

# GIRL PROBLEM IN LARGE CITIES

New York, Nov. 13.—Some of the closest trusts are not incorporated, and one such is the Immigration Servant Girls' Trust, with a score of immigrant societies, representing half as many nationalities, as sole directors. The missionaries of these societies, which are all endorsed by foreign governments or New York banks, have set of a right of way at the Ellis Island immigration station. Often before the newcomers have had time to embrace their friends they are tagged by the several agents and driven like herds to the different homes on old State street, on the Battery, overlooking the bay.

These homes are the only specific places the immigrants know in New York before they embark. Cards advertising them, having been sent over by relatives or by the societies, are often jealously guarded for years, and presented at last in crumpled form to a missionary at Ellis Island. The girls are housed, if need be, without money and without price, until their friends respond to the societies' notifications to call.

There is the feeling of home about the first place visited in a strange land, and these girls, therefore, ever afterward keep in touch with the societies. Battered skeptical about "doings" in America before they come, the girls accept no positions except through the befriending immigrant societies. They put their destinies into its hands.

Al over the country, however, agencies and "immigrant associations" resort to these immigrant homes as the logical clearing houses for servants—and especially so to Ellis Island.

It is enough to make husbands jealous to see the letters Commissioner of Immigration Williams gets from their wives.

Wives glare and grieve. They all think he is the head of a servant bureau. He refers the letters to the societies, which in nine cases out of ten send out a stereotyped reply, as this one:

"It will be impossible for us to furnish the help asked for in your letter. Immigrants do not care to settle in any of the Southern states. The wage rate is too low, and fear of competition with the colored element always militates against any increase of immigration to the South." "Servants' Guilds" by the dozen notify the various homes that they are ready for girls—do not send them the fact, your correspondents because of the unscrupulous treatment inflicted upon immigrant girls by promoters and stipulators, the immigrant societies positively no longer send them to distant points. One Central Kentucky immigrant and labor association just writes:

"There has grown up much excitement in this region as the subject of getting white help to take the place of the ignorant and totally depraved negro. I send herewith the skeleton of the character to be fled in a few days, which will show that the people are in dead earnest." "One thing I can assure you, the white servants to be introduced will not come in contact with the negro."

"It is our purpose to send on men speaking several languages to confer with you." Wanted paper. The immigrant girl knows that there are far fewer good bricks sold in New York than in the South and West.

But Commissioner Williams' mail is highly interesting. One woman a thousand miles away says she will accept any servant in sight. Others, many others, advise checks for fare, which the commissioner is to retain indefinitely—until he finds a servant, like a certified check accompanying a bid. The checks are often for \$25.

A month later he gets an angry letter. "You haven't been trying. Send me back the check. I can do better washing on my own part." A woman from Birmingham says she will come right down and talk it over with the commissioner. One from Richmond writes him: "I prefer white servants, they being much painstaking in their work." The commissioner has learned enough in the letters to graduate him in kindergarten science, for the women, bless them, have not the faculty of stating their troubles clearly. "The people in Fairfax (Va.) are in great need of servants, as the negroes have got too so bad that we cannot handle them at all." Often his letters contain a pathetic note: "Could you find a Leithen German girl, 14 years and up, among your immigrants, who could do

housework on a farm for two old people?" It was certainly written in a trembling, withered hand. A Green-castle, Ind., family will build a house for two servants, man and wife, if the commissioner will only send them. And in this respect a new feature of the servant problem will be revealed in a forthcoming report of the Immigrant Free Labor Bureau, which is that upward of 100 servants have been taken in service with their husbands and children since January. This did not use to be. The writers often refer to their standing in Broadway's, and one mushroom Western agency deposited \$50,000 in a bank here as evidence of good faith. Its only reward was the receipt of one of the above stereotyped letters, like unappreciative editors accuse to incipient Shakespeares. If they have no children, the writers make a display head out of the fact.

Perusing a lot of these letters I made an interesting find from one of our treasury officials. The treasury department's function, as all know, is to uphold the contract labor law. If one attracts a foreigner to America with the promise of giving him work he is liable to \$1,000 fine. In this letter our honorable ——— of Washington, D. C., whose patriotic heart has an extraordinary glow at the opening, makes arrangement for the transportation of a Hungarian family named Barkley to be employed by him as servants, in time for the smart set season next winter, he paying the transportation, etc.

The immigrant homes controlling the destinies of the girls never lose sight of them. A system of correspondence, in which all their troubles are related, is kept up with them. And a housewife who is complained of in discriminating against in the future. There is as much jealousy as charity in the solicitude for these girls, for nearly all the officials are foreigners.

The idea has lately grown up in immigrant societies to keep some oversight of immigrant servants' earnings. The servant girl's bank book has become an unsuspicious factor in the higher wages they are demanding. All the societies around the Battery are keeping servants' bank books. These goodly houses know how much the girls are earning, and their motto is: Get more. So a minimum wage of \$12 a month is fixed by nearly all. If you tell a Swedish girl in the sign language, who knows nothing American, that you will give her \$5 a month, "just to teach her," you will be promptly "set on" by the matrons—\$12 or best. Even her deposits are made for her by proxy, so she cannot get out in banking hours. At the Led Bank for German immigrants at 4 State street, for instance, Pastor Nagelsson and the sisters have 15 servants' bank books. Miss Matthews at the Protestant Home two doors up has 14, starting four weeks yesterday. A Hungarian servant has \$2,150 credited to her, all made at housework. Yet she cannot write her own name. One girl deposits her money in three different banks, so she won't lose all if one goes quiet. The other books average about \$300. "The Belgian girls are the best served," said a matron.

"It is certainly true that most of the big city churches have been built by immigrant girls. One of our girls, Anna Stronard by name, works money quarterly to her brother in Russia to educate him for the priesthood. She has already sent him through college, and is now sending him through the seminary. When the girls coin as on Sundays they generally leave at 10, but what money they want as to deposit.

Immigrant girls' wages have gone up since the homes have literally become clearing houses. Like children, the girls have a fascination of seeing amounts grow. "Low wages can't start the books," they are told. There is one immigrant house which will not allow its girls to go out for less than \$25.

This financial supervision extends even to assisting servant girls' wills. I know an immigrant matron who made money of the deceased abroad to heirs. She is now attending to the transfer of some insurance money from Russia to one of her girls who died, so the little son here may have it.

bank accounts only if urged to by employers or societies.

For the protection of the immigrant servant girl in her rights there are about a score of consulate offices massed near by, special attorneys employed by the homes, and greatest of all, the Legal Aid society. The result is, the New York servant girl is ever making into law.

Thursday is servant girls' day at the Legal Aid, being their day off. Seven out of ten are late immigrant girls. I listened to their complaints one whole morning—often of the most trivial character, as over \$1. They go there without the knowledge of their mistresses, who express the utmost surprise in subsequent letters to its head, Mrs. Low-Whitney (a young woman, by the way, who has a larger law practice than any individual in the world).

The bulk of the complaints at the Legal Aid is: The girl was discharged because she took an hour or two of in the evening without permission. Her month not being up she is refused payment for any of the time she worked. In every such case, however, the Legal Aid recovers full payment. The defendants are almost always people of their own nationality.

Though the servant recovers every time she is generally in the wrong. One girl tearfully stated the injustice that had come upon her. Her employer, however, explained in this letter: "I hired her for general housework in an apartment of six rooms, and two in my family. She refused to clean the brass knobs on the doors. She also told me that if I wanted dessert for my dinner I could make it myself. Her time to be here was 9 a. m. She would come at 9 on Monday, and any other time she pleased. She did not finish the work out, so I gave her \$2. She would not make beds, and refused to move the table in the dining room on cleaning day, saying it was good enough for me if I swept around it. At 11:30 she would go in a room not her own and take a nap." The employer never failed to send a check for the amount, adding that while they are certain they could win in a suit, it would involve time, trouble, and even scandal. (It is just the food a sensational press is after.)

In another case "Dora was offered a present of one month's wages, \$12, if she remained through the fall and winter. She left long before, but is suing for her present just the same. Over one-half the cases are ludicrous, ignorant and unjust. One girl wanted to sue because she was paid by a clerk, she had never seen a check before.

But the other side of the story is even more grievous. A poor Southern girl, writing on the letter head of a religious society that had befriended her, makes a terrible accusation against New York employment bureaus which, she alleges, are in the habit of sending for country girls and then robbing them of trunk, clothes, and money, and finally putting them in houses of ill repute. The case of real injustice runs often from boarding houses, and the tear of them is:

"I had to peel potatoes and cook for 15 boarders. She carried the meat, her daughters made the rooms. I had to do all the clothes alone and wash and cook and scrub the big kitchen—15 years old. She never pays a woman in full. She gets whiskey and beer and wine by the gallon, which at least she pays for."

Then trouble is caused by mix-up of race or religion. "There was a girl there I could not get along with," says frequently in affidavits.

According to the immigrant homes, which are all religious institutions, a housewife may retain a servant indefinitely if she shows an interest in the servant's religious life.

Though religion is nine-tenths of an immigrant girl's life, it is the most neglected by housewives.

There is a wealthy family in Ringwood, N. J., a close suburb, which retains its 15 servants for years. Eighteen are Catholic and one a Protestant. The Protestant will leave because there is no church of her denomination. There was some other for the other eighteen, so the family converted an adjacent cottage into a Catholic church and engaged a priest to come out regularly and say mass. This satisfied them. I looked over about fifty letters to a Catholic society requesting servants. Every one of them complained the religious advantages open to them. The officials would not permit them to go, if that were not the case. Mr. G., a wealthy Episcopalian

in East Sixty-sixth street, has fourteen servants whom he gathers with the rest of his family every morning before breakfast for family prayers—cook, coachman, butler, servants and all. There is a long list of such families.

I have heard of families who are so scrupulous as to the religious needs of their Finnish servants, for instance, that they provide bibles with the Finnish translation opposite the English, so the girls who cannot read English may follow intelligently in the family prayer.

One girl who could not speak English felt very homesick the first day. At mealtime, however, the father gently touched her arm to become quiet, and then asked the blessing. The girl wrote her immigrant society joyfully about it, and said she hoped she might stay long in so good a home. Other families take a servant along to church and install her in their own pew.

"We prepare the girls here—the preparation is unnecessary—to expect religious instruction in the homes they enter," said a missionary of a home. "We have family prayers every morning, lasting 15 minutes. Often a lady comes here seeking Protestant girls because they will not be 'running off' to church all the time like Catholics." Just such a woman can never keep a girl, and we discriminate against her. On the other hand, homes which look out for the religious needs of servants have no trouble with good girls."

## JOURNAL OPEN FORUM

Correspondents need not sign names to communication in good faith, and not personal, and of local interest.

### Defends Mr. Kay

Ed. Journal: I think the party signing himself A Republican in his attack on Hon. T. B. Kay in last night's Journal is away off on Mr. Kay's past record in the Oregon legislature in regard to his part as chairman of the ways and means committee. I don't think any man could, or did do more to keep down the large appropriations that Mr. Kay did. He kept the Indian War veterans' appropriation bill down to \$100,000, when we all know he had the hardest kind of a fight on that one measure and again on the shipshop graft. No man could do more than Mr. Kay did on this one measure alone and Mr. Kay deserves the thanks of every taxpayer in the state of Oregon. At the eleventh hour when the whole house was practically in favor of passing this measure, Mr. Kay challenged the house to go on record, but on, and the measure was lost. In regard to Mr. Kay being elected by the Democrats at last June's election, the gentleman surely did not need the returns from the election.

When Mr. Kay led the Republican party ticket, I don't see how he can charge his election to the Democrats, and even if so (even Democrats know a good thing), and again if the city of Salem gave Mr. Kay a bonus for his Woolen Mill, I think he has repaid said city well by making a success of said mill by distributing monthly something over \$5000 in wages among his employees, to be spent among the business men of this city and enabling them to buy homes and improve this city, where otherwise some of these people could not even be residents of our city.

And now in conclusion, I wish to say that Martin Conroy owes Mr. Kay their loyal support for the speaker of of the next house of representatives, and if elected (which I believe he will) he can do as much as any man for the taxpayers of this county and state. REPUBLICAN NO. 1. Salem, Oregon, November 11th.

## SOCIAL EVENTS

**Dancing Party.** The regular social dancing party, conducted by Miss Frantz, will be given Saturday evening at 7 o'clock at the Elks hall. McElroy's orchestra will furnish the music. Gentlemen 50 cents and ladies 25 cents admission.

**Dance Tonight.** There will be a dance in the Woodmen hall tonight from 8 to 11. Gentlemen 50 cents, ladies free.

## Money Saved is Money Made

The Great Closing Out Sale of Mrs. M. E. Fraser's Large Sale STILL GOING ON

There is no doubt about the great opportunity there is for you to save money during this great closing sale of Ladies' Tailor Made Skirts, Shirts, Millinery, Hosiery, Gloves, Corsets, Dress Trimmings, Dry Laces.

## Ladies' Ready-to-Wear Department

### Ladies' Dress Skirts

One large lot of ladies' dress skirts, all colors and styles, about 50 in the lot, values up to \$7.50, some lined, some unlined; closing price, your choice

**\$3.75**

One small lot of ladies' walking skirts, mostly gray mixed goods, worth \$3.50; closing price

**\$1.75**

### Children's Coats

One large lot of children's jackets, sizes from 4 to 14, all reduced to close quick

**25 per cent**

### Children's Long Coats

About 200 of this lot, all colors, sizes from 6 to 14, also reduced to this sale to close

**25 per cent**

### Ladies' Jackets

Lot of ladies' jackets and box coats, sizes from 32 to 44, all desirable shades, reduced to the lowest notch.

**25 per cent**

### Ladies Tailor Made Suits



Some Wonderful Values

This lot of suits are such low prices that if you see them you can't help but buy if you see after your own interest, up to \$15; closing price

**\$9.50**

One lot of ladies' suits and colors, values up to \$10; closing price

**\$3.50**

We have only a few left of this lot; values up to \$12. Do not wait long, they are the FINE TAILOR-MADE suits the best the market affords all priced at at least

**25 per cent**

## OREGON AND IDAHO CONVENTION

The Oregon-Idaho Y. M. C. A. convention, which is to be held in this city, at the First Methodist church, November 25, 26 and 27, is expected to be one of the most successful in the history of the association. About 200 delegates will be in attendance, composed of representatives from every organization in the two states. The delegates while in the city, will be the guests of the Salem city and Williams University associations and every endeavor will be made to leave a good impression of the city in the minds of the visitors when they depart for their homes. The convention will be presided over by President F. J. and General Secretaries F. J. of Boise, Idaho; Seth Leavon City, and A. S. Allen will be in attendance. In the conference will be H. Lee, of Albany college; Hill, of Portland; J. Taylor, L. Farr, I. B. Rhodes, P. B. Fother, W. E. Winger, E. J. ter B. Miles, of Pacific college; Shepard, O. A. C.; A. J. U.; C. A. McLean, W. of St. Paul, Minn.; and J. Whitcomb, thought land.

## FRENCH CARTERS STRIKE

Have, Nov. 13.—The strike movement which originated here among the carters several days ago is spreading. Several riots have occurred this morning, but were quickly put down by the troops of the cavalry force, which are patrolling the streets. The docks are badly congested.

## FATHER SCHELL ARRESTED

Have, Nov. 13.—The strike movement which originated here among the carters several days ago is spreading. Several riots have occurred this morning, but were quickly put down by the troops of the cavalry force, which are patrolling the streets. The docks are badly congested.

## CASTORIA For Infants and Children

The Kind You Have Always Bought

Beware the Signature of *Dr. H. H. Stitt*