

## "FIRST AID TO THE IMMIGRANT"

Martha Reizenstein

Much has been said and written regarding the welfare of the newly arrived alien. He has every reason to be satisfied with his reception to these shores, and they vary but little at each port of entry. As soon as he passes the primary inspection, he is greeted by one of his own people, and things necessary to his comfort are arranged for him. If for certain reasons he is detained or excluded, every effort is made to gain his admission. It is not unusual to have cases reopened even after the excluding decision has been authorized by the Bureau if there is the remotest evidence that might have a bearing in his favor. After-care, the keynote in all personal service, is exercised to meet the requirements of the individual, with special reference to his personality in relation to employment and other matters necessary to his welfare. The settlements, no less interested than the immigration worker, offer to the newly arrived what is most essential in the line of social and educational activities, thus reducing to its lowest terms the possibility of undesirable companionship and questionable diversions. So on the whole, the immigrant has no cause to complain of his reception when he enters the Land of Promise. That he is not always happy at first by reason of his new environment is easily conceded, for it is not unusual to find young men who have had the advantages of a *gymnasium* education in Russia working here in a clothing or cigar factory for \$3 or \$4 a week.

Many unnecessary complications, however, manifest themselves after the immigrant's arrival in America that can be directly traced to the "first aid" given him before embarkation. One of the most flagrant errors that bring in sequence hardship and misery is the discrepancy in the ages of children. Spurious ticket agents in Europe, in order to promote the sale of tickets, advise the purchaser having children, who are really 15 or 16 years old, to give the age of 12 years, in order to save the expense of buying a whole ticket. Satisfied with this knowledge, the child is manifested as 12. Shortly after arrival the boy or girl (usually the latter) wants to go to

work. Not knowing the requirements of the law, she is told of the necessity of obtaining a work permit. When asked her age, she answers 16 years. A verification of landing is necessary, as the child appears small for her age, and the Bureau of Statistics is guided by this official record; in consequence of the record thus obtained the permit is refused. A number of cases of this kind are known to immigration workers, and it is not infrequent that the applicant writes to her home town in Russia for a birth certificate, and as a Bureau of Vital Statistics is an unknown quantity, a paper is forwarded (for which the sender has paid three roubles) signed by a number of citizens, which is absolutely worthless. Thus the girl, instead of contributing to the family's support, is obliged by reason of the advice given on the other side, to be a dependent on the limited resources of her relatives or friends.

This unwarranted procedure is not restricted to individuals, but standard organizations are known to have given advice that might result in deportation to those about to sail for America.

A few weeks ago a young man with frail physique came to the port of Baltimore and showed the inspector the name of a "cousin" to whom he was manifested. He passed the medical and primary inspection, and was given in charge of one of the Jewish representatives to be taken to the given address. The worker recognized at once the name as that of a dependent on one of the local charities. When questioned, the boy admitted that he did not know the man, and stated that the address had been given him by a foreign society. As a matter of fact, the society had chanced to have this name and address upon its records as a member of this man's family is being treated for trachoma.

Ninety-nine per cent of all trachoma and favus cases have their origin on the other side, and many a hardship could be avoided if organizations and individuals would advise the persons afflicted not to embark under any consideration until a permanent cure has been effected.

The unnecessary trials of the alien could

be obviated by common-sense judgment on the part of those interested at the ports of departure. Thus the ethical "first aid" by

adhering scrupulously to the truth would prove a helpful factor in making him a desirable asset in our national life.

## THE NEW MIRACLE

Alexander H. Geismar

The seventeenth chapter of the first book of Kings tells how the Prophet Elijah was sent on a divine mission to a little village where there was extreme poverty. The Prophet himself had no means. As he reached the village gates a poor widow met him. He told her to bring him some bread. She answered that she had nothing more than a little meal and a little oil, and she was gathering two sticks to build a fire on which to roast a cake which she was going to divide between herself and son. Then both were going to lie down and die. Then the Prophet wrought a miracle. He told the widow that the jar of meal and the cruse of oil might be used daily, but would be never exhausted, and so it happened. Each day the widow baked a cake and each day the meal and the oil were miraculously and promptly renewed.

If now the Prophet had been in Brooklyn he would have treated this problem of poverty with quite a different miracle. He would have looked up the proper number in the telephone book, viz.: Williamsburgh 5063, and promptly gotten in touch with the superintendent of the United Jewish Aid Societies affiliated with the Brooklyn Federation of Jewish Charities. Within two hours a trained investigator would have made a complete report, upon which prompt aid for the emergency in the shape of necessary food would have been given to the Prophet Elijah and also to the widow and her son. If the widow were ill, a bed would have been provided for her in the Brooklyn Jewish Hospital. If her orphan boy required it, he would promptly have been placed in the Brooklyn Hebrew Orphan Asylum. If the widow were suffering from the infirmities of old age, room might have been made for her in the Brooklyn Home for Jewish Aged and Infirm. If the boy were old enough to become self-supporting, a job might have been found for him through several different

employment agencies maintained in connection with various institutions supported by our Brooklyn Federation. If the cause of the distress were tuberculosis, or some form of incurable disease, the widow or her son might have been sent to the Denver Hospital for Consumptives, or to the Montefiore Home for Chronic Invalids, to both of which the Brooklyn Federation is a heavy contributor. Finally, if the boy were a delinquent, he might have been at once committed after proper hearing to the Hawthorne School for Jewish Juveniles.

This is the modern miracle of charity which is performed every day in Brooklyn through the splendid organization of the Brooklyn Federation of Jewish Charities. For this purpose there was collected last year \$162,000. All of which, with the exception of but \$10,000 for administrative purposes, was disbursed for purely eleemosynary purposes.

Nevertheless, our situation in Brooklyn is exceptional. Our problem of charity is almost as great as that of Manhattan Borough, while our contributors are but one-tenth in number and resources. Many of our worthy poor have come to us within the last year directly from Manhattan Borough. We of Brooklyn therefore believe we have the right to ask that neither the East River nor any borough lines be regarded as a boundary. We feel that we have the right to appeal to our brethren in all the different boroughs for help. Our collections this year have fallen off at a rate at which if they should continue to fall off during the next six months our charitable institutions would be tremendously hampered in their work. We make this appeal to our richer brethren, and ask for your assistance in substantial form. This is the opening gun in our campaign of appeal to our sister Borough of Queens, and we hope that you will respond when our canvassers approach you in person.