people," was I rapidly preparing

ly "made up," not unlike the daugh- myself to ascertain, among many ters of our present day "nice other problems, why men leave home.

TWENTY-TWO YEARS OF SOCIAL SERVICE

BY FRANCES TAUSSIG

TT DOES not take long to grow old father, sitting at his student lamp enough in a profession, or an environment, or in life itself, to enjoy the opportunity to become reminiscent. And it is reminiscent that I shall become in this article, despite the command of the august Editor to be autobiographical. We shall begin, as all good case histories should, with my background.

In 1848 my grandparents on both sides had made their way to America, voyaging for ten weeks in a sailing vessel (steamboats existed, but were in war service). From Delancey Street in New York, the first home of my mother's parents, they soon set out pioneering, first down the Mississippi, and a few years later to a little town in Wisconsin, which, when they arrived, had a population of ten families. When we were children we listened with envy to stories of experiences with the friendly Indians from a nearby reservation. The family remained for twenty years in the quiet little village, taking an active part in its life, and then moved on to Chicago, just in time to lose home and possessions in the great fire of 1871. A few pieces of furniture survived, and my grandfather's precious Hebrew books. Business had been forced upon him by necessity. It was in the study of his books that ilies, participated in the commuhe was happy.

One of the pleasant memories of my childhood is that of my grand-

in the evening, studying his Hebrew Bible, his lexicon and the commentaries open on the table before him. This interest of his, however, did not mean an Orthodox religious life for the family, into which I was born in Chicago. The successive adjustments to fundamental changes in environment had accustomed even the old great grandmother, who lived with us, to a changing attitude toward many aspects of life.

However, it was my grandfather's spirit which put whatever meaning it had into the religious training which we received in Sabbath (and Sunday) School of the Reformed congregation to which we belonged. There, at an early age, we went through the ceremony of confirmation, learning by heart and repeating before the assembled congregation, a vast amount of Hebrew, the meaning of which we knew but vaguely, and an equal amount of English, which to us was almost equally meaningless. I still remember some of the phrases. The whole experience led to the usual adolescent religious doubts and wonderings, and was saved from being destructive only by the contributions which were made within the home.

Our family, like most Jewish famnity's attempts to relieve the suffering of the poor. Organized Jewish charity was still in its earliest stages.

We all knew about the "Relief," which was the Jewish community's name for the organization which dispensed its charity. An occasional client of this Society would come to our door and tell tales of the hardships imposed by the organization on the deserving poor and we sympathized with help, regardless of the plans which the hard-hearted organization might be cherishing.

One of my earliest recollections is of one of these long-suffering persons who visited our home periodically, bearing an enormous basket of notions which she professed to sell. The basket was deposited in the kitchen, and when she had been fed and given an opportunity to relate her troubles, she carried away much of the family's clothing for the little Greenbergs, or whatever other use she, in her wisdom, might make of it. Mrs. Greenberg bore a striking resemblance to the witches of my earliest literature. We lived in a thinly-populated residence district, and I used to sense her presence in the neighborhood and flee, to garret or to cellar or remote back yard, anywhere to escape the ardent. toothless kisses with which she insisted on expressing her appreciation of the family's kindness.

Meanwhile, I went to public school and to high school and prepared for college, and during these years little thinking of a vocational nature was being done either by me or those who were concerned with my education. When I finally entered the University of Chicago, no person of my acquaintance was in what we have only since that time learned to call social work. Perhaps my most positive vocational achievement at the University was the gradual and

finally complete rejection of teaching as a career. English and German had been my major fields of work, but nobody was there to tell me how to use them vocationally in a world where college-trained women either did or did not teach.

The University of Chicago is a Baptist institution. Chapel was compulsory, but we were fortunate in having as University Chaplain, Charles Richmond Henderson. Once each week we heard much talk from Dr. Henderson on "dependents, defectives and delinquents," and of social problems and their treatment. George Edgar Vincent, now of the Rockefeller Foundation, was Dean of the Junior Colleges and a member of the Sociology Faculty. His sociology courses were popular with the students and through them we learned of the existence of the city's social agencies and made visits to settlements, missions and family agencies, such as they were at that time.

Sophonisba Breckinridge was then assistant to the Dean of Women, along with her many other responsibilities in the University and out of it. It was she who discovered a group of students one day, worrying over papers and examinations. "What you need, my dear young women," she said, "is something to worry about." Whereupon we were led to her study, deposited in easy chairs, given some suggestive fresh handkerchiefs and Jacob Riis' recently published "Battle With the Slum," with orders to read and weep. Whether this was meant to constitute psychiatric treatment or vocational guidance, or both, I have never known. Other bits of Miss Breckinridge's work of a seemingly

vocational nature come to memory. It was she who stimulated us to participation in various social and civic movements, through committees in the women's organization of the University. One of our proud achievements was a Consumers' League exhibit, with Mrs. Florence Kelley herself as the thrilling speaker. During all of these years the University Settlement. "back of the yards," was the scene of much student activity. Perhaps the impulse to case work was already stirring when I was unsatisfied with my contact with the heterogeneous crowd of little Italians, Poles and Irish, to whom I tried to teach what I knew about sewing, and longed to know each one of them better.

As an undergraduate, I had helped to finance myself by acting as literary assistant to a versatile professor of sociology who regaled himself during his spare moments with literary as well as chemical research. After graduation an opportunity to continue this work came to me. It was not until a year later, in 1905, when I had worn out this sometimes fascinating job, with its searching into the mustiest and obscurest and most interesting books on remote shelves of the University's library. that my first opportunity in social work offered itself.

My new position was in the United Hebrew Charities of Chicago. whose executive had conceived the novel idea of adding to his staff a young woman with college education and training. Until that time. the staff had consisted, in addition to the executive, of a stenographer, a voung man who found or sought jobs for the unemployed, and an assistant. This assistant functioned simultaneously as visitor, bookkeeper, cashier, statistician and dispenser of worn clothing.

I was the new investigator. My job was to visit families and my salary was forty dollars a month. Training consisted in observation of the work of the other visitor and in being allowed to read records. We made our visits in the afternoon. In the morning the applicants (there were no clients in those days) were received in the office by the assistant, who disbursed the regular relief funds from a tin box, which was replenished through frequent visits to the bank. The interview, which brought money from the box. was brief. The worker knew every family intimately and managed to keep in her remarkable memory names, ages and characteristics of children and adults. Woe to the homeless man who dared to make a second application under a new name! Frequently all business was suspended while a baby was adored. At the termination of the interview a notation was made on the case record, a bookkeeping entry was made, and a statistical sheet marked up-twice for two adults, five times for five children, and once for the "principal cause of distress" -all by one versatile worker.

The office of the Charities, like so many of that day, was convenient to the neighborhood in which most of its directors had their homes. Two street cars brought the visitor to the scene of our activity on the West Side, or the "West Side" of the office. There were some important traditions which had to be observed. Twice each season a carriage was hired-automobiles were still too

expensive and conspicuous — and frequently appeared in red ink at evening visits were paid to the homes of deserted families. Sometimes the result was the triumphant confirmation of a "hunch" and sometimes it meant increased sympathy for the family group whose miseries had been presented so pathetically by the dim gas light of the home.

Shortly after my beginning on the job, through a combination of circumstances, I was temporarily left in charge of the office. My new and exciting opportunity had hardly begun when word came of the earthquake and disaster in San Francisco. Emergency committees began to work in the stricken area, and to send back with every train, hundreds of refugees whose homes had once been in Chicago and the East. or who thought that they might be taken in by relatives or friends, or, for that matter, by strangers. It was a hectic time for an untrained and young worker. Trains had to be met, refugees taken to emergency shelters and new homes found and equipped with the necessities of life; jobs had to be provided, children clothed and sent to school, and, worst nightmare of all, bookkeeping records had to be kept for emergency expenditures as well as for the continuous, regular work of the organization. Of course, the books failed to balance and the reconciliation involved long hours spent in mathematics not learned at the University.

Our case records at that time consisted of a long sheet, folded twice into document size, outside surfaces of which were used to record relief expenditures. "Irrevocably closed, by order of the Board of Directors"

the end of a large column of expenditures for relief, and in another month the column reappeared, giving evidence that the strength of the Board was no match for that of a persistent client. The inside of the sheet contained what there was of "face card" information, and the beginning of the chronological record, which was continued on additional narrow sheets which fitted into the folded record. We had no difficulty in those days in finding time to read records—we carried each day's records with us in a long manilla envelope, and read them as we rode to our visits. They were short and generally to the point.

Those early days were exciting ones in the field of Jewish social work. Great names adorned the letterheads of the organizations with whom we corresponded. We addressed Lee K. Frankel before we did Morris D. Waldman, as manager of the United Hebrew Charities of New York, and our first view of Dr. Frankel's white head at our first conference was an event. David Bressler was active in the Industrial Removal Office; Dr. Bogen visited us often from Cincinnati and entertained and stimulated us with his half humorous, half satirical philosophy. The Conference stood out in each year's experience; once Henrietta Szold brought her first report from Palestine; Dr. Sabsovitz presented the first of a long series of discussions of pensions for social workers; the National Desertion Bureau was formed after a series of studies, reports and discussions. Minnie Low was the one consistently influential woman in the group. The whole conference was illumined by

the personality of Louis H. Levin. No one was so kind as he to the young workers, so imaginative and dynamic and tolerant.

After a series of amalgamations and separations the United Hebrew Charities of Chicago gave way to a new organization—the Jewish Aid Society-which consisted of a Relief Department, Miss Low's Bureau of Personal Service, a free dispensary and an employment bureau. In 1912, executives having come and gone, the Board decided to experiment with its own material and I became the superintendent of the Relief Department, which by this time had grown in budget, case load and staff far beyond the little organization in which I had first worked.

That year marked my first venture in public speaking. An invitation came from Dr. Bogen to come to Cincinnati to observe some of his experiments, and incidentally to address a group of young people to whom he was giving a brief course of lectures. I went and gave my first speech and this, with later experiences, did much to convince me that college courses in public speaking, in which one laboriously learned and recited bits from Daniel Webster's orations and other classics, were not entirely adequate preparation for future public appearances.

The succeeding years were years of development for the organization and for the whole field of social work. More and more college women found their way into the work. From its beginnings in a few lecture courses by Graham Taylor (the elder) in my first year, the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy had developed, through the labors of Dr. Taylor, the Abbotts, and Miss

Breckinridge. Valuable teaching opportunities came to me from the school. Supplementary training was offered members of our staff, and in time, workers trained in the school entered our ranks.

Gradually, effective work with families began to be possible through a lower burden of work for the visitor; very slowly and gradually salaries rose until I began to believe that my original \$40 a month had been low after all. The case work processes were seen to emerge, and human personality appeared from the chaos of family life into which we had thrown ourselves with so much energy and good will. Turnover of staff was not vet the problem which it has since become. Opportunities in social work were restricted and did not offer the invitations to mobility in the field which have since led us to be termed "high-brow hoboes." We stayed on the job, learned to work together and found that if we were able to wait for them, satisfactions came to us from our work.

The Jewish Aid Society of those days was small enough for a real working together of staff, directors. community and clients, toward a common end. We held no monopoly, in our paid staff, on social service. Volunteers of all sorts gave significant contributions. We had, working side by side with the staff, Mrs. X., the well-trained volunteer visitor who contributed a real understanding of the meaning of family life to a few families with whom she worked; Dr. Y., who supplemented his medical services by sweeping up the home of a bedridden mother and leaving with her all of the money in his pockets, and who used to demand of his case committee that it pause in its meet-

matters; Mrs. Z., practical and unlearned, and helpful, who attended a National Conference and listened in bewildered wonderment to Julius Drachsler, whom she hailed as a Professor "from Azeology," to his own great delight.

In 1917, Morris Waldman left the United Hebrew Charities of New York to reorganize the Jewish Charities of Boston. He returned in 1919 to reconstruct his own old organization. Everything was to be possible under the new regime; money was available, the new Federation favored the new scheme, and the community was ready for it. An invitation came to me to assist Mr. Waldman in the reorganization. Fifteen years in one organization seemed an adequate guarantee against possible accusations of instability, and at the same time were a stimulation to change and a new experience under new conditions. I had been in New York only a few months when Mr. Waldman amazed our world by departing for new fields.

Soon after, the Board of Trustees of the United Hebrew Charities decided upon the radical step of committing its job to a woman executive. Remember, this was 1919, the war was just over, and the world had not yet recovered its equilibrium after a forced experience with women in what had been men's jobs. Even the New York subways in 1919 were still "manned" by neatly-dressed women guards! Undoubtedly some of the older and perhaps also the younger members of the Board of Trustees waited for a crash, and there were surely those in the community who prophesied dire results from such a bold experiment. Even in the professional group in New

ings for the discussion of spiritual York some disturbance was evidenced. Shortly after Mr. Waldman's departure, the secretary of a group of executives who had held monthly meetings, politely and regretfully made it clear that the time had not yet arrived for such an advanced step as the inclusion of a woman in the sacred group, and suggested that perhaps a male member of the Board of Trustees might be selected to represent the organization.

> After the first disturbance died down, things progressed more smoothly. The story of the eight years which have passed, along with the more interesting study of the years which went before, have been told in "Fifty Years of Social Service," which the Jewish Social Service Association published in 1925, in celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of its predecessor, the United Hebrew Charities.

And so I find myself in my twentysecond year in social work. It is hard for me to think of myself as an old timer, and although it has been pleasant to think of the old days, I have not yet begun to sigh for them. Social work as we think of it has been made during my working years, and it is something to have participated, practically from its beginnings, in what we are beginning to allow ourselves to call the development of a profession. Its satisfactions have been cumulative, growing with the years; its content has been enriched as new material has been brought in from year to year, or new light has been cast on the old. It has been an exciting experience, and each year still means a beginning, another commencement in a working life.