

# The Heartbreaking and Inspiring Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Orphans He Saved



## Orphan Trains: The Story of Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved and Failed by Stephen O'Connor

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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In the squalid slums of mid-19th century New York City, thousands of orphans roamed the streets, begging for food and shelter. They were the forgotten children of society, victims of poverty, neglect, and abandonment.

But one man was determined to save these children. His name was Charles Loring Brace, a young minister from Connecticut. Brace believed that every child deserved a chance at a better life, no matter their circumstances.

In 1853, Brace founded the Children's Aid Society, an organization dedicated to helping the street children of New York City. The society's

mission was to provide food, shelter, and education to these children, and to find them permanent homes in the Midwest.

Brace's work was revolutionary at the time. He was one of the first people to advocate for the rights of children, and he believed that they should be treated with dignity and respect.

Over the next 50 years, Brace's Children's Aid Society rescued over 100,000 children from the slums of New York City. He sent them to families in the Midwest, where they had a chance to start new lives.

Brace's work was not without controversy. Some critics argued that he was forcibly separating children from their families. Others said that he was placing children in homes where they were exploited as cheap labor.

Despite the controversy, Brace's legacy is undeniable. He was a pioneer in the field of child welfare, and he helped to save the lives of thousands of children.

The story of Charles Loring Brace is a complex and multifaceted one. He was a visionary who saved countless lives, but he also made some mistakes. His legacy is a reminder that even the best intentions can have unintended consequences.

## **The Early Life of Charles Loring Brace**

Charles Loring Brace was born in Litchfield, Connecticut, on June 19, 1826. He was the son of a wealthy merchant and shipbuilder. Brace graduated from Yale College in 1846 and then studied theology at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

After graduating from seminary, Brace served as a pastor at a church in Newington, Connecticut. But he soon became disillusioned with the church's focus on wealthy прихожане.

In 1850, Brace moved to New York City, where he became involved in the city's growing social welfare movement. He was particularly concerned about the plight of the city's street children.

### **The Founding of the Children's Aid Society**

In 1853, Brace founded the Children's Aid Society. The society's mission was to provide food, shelter, and education to the street children of New York City, and to find them permanent homes in the Midwest.

Brace's work was based on the belief that every child deserves a chance at a better life, no matter their circumstances. He was convinced that the street children of New York City could be saved, and he dedicated his life to helping them.

### **The Orphan Trains**

One of the most famous aspects of Brace's work was his use of orphan trains to transport children from New York City to the Midwest. Between 1854 and 1929, the Children's Aid Society sent over 100,000 children to families in the Midwest.

The orphan trains were a controversial program. Some critics argued that Brace was forcibly separating children from their families. Others said that he was placing children in homes where they were exploited as cheap labor.

However, many of the children who were sent on the orphan trains found loving homes and went on to lead happy and successful lives. The orphan trains played a major role in the settlement of the Midwest, and they helped to shape the American character.

## **The Legacy of Charles Loring Brace**

Charles Loring Brace died in 1890 at the age of 64. He left behind a legacy of service and compassion. He was a true champion of the poor and the oppressed, and he dedicated his life to helping others.

Brace's work continues to inspire people today. The Children's Aid Society is still in operation, and it continues to provide services to children in need.

The story of Charles Loring Brace is a reminder that even one person can make a difference in the world. Brace was a visionary who saved countless lives, and his legacy will continue to inspire people for generations to come.

## **Further Reading**

- The Children's Aid Society
- Charles Loring Brace: The Children He Saved and Failed by Peter Dobkin Hall
- The Orphan Trains: Charles Loring Brace and the Children He Saved by Mental Floss

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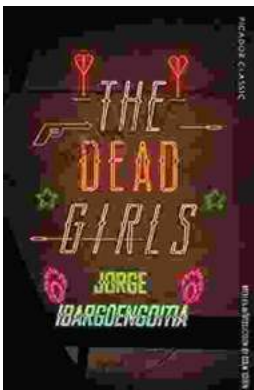
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