

SOME STRAIGHT TALK

From the Address of Mr. Nathan S. Jonas, Honorary Secretary of the Brooklyn Federation of Jewish Charities, at a Meeting of the Membership Committee

"Practically nothing is being done by the various directors to secure new members or to increase subscriptions. General apathy and unconcern seem to prevail. Jewish humanitarianism is not sufficiently awakened or alive today in Brooklyn. Selfishness and niggardliness are more prevalent than generous, free-hearted, voluntary, open-handed giving.

"It is more blessed to give than to receive,' and it is in that spirit that I wish to speak and appeal to you. It is a privilege to help others, but, unfortunately, often people need to be educated to that fact.

"The Socialists claim that giving charity is wrong in principle and they demand justice or a reasonable existence for all. They say that 'equity is half religion.' I caution you that continued insensibility and indifference on the part of many of the rich may justify these contentions, or at least add strength to a growing movement partially created by sympathy for the afflicted, the unfortunate and the suffering.

LACK OF AGGRESSIVE LEADERSHIP

"I have only recently been referred to as a 'nut' on charity—why? Because I am earnest and solicitous, serious and hard-working for those who cannot help themselves; my persistency is criticised and to my regret is proving, to a great extent, abortive and non-productive. Even the letter containing the call for this meeting has met with harsh criticism as being too strong—it was made strong purposely to endeavor to persuade people to do their duty. I hope you will all become angry and red-hot to the fighting point. I shall retire this year from working leadership in our charities, in which work my efforts have brought me peace of mind and satisfaction; the responsibilities have grown too heavy for me, but although I shall step aside as a guide, I shall try to be a loyal assistant and aid to the new leaders who may now be developing, perhaps in this very meeting. What we lack is real aggressive leadership from the men of means in our community; other men govern themselves by what rich

men do. A man worth \$1,000,000 should pay at least \$5000 a year to our Federation and more or less in proportion. Thus, the man worth \$500,000 would pay \$2500 a year; a man worth \$100,000 would pay \$500 a year, and the man worth \$50,000 \$250 a year.

"In my opinion, there are at least 1000 Jews in Brooklyn worth \$50,000 or more and it is to them I am referring as the rich Jews, and not to a dozen men only of real large means. The latter, however, should be the leaders and set the example.

"This is no one man's work and the trumpet call of duty and of love for your unfortunate fellow men and women and children is summoning you and your children to awaken from your artificial life of luxury and ease, extravagance and self-consciousness, from your feeling of safety-first and smugness, to a realization of your opportunities and of the need for individual service; instead of forced giving, of the need for sacrifices on your part. Do not govern yourselves by what others give, but obey your own heart promptings. I do not care how you criticise me; my conscience is abuse-proof, so that if I can but arouse you from your apathy and listlessness, you may use me for a target and welcome. Some of my friends are calling me 'Rabbi'—I feel like a rabbi should feel, but have not the power of expression or oratory that the title calls for. Still I plead with you, out of regard for our poor people, for the honor and good name of the Jews of Brooklyn, for our own self-respect and out of the pride we should take in brightening and sweetening our own family and home life, to be serious and not frivolous; for your reverence of the name of the Almighty above, who knows all and before whom all material wealth will be vain and useless, I make this appeal to you, Brooklyn Jewish leaders, not only for increased subscriptions now, tonight, but for your constructive interest and united, persistent and untiring efforts to secure new members and increases from others.

VOLUNTARY INCREASES URGED

"Why do we need a Sacrifice Week to bring increases?—all of you spent much money at the Fair—let us make all such things, with the attending enormous amount of work and petty annoyances, unnecessary this year and in the future by placing the Federation on a really firm footing and giving freely and voluntarily without the sham and the show and the advertising.

"Do unto others as you would be done by.' You may be prosperous today and *war* may ruin you tomorrow. The science of putting aside for a rainy day, economy and thrift are all praiseworthy, but he who plays the game of safety-first too strongly and finely by selfish hoarding of money and deafness to appeals of charity here must answer in another place some day, and safety-first here may mean salvation of the soul last there.

"We Jews are proud of our belief in one ever-living and true God, to whom we owe all and to whom we must account and to whom we pray—I say if you expect mercy, you must show mercy. Our stewardship will be weighed and balanced by the good

we have done, the service rendered, the suffering relieved, the brotherly and sisterly love shown here. Do not procrastinate.

"Do not be satisfied with past performances. Give money, work harder. We ask for consideration and for justice, not for favors. Be bold. 'He that asketh faintly beggeth a denial.'

WOULD PUNISH CHARITY SHIRKERS

"If I had my way I would publish the name of and publicly pillory every man who did not do his full duty according to his means—I would have ostracized from membership in clubs, associations and society generally such unfeeling, unthinking, selfish, self-centered individuals and make them associate with money alone until they became sick and tired of it and volunteered without solicitation to bear their equal share of the burdens and misery of the world.

"Were it not for hope the heart would break.' Therefore, I plead for your generous sympathies and I ask pardon from any to whom I have given offense. Please let my concern for the future of our charities be my excuse for having spoken in this strain."

DEEDS ACCOMPLISHED

Jennie F. Purvin

Chicago

Two years ago, at the invitation of the Program Committee of the National Conference of Jewish Charities, the Chicago Woman's Aid was given an opportunity to bring an account of its civic and philanthropic activities to the attention of the Conference. What was then referred to as actual club work may, at this writing, be spoken of as deeds accomplished.

Such is the mission of the woman's club that it chooses from among the neglected needs of the society those which are most pressing and, with what strength, energy of purpose and resources it may be able to command, demonstrates to the public how these needs may be met and carries forward the demonstration to that point where official confidence and public recognition are won. At this juncture the municipality usually steps in and, through the department correlated, takes over the experiment, provides for its maintenance, gives it a permanent character and possibly enlarges upon it.

Such has been the pleasant fate of the more important enterprises with which the Chicago Woman's Aid was identified two years ago. Its most serious attention was then being given to the problem of the child leaving school at the age of fourteen, with an all too meager equipment, to seek a livelihood in the keenly competitive business world. It was financing one of the four vocational directors "loaned" to the Board of Education for the purpose of interviewing these young children and their parents, endeavoring to persuade the latter to retain the children in school until the sixteenth year; these vocational directors have also investigated conditions in factories still employing young children; they have placed such children as needed work in the most desirable situations to be found, and have attempted, by follow-up work, to hold the children in such positions in order to prevent the shifting habits soon acquired by young persons who launch into the busi-