

# From Near And Far

By Ben Dor

## Father Seeks Man Who Saved His Son's Life

Little Harold Wulffhart, aged eight, who comes from Queenstown and was in Sea Point with his father on holiday, was playing at the water's edge when he was washed out to sea. A stranger on the promenade saw him, and dived fully clothed into the sea, bringing Harold back to shore. Harold was taken to the hotel and put to bed.

When Mr. M. Wulffhart, Harold's father returned from town and found out what had happened, he tried to get in touch with the stranger to thank him for saving Harold's life, but to no avail. All he could find out was that he was also on holiday and comes from Pretoria.

Thus the "Argus" carries the following advertisement: "Will the gentleman from Pretoria who rescued the little boy from drowning at Rocklands Beach on the 22nd please contact M. Wulffhart, Sea Point?"

## Death of Chazanim

ACCORDING to American newspapers, the Synagogues had a very busy season during the recent High Festivals. Tickets in all synagogues were sold out several days before Yomtov, and you could not get a chazan anywhere in New York for the love of money!

A new custom in American life is for hotels to turn themselves into Houses of Prayer during the High Festivals. In Atlantic City and in the holiday resorts of the Catskill mountains the hotels engaged chazonim and advertised that services would be held. Thousands of people went out to the holiday resorts to spend the High Festivals. Problems of domestic servants in America have contributed to this new phenomenon—housewives do not want to be bothered with the preparations for Yomtov, and they prefer to spend it at an hotel. Hotel-keepers paid thousands of dollars to famous chazonim for the Rosh Hashona season.

Unless most of our thousand passengers remained below, she would be constantly and dangerously off keel.

"And you can't keep them below very long," he explained. "When you see what the hold is like you'll know what I mean."

I left him on that pleasant note and went to my cabin. A tiny stateroom had been allotted to me, big enough for a bunk, a sink and a chair. Holding to the door to keep from falling, I turned on the light to survey my new home. Securely tied to the swaying back of the chair was a slim vase of roses. On the straw pillow nestled a bottle of old cognac. Someone had been wishing me luck.

As I climbed on to the bunk my foot touched something strange and I bent to investigate. Three child stowaways were curled up on the floor below me. Beside them were their paper bags, neatly balanced. They were fast asleep.

I wondered how long it would be before they—and I—saw land again—if we ever would. I patted their heads and went to bed.

(Second article next week)

There was also a shortage of choirs. Good choirs were paid 5,000 dollars for the three days of Yomtov. Good chazonim received between 6,000 and 10,000 dollars for the three days. The Union of Chazonim in New York has some 350 members. They are a number of young men, born in America, who possess a good musical education. Recently the Jewish Theological Seminary opened a special course for Chazanuth, and many Rabbis are taking up the course in case they are called upon to officiate at small communities where a chazan is not available.

## King David's Penicillin

THE other day I came across the startling admission by a great scientist, that the recent discovery of penicillin by Prof. Florey and Dr. Chain had been anticipated thousands of years ago by King David, who recorded its curative properties. You will find it in Psalm 2, 9: 'Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean.'

"The scientist based his assertion on the fact that 'Penicillin notatum is a mould that grows on rotting hyssop.' It is remarkable to note how the natural qualities of hyssop as a healer have been recognised in Biblical times.

"This well-known aromatic plant was also extensively used in those remote days as a disinfectant, quite a modern practice: 'And he shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent, and upon all vessels . . .'" Numbers 19, 18).

"We find throughout the Bible many instances where hyssop was employed for dealing with infectious or contagious diseases. The Torah is truly 'a Tree of Life to them that grasp it.'" —Joseph Porton, in "London Jewish Chronicle."

## Old Vic Producer for Habima

THE well known Old Vic-Sadlers Wells producer, Mr. Tyrone Guthrie, is to be the guest producer of the Habimah Theatre, and is expected to arrive in Palestine shortly.

Mr. Guthrie's first production will be Sophocles' "Oedipus," translated into Hebrew by the late Saul Tchernichowsky. He has staged this classic with outstanding success in London and New York.

## Nikova Becomes Famous

THE fame is spreading of Rina Nikova, for 20 years a pioneer of classical and biblical ballet in Palestine. She is mentioned in the splendid "Borzoï Book of Ballets" (New York, 1946), and she gets a whole illustrated chapter in the Comte d'Aumale's "Voix d'Orient" (published in Canada and the U.S.A., 1946). The author was formerly French Consul-General in Palestine.

Leading weeklies such as "Picture Post" (London), "Le Monde Illustré" (Paris), "Er und Sie" (Zurich) have published full page

feature stories on her Biblical Ballet, with illustrations of her dancers on Mt. Scopus. She has been "featured" even in far-away Buneos Aires.

## Trees

SEVERAL investigations of considerable practical importance have recently been completed by the Department of Botany of the Hebrew University.

In the field of geobotanics, special attention has been paid to the question of forest trees, and a list of those indigenous to Palestine has been drawn up. The pine, of course, figures prominently on the list, for its readiness to grow in any kind of soil—sometimes even in pure chalk. But there are other trees, less well known but of greater practical value and, sometimes, even more attractive to the eye. Thus, for instance, Pistacia Atlantica, a species of the pistacia tree. It will grow in extremely dry soil and, moreover, will grow quickly. Its timber is suitable for industrial purposes, and as a result of a grafting process with Pistacia Vera it will produce kernels of excellent quality. Good timber, too, is provided by the Tabor oak, a tree of slower growth. A number of trees on the list are wild varieties which have only recently been detected in Palestine. Examples of these are Grewia and Pistacia Sapotae.

## Progress of Jewish Theatre

IT is pleasing to note the expansion of the Jewish Theatre in Soviet Russia. Recently a Jewish theatrical company, consisting mainly of ex-servicemen, was formed in Odessa under the auspices of the Odessa Regional State Vaudeville Company. During its six weeks' existence the troupe has given concerts in various towns and everywhere attracted large audiences.

Another notable concert was that given by the well-known Jewish actress, Sidi Tal, and her company, in the spacious hall of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. The programme included readings from Gorky's and Sholom Aleichem's works, as well as popular Yiddish songs. The company also gave several concerts in Kiev.

In Riga the Jewish theatrical troupe, affiliated to the State Philharmonic of that city, produced Samuel Halkin's "Bar Kochba," which proved very popular with Jewish theatregoers. The company is now rehearsing Goldfaden's "Zvei Kunilemlach," which will be produced on the 70th anniversary of the Goldfaden Theatre.

In Birobidjan a new technicum has been opened for the training of librarians and concert and theatrical workers. The students will be accommodated in special dormitories and will receive stipends from the State.

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