

"GUNK"

By STRICKLAND GILLILAN

THAT'S a funny sort of noise, "Gunk." Sounds as if one had been hit suddenly in the pit of the alimentary canal.

But in Toledo, Ohio, it is a noise to conjure with. Get into trouble in the street or lose your pocket-book, and say "Gunk!" to a newsboy, and you'll have the finest detective force in the world working for you for no pay inside of a minute.

The noise is an abbreviation—a loving one, too—of the name of that patron saint of newsboys, John E. Gunkel of Toledo, rapidly becoming Gunkel of the United States. Nay, he has already become so. And it is only because he is so loaded with work among boys who are personally so close to his big, warm heart that he doesn't spend his entire time—three hundred and sixty-five days of each year, and three hundred and sixty-six in leap years—going about organizing homes for newsboys, or rather going about readjusting the moral tone among little boys everywhere of the newsboy age.

There is nothing marvelous about any of it, either, when you watch Gunk do it. It is the most natural thing in the world. If there is anything wonderful, it is that it can remain natural with him so long. But it does. I was in his office the other day while he took in as full members of the Newsboys' Association Nos. 7,031, 7,032, 7,033, and 7,034. These numbers are actual numerals, representing the nineteen years' membership in Toledo and suburbs. Of course, many of that 7,034 (goodness knows how big the number is by this time) are now grown up men. But they are far better grown up men than they would have been if "Gunk" hadn't got hold of them in boyhood.

You see, without organization and selected leadership, the moral tendency of boys is downward. Gravitation's law is a busy little thing among the boys, when they are undirected, and even then if they are not wisely directed. "Gunk" takes the moral current of the boys, twists it, and, behold! it is flowing to the right instead of to the left. And it flows just as rapidly in the right direction as in the wrong. For boys are volatile, active, busy organisms. They can't stand still. They will advance, in whatever direction they are headed.

"Gunk" asks them pointblank what are their bad habits, and they tell him. Then, in the most matter of fact way, without any slush of sanctimoniousness or soft soldier or piffle or "a word of prayer," he shows them he regards that as poor policy, and that they don't belong in his bunch of live ones unless they get rid of profanity, lying, fighting, sauciness to their parents, smoking cigarettes, etc. He doesn't tell them why. They knew it before he told them; so no argument is necessary. They never think of disputing him on those points. If they wanted to argue it, or thought it arguable, they wouldn't have come to "Gunk."

When I sat in his office he held court as usual. Jeff, a little Syrian cherub, sat on the leaf of the desk at Gunk's right hand, and thought he was helping. He couldn't bother "Gunk"; no boy could. Jeff had been rescued by "Gunk" from a saloon, where they were hiring him, at a nickel a swear, to roll out broken Assyrian-American oaths. "Gunk" got him away; also his little brother Tony. They are good boys now, and their parents are proud of them instead of in despair. The mother, who is the same size any way you measure her, except in circumference, came to the Newsboys' Home one day to see "the person" who could do more with her boys than she could. When she looked at that baldheaded old skeesicks sitting there at the desk guarded by an officer of the day—eleven years old or so—she said, through her interpreter, "Humph! Nothing but a man!" and waddled off.

That's what one involuntarily feels in Gunk's presence: "Nothing but a man." In this world every male adult is either a man or less.

Here's what transpired one minute while I watched:

"Hello, Blondy! What's the matter with you? Want to be a friend of mine? Well,



John E. Gunkel.

did I ever? Do you know that if you get into this once you can never get out? You do, eh? Are you a good boy? Well, well! Now, you other boy, keep still there! This boy can do his own talking. Eh? Why, Tony here can whip the life out of you! What! Oh, you can talk, eh? You don't have to have anybody talk for you when you get in earnest about it? Now, here's your card. What do you do with this? Tell him, Tony. Yes, Sir, he takes it upstairs to Charley, and Charley keeps it. That's your house card. And this card—what do you do with this? You keep it at home. You don't carry it at all. But—listen now—if you lose this card, don't come blubberin' around about it. We don't blubber here. You come and say you've lost it, and we'll

give you another one. You'll get your badge soon. And if any boy takes this or your badge away from you, whale the life out of him. That's all. Come see me any time.

"Hello! Money, eh? Where did you find it? Right out at the corner? All right, Son. Here it goes, in this envelop. If we can't possibly find the owner of it in thirty days, it's yours. Here's your honor badge."

In pigeonholes in "Gunk's" desk are all sorts of valuables, cash, diamond rings, watches, everything. The eyes of the newsboys are like a fine-tooth comb. Badges of honor are given for finding and returning property. And when anybody in Toledo loses anything, "Gunk's" is the first ear to hear of it. And he returns more lost stuff than anybody else in town.

Gymnasium, theater, playground, reading room, swimming pool—all the luxuries of the wealthy are at the command of these little men of "Gunk's" when they get leisure, which is rarely enough to make the recreations and luxuries appreciated. Older boys are in charge. He is making men of boys who would, in large numbers, grow into toughs and menaces to society. And the boys don't feel foolish about it, either. They are proud of it and of themselves and, most of all, of "Gunk."

A LESSON IN COLD STORAGE

APROPOS of the success achieved by the Department of Agriculture in greatly widening the market for fresh fruits through improved methods of picking, handling, packing, and shipping, it may be interesting to note that this was a direct outgrowth of the experience of the American commissioners at the Paris Exposition in trying to maintain there throughout the season an exhibit of fresh American fruit.

Never before had a similar attempt been made when the source of supply was across an ocean; so when the commissioners announced their intention they received little serious consideration. They succeeded, however, to such a degree that the number of awards for fruit displays given to American exhibitors was greater than that given to any other country except France. The fruit came from all parts of the United States. For instance, the apples were from the crop of the preceding year in seventeen States. When harvested, the fruit intended for exhibition was placed in cold storage. It was assembled in New York in the March following, and transported in refrigerator compartments to Havre, where a special fruit depot was constructed in a meat storage plant to receive it. The apples were sent on in lots of twenty or thirty barrels at intervals of two or three weeks to freshen the exhibits. Then, when the new crop began to come in, the summer fruits were sent on successively.

It was the variable behavior of different lots of the same variety of apples, peaches, and other fruits under the same storage conditions that impressed the Government agents, Colonel G. B. Brackett and William A. Taylor of the Department of Agriculture, with the need of more light on the principles governing the decay of fruit in storage and transportation. The public is now just beginning to experience the important benefits of the investigations that followed.

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