

EAST-SIDE CAMEOS.

No. 7.

The late Mr. Isidor Straus' pleasure - Deepening the hollows - Legal Aid Bureau's valuable services in various claims.

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Now we are ready to start. Purposely have we refrained from giving statistics, not because we have none, for here are enough to delight a certified public accountant. But we felt that you would prefer instead to become acquainted with facts saturated with human interest. We want to give these as a good dinner is served; in courses, not too much at one time.

Our late president, Mr. Isidor Straus, used to point to the hollows in our stone steps. (We have an elevator for visitors, but pupils walk.) He delighted in those hollows and said "They show that our building is being used." He understood that the deeper the hollows, the greater had been the impress left on those who made them.

The work of the Educational Alliance is multifarious. Suppose we look at each department, instead of dealing with them en masse. Shall we begin with the one continuously active, day and night? Its name spells tragedy - the Legal Aid Bureau - the major part of whose work is handling what are known in legal terms as "Work, Labor and Service Claims" and "Desertion Cases." The former arise from employers trying to deprive employees of lawful earnings. To this end they resort to divers tricks and quibbles, to overcome which our regularly employed attorneys must be always alert.

Last year we had of these cases alone, the startling total of 3,356. The sad part was that the offenders were, only a short time

previous, immigrants themselves. They literally preyed on the newcomers. But among them you will not find those who received their initial training here. This is another point in favor of our preventive work, for equity and justice are impressed upon all who are enrolled or attend here.

The heartless, treacherous conduct of many owners of small "sweat shops" is recorded in our files. You see them in this cabinet. If interested in studying the sweat-shop system, you may look them over. One frequent cause of trouble comes from paying shop hands by checks that are returned for "lack of funds" etc. When the drawer is confronted with a bad check, he gives a new check in its place. That also comes back, marked "no good." If the employee insists upon having cash, immediate discharge follows. The defrauded immigrant comes to our Legal ^{Aid} Department because in no other way can the dishonest employer be made to pay. The complainants have no money to engage a lawyer.

Numerous domestic servants also appeal to us to get wages which, without just cause, had ~~either~~ been held back, ^{either} all, or in part. Their claims averaged not over \$8.00, which is little to prosperous ones, but means a great deal to those with whom every cent counts.

You may say "There are two sides to every question." We agree with you. But in judging these cases, we were not blinded by the claimants' necessity or destitution. Facts only, governed our trained investigator, who made a report of his personal investigations. Results proved that in far the largest number of complaints, the employers' representations were untruthful. That was suggested by their refusal to face our attorneys. Formerly suits at law would have been necessary, but of late we have been able to settle these disputes, or to have them arbitrated, with the consent of all the parties.

Such disputes are always hard to settle. Invariably the

employers insist that "the work was improperly done, and goods were wasted." When they are right we show the complainant that there is no just cause for an action.

We had an unusual number of complaints against unscrupulous attorneys - especially notaries. Judgments had been obtained but, on various pretexts, these attorneys kept funds they had collected. You can imagine the situation of immigrants thus defrauded. We recovered what was due in most cases.

The Bureau was open 343 days of the year, usually from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. on an average 82 persons attended daily, 25,850 in the year. There were 4,324 cases pending or in course of settlement last year. 91% of the applicants were aliens and over 87% were Russian Jews.

Needed today.

\$15,000. to pay a mortgage on Annex 109 East Broadway.
Funds to add several stories to the Educational Alliance Building.
\$150,000. additional for our Endowment Fund.

Contributions invited.

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The Educational Alliance

East Broadway & Jefferson St.

'phone "1970 Orchard."

(To be continued shortly.)