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CITY MOTHERS.

(By Estella M. Place.)

Mothering a big city—that is what the City Mothers are doing in Los Angeles, California.

How are they doing it, do you ask? They are doing it by charm, and tact, and understanding. They are the mother confidante for anyone in trouble who wishes to come to them for advice and counsel. While the City Fathers concern themselves with the financial needs of the city, the City Mothers try to keep the heart-fires of the city burning brightly and the home life what it should be. Wisdom is born of experience, and because of their wide experience they are able to help the less wise to solve the difficult problems of their daily lives.

Let me tell you how I discovered them. As a tourist, I was walking past the Normal Hill Centre Building, which is an adjunct to the City Hall, and I saw above an entrance door the sign, "CITY MOTHERS." Curious to know what the sign might stand for, I found my way to the reception room of the City Mothers. There I found some fifteen or twenty persons waiting their turn to go into the inner office. I seated myself and began to study the people who were waiting.

They were all well dressed, and looked to be considerably above the average in intelligence. The first inkling I had as to what the work might be was when a dear, sweet-faced little woman entered the room and took a chair next to mine. In a few minutes the woman

on the other side of her leaned over and whispered to her, "Are your children giving you trouble too?"

"My children? No, indeed," she answered in surprise. "I have raised five, and they have never given me any trouble. But I have a friend that is having a lot of trouble, and I am here to talk things over for her."

I turned to a sad-faced little woman on the other side of me, and asked, "What is the work of the City Mothers?"

"The City Mothers are splendid women who are here to help any one in trouble in any way that they can. Mrs Aletha Gilbert is the head mother, and she is a fine woman. Mrs Harris is her assistant, and she is fine too. Mother Gilbert helped me out of trouble when I was a girl, and I am here to get her advice in regard to my daughter. My daughter is just thirteen, and she is getting to be unmanageable. I am a divorced woman, and her father is responsible for the way she does. He wants to make all the trouble he can for me. I want Mrs Gilbert to talk to my daughter, for she will listen to her where she won't to me. She has such a way with girls, for she understands them," she added.

I waited a couple of hours before it was my turn to enter the office. As it was late, I asked Mother Gilbert to tell me briefly something of her work. I told her that first I would like to know her relation to the city.

"We are a part of the Police Department of the city, but few people know that fact. We have police power, but we rarely use it. We do not want our

work to suggest police authority," she answered.

"I think you have succeeded admirably. I have watched the faces of the different persons as their turn came to see you, and there was always a look of pleasurable anticipation. If you are willing to tell me something of a few of the cases that have come to you, it will probably give me a better idea of your work than anything else could. There was a young man waiting this afternoon that interested me very much. He had an unusually intelligent face, and such a straightforward countenance. He wore a light grey suit, and was very tall," I said.

A smile played over the face of Mother Gilbert as she answered: "He is one of our boys. Jim belongs to one of the best families in the city. Several years ago he got in with a band of boy burglars. He was not a bad boy. It appealed to him as an adventure. He was in it for the game—not the gain. When we found out about Jim we took him in hand and kept him out of the police court. We separated him from his companions and just mothered him. He is now a fine man. He has been in Texas for over two years and he has made over a million dollars in oil in a perfectly legitimate way. He comes to see us every time he comes home. We are very fond of Jim," and there was a near tear in her eye.

"I understand now the pleased look on his face when his turn came to see you. One would have thought he was going to meet his sweetheart," I replied.