

## BIG BROTHER WORK

Walter N. Rothschild

Brooklyn

The history of this work has been a varied one. In June, 1914, through an agreement with the Jewish Big Brother Association of New York, whereby \$500 was subscribed by the Heinsheimer trustees if \$1000 was gained from Jewish Federation, this Big Brother work had its inception in Brooklyn.

An officer was maintained through this agreement in the Brooklyn courts. Because of the distance from the office where the work was directed to Brooklyn, where it was carried into effect, this arrangement proved itself rather difficult, both for the New York Society to gain new material in Brooklyn and the Brooklyn workers to gain the fullest co-operation of New York. These difficulties were those of locality entirely and not in any way differences between the New York office and Brooklyn, between whom the friendliest feelings have always existed.

In June, 1915, this contract expired. Provision could not be made for its renewal under the old plan, as both the Heinsheimer trustees and the Brooklyn Federation were loth to continue their subscriptions. The Auxiliary, however, provided from its own treasury for three additional payments of \$83 per month, which made the work possible under the same management to September 15th. At that time the present highly satisfactory agreement with the Brooklyn Juvenile Probation Society was made. The Auxiliary has been kindly proffered the offices of the Juvenile Probation Society free of charge and its only expense at the present time is the maintenance of the visiting officer at court. We trust sincerely that this current and eminently successful agreement may be continued in the future with the same cordial relationship.

Figures alone mean very little, but figures as indicators of the accomplishments of the last year are able to show a great deal. Between May, 1914, and December, 1914, 443 Jewish boys were brought up before the courts. Of this number 87 were placed on probation. Between March, 1915, and January, 1916—a period longer by ninety days—299 cases of Jewish boys were brought

before the court, of whom 181 were placed on probation. This shows a diminution in a greater period of time of 144 cases and an increased capacity in their allotment, as in the first period only 19 per cent. of the cases were able to be placed on probation, whereas in the latter period 60 per cent. of them were able to be placed. Taking the last three months as a criterion, we find that in October, 1915, 47 cases of Jewish boys were brought before the court, in November of the same year 27 cases and in December 18. This is enough to illustrate the effect that Big Brother work is having not only to prevent recurrence of old cases but also to show that the presence of the visiting officer in the Children's Court is effective enough to cause a marked lessening in the number of the new cases that are brought up before the judges.

Now for a few figures on the subjective portion of the work. In May, 1915, there were 47 active Big Brothers; April of the same year showed 51. Both these figures were during the time of our affiliation with the New York Society. In December, 1915, there were 78 active Big Brothers and on January 16th our roster showed 92 men taking active part in this work. This is indeed an inspiring increase; but do not let us think for one moment that we even have approached the ideal condition of affairs in this work. We must have more Big Brothers, as a perfect arrangement is only reached in which a surplus of Big Brothers await the placing in their care of the little boys who will be committed to them by the courts.

As regards our general plan of procedure in the past, we have held meetings on the first Thursday of each month. We have had one very successful smoker, and intend to continue these enjoyable events, as they tend to bring a closer affiliation of Big Brothers and enable us to listen to men who have had vastly more experience in this direction. A number of plans are now under consideration for augmenting the number of Big Brothers in Brooklyn. These will probably be put on a working basis before spring.

At the present time we have a representative on the General Committee of Big Brother work, the purpose of which is to standardize records and methods of dealing with the problem. This Committee was originally started in the new Children's Court at 137 East Twenty-second Street, New York city.

Besides our continual need of new timber for Big Brothers, there is a continually growing problem in the overcrowded condition of the Hawthorne School. The Brooklyn Cottage is full to overflowing and at the present time the courts in Brooklyn have been forced to make commitments to

the House of Refuge at Randall's Island, a condition of affairs that, to say the least, is deplorable. Likewise, a need has arisen for a Bureau of Advice and Information, through which many of the differences which now needlessly are brought to court could be settled before this condition is reached.

There is also a need for a Bureau for Mental Defectives, as it has been shown by students of criminology that this state is accountable for many of the crimes which come on the calendars of the court. Cases of this description naturally are hardly proper ones for Big Brothers.

## RATSHESKY CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

Harris L. Selig

Boston

The Ratskesky Charitable Foundation is the first of its kind in the history of New England Jewry. The primary purpose of this Foundation is to be the promotion of Jewish philanthropy in Boston and it is to be managed perpetually by a Board of Trustees, in whose care the funds are to be placed.

At a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Federated Jewish Charities on Wednesday, February 16, 1916, the following trustees who are to manage the Foundation were named by Mr. Ratskesky: Joseph M. Herman, vice-president of the Federation; Ferdinand Strauss, president of the Baron de Hirsch Committee of Boston; I. A. Ratskesky, treasurer of the United States Trust Company; Jacob R. Morse, president of Temple Israel; Adolph Ehrlich; Miss Isabelle Hyams, of the Louise M. Alcott Club, and Mrs. Daniel Frank, president of the Sisterhood of Temple Israel.

On Thursday, February 17th, the first meeting of the trustees took place at the office of the United States Trust Company and the following officers were elected: Joseph M. Herman, president; Ferdinand Strauss, treasurer, and Adolph Ehrlich, secretary. The details of the plan and the outlining of the first activities are now being arranged and will be completed and the Foundation in operation in the very near future.

The Foundation was started by Mr. A. C. Ratskesky, with a gift of \$100,000 as first

contribution, in commemoration of his fiftieth birthday.

The announcement was made in a letter addressed to Mr. Joseph M. Herman, vice-president of the Federated Jewish Charities, as follows:

"MY DEAR MR. HERMAN:

"You will remember that at the birthday luncheon given me at Young's Hotel a year ago I told my friends there assembled that I intended to do something before the year was out to commemorate my fiftieth birthday, and I am now prepared to explain the thought which was in my mind at that time and which prompted me to make that statement.

"To emphasize my gratitude for all the blessings that God has bestowed upon me during these fifty years, I propose to establish a foundation, the purpose of which primarily shall be the promotion of Jewish philanthropy in Boston.

"It is my fervent desire to have this project successfully established during my lifetime, with its aims so defined and its work so planned for the future that, as time rolls on, and I am no longer with you, it may, through ever-increasing efficiency, broader scope and vaster resources, develop into an institution far-reaching in its possibilities for the alleviation of need and suffering among our poor and unfortunate co-religionists.

"This foundation is to be managed perpetually by a board of trustees, in whose