

BROTHER AND SISTER

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The Big Brother and Big Sister movement in general is in one aspect an extension of the system of probation or of the conditional sentence. The Continental idea is best expressed in the conditional sentence, whereas the American development has been in line of suspension of sentence, with probation, or probation in lieu of any other sentence. According to this American idea, the defendant is allowed his freedom with the sole condition that he is to be in charge and under the direction of a probation officer of the court to whom he is to report at stated intervals, and who is to have general supervision over him.

It having been discovered that the system of probation had its limitations, the next logical step was unquestionably to be found in an endeavor to select a guardian or friend for especially the juvenile delinquent, who, not being a paid probation officer, and in no respect associated with the court, might give to the relationship between the guardian and the ward in this case the closeness and confidence of the status existing between real brothers. It was deemed, and probably rightly so, that the sympathetic nature of such a relationship would accomplish far more than the merely formal and somewhat cold relationship existing between the court officer and his probationer. Thus arose the Big Brother and Big Sister movement, which sought to enlist all sympathetic persons of sufficiently mature age and proper training, as personal helpers in the redemption of delinquents by means of undertaking and sustaining toward such delinquents the relationship of Big Brother and Big Sister.

A natural extension furthermore occurred almost immediately upon the inception of this movement. This lay in extending the idea of appointing Big Brothers and Big Sisters, not only for children who have already been brought into court, and as such had been adjudged to be juvenile delinquents, in need of the care and guardianship of the state, but also in getting hold of these youngsters before they had gone to the extent of committing some act which made them subject to arrest. The Big

Brother and Big Sister movement in Brooklyn and New York includes all these phases. Not all the different societies undertaking this work have seen their way clear as yet toward uniting, but the community interest is so strongly established that there is the utmost co-operation between them. For a long time the field in Brooklyn was covered by a non-sectarian association denominated the Brooklyn Juvenile Probation Association, which was formed under the leadership of Judge Robert Wilkin of the Children's Court, and in which both Big Brother and Big Sister work was done, care also being taken to see to it that the little brother or sister was assigned to a guardian of the same religious persuasion. With the development, however, of the work of the Jewish Protectors and Aid Society, which maintains a cottage colony for delinquent Jewish boys at Hawthorne, New York, the need for a specific and Jewish Big Brother Association, particularly to take charge of the paroled graduates of the cottage colony, became most insistent. In response to this vital demand, the officers of the Jewish Protectors and Aid Society of Manhattan, sponsored the formation of the Jewish Big Brother Association of New York City. This association is officered and maintained by the young Jewish men of New York City and by the Brooklyn Federation of Jewish Charities, which annually contributes \$1500 for its maintenance. It supports two trained parole officers, who act also as investigators, and are in constant attendance at the two chief children's courts of New York City, namely, the one situated in the Borough of Manhattan, and the other situated in the Borough of Brooklyn. It is the business of each one of these officers to be in immediate attendance upon the case of any Jewish lad that may be brought to any one of these courts, and in each proper case to see to it that the executive secretary of the Big Brothers Association is at once authorized to assign a Big Brother to take charge of the boy. The Big Brothers are recruited from the young Jewish men of New York City and

are submitted to a rigorous examination by the executive authorities of the Association before being permitted to undertake a case. All discharges of boys from the Hawthorne Protectors of the Jewish Juvenile Protectors and Aid Society, under which the graduates are returned to New York City, are sent at once to the office of the Jewish Big Brothers Association in Manhattan Borough, where immediate effort is made to assign some Big Brother to take charge of the young graduate, as parole officer. The Society also maintains a Bureau for Prevention and Settlement of Family Difficulties, established with reference to troublesome or unruly children. The particular purpose of this bureau is to get hold of boys who may be proving troublesome to their families, before the boys have gone so far in evil ways as to be brought to the court. In each such proper case, also, an assignment of a Big Brother is made.

The instruction of Big Brothers in their duties is accomplished by means of periodic and frequent conferences. A syllabus of these duties has been published in the shape of a leaflet by the Association, and monthly experience and rally meetings are held for instruction and exchange of experiences.

In general, this writer is of the opinion that this comparatively new movement of prevention has already borne such excellent fruit as to fully justify itself as a worthy instrument of preventive charity as well as being a logical extension of the probation system as championed by our later scientific criminology. At the monthly rallies reports have been made of the success of particular cases that are astoundingly gratifying; as a matter of course, there are also failures, but there are more numerous failures of Big Brothers than of Little Brothers. The leaders of the movement are more than ever convinced that Big Brothers must be chosen with exceedingly great care, and that mere willingness to serve shall not be accepted as a substitute for or in place of other needful substantial qualities.

Correction

"Girls in Camp" article appearing in October was written by Mrs. Ray Van Baalen, and not Mrs. Sarah Van Baalen.

EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

Conducted by Bertram Benedict

On October 25th a national mass meeting was called by the American Jewish Committee to lay down methods of alleviating the distress among the Jews in Europe and Palestine. The Committee would be the last to claim that it can meet the situation at all adequately. Indeed, it was estimated that \$10,000,000 would be needed to relieve merely present conditions. But since all the relief contributed can accordingly be but partial relief, it is vital that none of it be wasted by inefficient methods either of collecting or of administering. He gives twice who gives to the Committee.

Delegates from more than forty national organizations were present at the meeting. After much discussion, it was decided to adopt a democratic plan for organizing the central national relief committee. Many, of course, preferred more autocratic and more easily managed plans than the plan finally adopted; but those who believe that efficiency is a matter of method as well as of result finally won out.

The successful plan is as follows: Every Jewish organization of national scope will be invited to send a delegate toward a general committee. From this helter-skelter body will be selected an executive committee to attend to the collecting of funds. It is hoped that the committee will have both tongues of angels and Jesse James monkey-wrenches; for both these mutually antagonistic elements are necessary to separate men from their money in these parlous times.

Meantime, a committee (how frequent the word becomes whenever anything is to be done!) is in temporary charge. It is composed of Oscar Straus, Louis Brandeis, Julian Mack, Harry Fischel and Meyer London.

An interesting by-product of the discussion came from Dr. J. L. Magnes. Rabbi Magnes wondered if from this movement might not be finally conceived a national body to represent all classes and all shades of thought in American Jewry. Optimism never fails, and once in a while wins out.