized the San Francisco Public Schools Athletic League, the Catholic Schools Athletic League and the Sunday-Schools Athletic League. He is now with the Columbia Park Boys on their vacation tour to Seattle.



Four Little Boy Blues who have blown American war-time melodies on hospitable foreign shores



IT is nineteen years since a work was started for the benefit of boys living in the south-of-Market district of San Francisco by an earnest lot of young men and women who desired to give some of their spare time in the interest of boys less favored in their start in life. Four years after the beginning of the work here, a new work for boys was organized, called the Columbia Park Boys' Club. It is here that I have had the opportunity to create and develop the interesting boys' club which has grown so well to be a virile boys' work of to-day.

It has always been my idea to give boys what they want, not what people think they ought to have, and I believe this has been

one of the reasons for the success of this club. The Columbia Park Boys' Club stands as an expression of what boys long for and love best. They have been led to express themselves more intelligently than they ever could possibly hope to do if they were working alone. Boys are exactly the same as men. If left to themselves they will develop just as one-sidedly as most men develop. We find, in our associations with the boys, those with no thought in life but baseball; others crazy over going to cheap theaters; others who think swimming the only thing for their Sunday sport, and some who, having learned to read, keep at the books of only one author until they have read the last book of a hundred he has written.

Boys as a rule get into a rut along the line of the gang with which they are associated and there seems to come the end of their development. It was urgent, then, in starting the new club, that an attempt should be made to develop these boys into what has

come to be called "all-round boys." Boys should be made to use all the qualities with which every one of them in this world is endowed. Military drill was established for the sake of its training and its high order of discipline and because it is not a popular feature of boys' work. Here was something they would have to do against their will. In order to overcome the unpopularity of military work we went into athletics with heart and soul. This is the work that appeals to most boys and should be the greatest factor in all boys' work. Inter-club baseball tournaments and track and field meets for boys were the great feature of early club days and aroused a spirit of fair play and loyalty which has lasted through all these years. Later, when the boys had reached a point of understanding, the work of physical development was established in the gymnasium, and this department has grown to be a most important part of the work to-day.

It has always been the motto of the club that the boys should be kept busy at all times. The parliamentary meetings, the hour in the manual training workshops, and the interesting dramatics have been important influences in enticing the boys from the street into the quiet atmosphere of the club. Music began in the earliest days in the form of jovial chorus singing before the boys went home. It was later developed into a soprano chorus, which has established a long line of celebrated boy soloists who have made singing traditional and easy to attain. Out of military came the need for drum and bugle corps, and as a growth from this drum and bugle corps we have developed our bands which now form so important a part of the club's life.

The summer camps have grown in a most satisfactory way. First, they began as an outing for boys in the fruit orchards; then as a development of a summer government camp which has grown year by year to an orderly and inspiring type of boy camp life. The walking trips have been my personal idea and they have grown from a party of four boys in 1896 to parties of fifty boys who have seen all the coast counties of California on foot.

In the long fifteen years since the Columbia Park Boys' Club has been established, the one effort has been to make this club a demonstration of the wonderful possibilities that lie in the boys' world. We are apt to

think that the boys of to-day are so careless and irresponsible that this thing of interesting boys in themselves is a rather difficult task. The encouraging success obtained in this work only proves that the boy of the great city is still a regenerate, longing, yearning still for the old ideals that are not obtainable to-day because of the rush of city life and the changed home ideals.

It was no easy matter to bring this work to its present splendid condition. From the very start, boys in the neighborhood arose in arms against this peaceful invasion. They all seemed to resent any energy that came into their midst which was to bring order and refinement among them, or a desire to establish a new standard from that under which they were living. A man who works among boys meets with the most peculiar opposition. The boys within the club make every effort to appear uninfluenced by him. They willingly accept all that is given with the outward appearance of indifference. They misunderstand his motives; they talk most unkindly about him on the street and use every effort to make the teacher feel that his work is wasted and of little meaning to them. The boys who do not belong to such a club make the boys who do belong feel that an intruder is coming among them with an ulterior motive. The teacher has to create an alluring temptation; he has to make everything done so appealing that there must be some excuse for boys to retain their membership. Our work was so convincing that the boys on the outside had finally to admit its worth.

The club has always held to the idea that nothing is too good for boys. It has argued that it costs large sums of money in every household to raise good children. Boys must have the best of things to grow up to be the best of men. Their idle hours must be made valuable to them. The first thought in our club has been, not to erect a costly structure, but to provide proper and elaborate equipment for every department of the work. The uniforms of the band must be of the first quality; the military suits have always been durable and neat and smart in appearance; our baseball department has been equipped with every facility for giving the boys proper expression in this difficult form of sport. All the other features of the club work have been uniform and made so that they create pride in the heart of every boy who is a member of these various



The Columbia Park Boys' Club in minstrel form. There is no end of talent among these youngsters

interests. We have purchased the best quality of drums and the musical instruments used by the band are of the best make we could buy. We have made the utmost effort to provide the boys of this club with such inducements that they would feel proud to be members of the organization and it has been this standard that has made the boys outside agree, although they do not belong to the club, that it is a work of which any boy who belongs should be proud. It is true that there are much more elaborate clubhouses for boys and it is true that there are clubhouses where there are more boys, but there is no boys' club which has so many wonderful organizations within its walls, or where those organizations are better equipped.

The educational features of the club have grown to be more and more a distinct idea around which the work is associated. In the earlier years it perhaps was fair to class

the work within the realms of a charitable organization. The later developments have quite raised it above the benevolent institution type. The work is an educational development and illustrates not the needs of any one set of boys, but the needs of every boy who is born in the great American city. The successes with the educational feature have come through the fact that all the work is given to the boys through the simplest possible methods. There is no extravagant waste of time in learning anything. The singing is an expression of sound, without any cultivation of voice or waste of time learning note reading. The band music has grown to be one of the easiest accomplishments of the boys, because tradition has told us how simple it is for young boys to take up a musical instrument and master it if too much stress is not laid on the learning of the fundamentals which the average music teacher insists on children learning.



On the first of March, of this year, several thousand people gave enthusiastic greeting to the company of forty-two Columbia Park Boys, athletes and entertainers, who returned on the Steamer Alameda from the Antipodes

In our manual training shops, the work has been presided over by people of artistic instincts. The results here have been most satisfactory. Just recently a Russian educator, who is making a careful study of schools in the United States, asserted that the work accomplished by the boys of this club was superior to anything that he had seen in his travels through the United States. The fact that the same method—simplicity—has been used in applying the course of study in this department has made it an attractive work and one of the most delightful sides of the club life to the boys is this development of their handicraft instincts.

The athletic work of the club is very well known. The boys of this organization acquitted themselves with credit and honor for a great many years in all phases of athletics, whether they represent the club or the school where they are studying. Outdoor athletics are allied with the strongest factor for their success—the gymnasium. It has been part of the duty of every club member to consider the development of his body as one of the urgent necessities of his membership, and most of the older boys who have grown up in this club have a sturdy basis for physical health, which will be a great factor throughout their entire manhood.

The stage work that seems to fascinate the large audiences before which the boys have performed, is the result of the most simple forms of expressions. For seven years, in the afternoons and evenings, before the boys have left for their homes, impromptu plays have been arranged in the little club theater, and after the plot has been discussed the boys enter into the movement of the play and supply the lines upon the stage as the play develops. The result of this training has been a race of boys who are fearless in the face of an audience and who talk intelligently upon any stage. They are mimics and understudies of the clever older members of the club. I consider that this has been one of the greatest factors in making the Columbia Park Boys' Club a successful boys' work.

All of this has been made more attractive because of our vacation outings. Every boy living in the city of San Francisco should have at least a month each year of outdoor life. The benefits have been so evident in the growth of the city boy, during such a short period of time, that we have come to

look upon this as the important point of all other influences of the club. A year's work at the club and a month's work in the summer time means a growth of from four to five inches a year in the height and breadth of body, and the mind keeps pace.

Most of these boys have wandered on foot up and down the California coast and some of them were the fortunate members of the greatest boy's trip ever undertaken—the recent journey of Columbia Park boys to Australia. It was the remarkable versatility of talent possessed by these boys that made the Australian people love and welcome them so heartily and send them through the great commonwealth with success. These boys had the honor of being reviewed by every Crown governor of the Australian states, of being addressed by the Premier of every state and of meeting the mayors of sixty-one cities and towns in New Zealand and Australia.

They played a new Australian football game, they played baseball, basketball, and cricket; went in for swimming tournaments and shot rifle matches against crack cadet teams. They gave evening performances everywhere they visited, evenings sports now and then and attended innumerable receptions and banquets. Besides all this, they found time to visit all the historical monuments, museums and manufacturing plants in every part of Australia. So they are all full of a wonderful tale of nine months' travel in foreign lands.

This year's vacation tour is a trip to Seattle this summer, a jolly journey taken under the auspices of SUNSET MAGAZINE. The boys will have the fun of giving their theatrical shows to new friends and of joining in athletic contests with local champions. They hope to see every industry in the cities and towns they visit and to interest the citizens in the boys of their own communities by the force of the example of the Columbia Park boys.

There are some mightily interesting youngsters in the party that will take this trip. Not long ago I had the pleasure of organizing and carrying out the first week ever devoted entirely to boys in San Francisco. The success of the venture was complete. The unique feature of the week was the election of a boy mayor, to whom Mayor McCarthy turned over the keys of the city. The boy chosen was selected first by a committee of three men who were



Three particular stars on the Boys' Club tour. From left to right: Sheridan Williams, baritone; George Wihr, solo cornet; Edward Nelson, comedian. These boys made a hit in Australia

working with boys, who chose six boys from the thirty picked schoolboys under thirteen years of age, and sent them to a final test before a committee of business men, who eventually chose Benjamin Katz, a member of Columbia Park Boys' Club, to be the distinguished head of the city government. Ben Katz has been a member of the club for five years and is a musician and all-round member of this party. Sheridan Williams is another prominent member of the party. His rich baritone voice has been heard in all the Australian cities and universally praised. Edward Nelson is another bright and interesting character whose whimsical coon songs and dances are quite original and quaint. Another much admired small boy is Emil Hastings, spoken of universally as a natural comedian and wit. As a dancer, Montague Barton delights those who see him by his graceful work. The four boys who do the cornet quartet, George Wihr, Henry Behre, Claude Meinert and Harris Fraser, are another group of fine musicians who are

athletes as well. Edward Burke, whose charming harmonica solos have brought plaudits from thousands of people, is a rare boy character, who expresses well the Columbia Park training. He sings now, and in years gone by as a boy, beautifully; he is a leader in all athletics and a band musician. So is his act mate Jack Lavell, on whose shoulders will rest the main responsibility of pitching for the baseball team.

So one might go on down a list of which the club is honestly proud, a little company of all-round boys that will make new friends for the club and more believers in this good work. The boys enjoy these vacation outings immensely, none the less for the good, hard work they mean for all the party; and back of that is their larger significance, which makes them of importance to me and to my supporters and collaborators in this endeavor for good citizenship: we are showing, in these little journeys in the world, something of what we are doing with the eager and intelligent boy of this generation.

