

OUR CHILDREN'S CIRCLE

Conducted By COUSIN HELEN.

"A little child shall lead them."—Isaiah xi., 6.

Our Motto:

"Do not unto others, what you would not have others do unto you."

P.O. Box 2000, Cape Town.

My dear little Cousins,

This week we must all celebrate a special birthday. It is our birthday—I mean our cousins' birthday. *Cousin Helen* is just two years old to-day. I can hear you all whisper that you believe that. (Her letters sometimes read as if they were written by a two-year-old.) So let me explain quickly what this birthday really means.

Two years ago a few boys and girls wrote to the "Jewish Chronicle" asking them to start a special page for children. Well, the grey heads came together, and they talked and talked—as grown-ups do—and then they decided that they would try it. So they came to me and said: "Here are two columns for you, and invite all the Jewish children of South Africa to help you to write them."

Well, I did so. But, as you know, we have not yet a hundred members in *Our Circle*, and some of our cousins write very very seldom, and others forget to write at all after they have received their certificates. On the other hand, we have a few very eager members, and they really do take a very special interest in our page.

Now, I want a *Birthday Present* from each one of you, and I shall accept only one kind of present. Do listen carefully. I want each one of you to present me with a new cousin. Here is the form, so fill it in, and don't forget to send it to me.

Dear Cousin Helen,

Many happy new cousins for your birthday! I have spoken to my friend and he (or she) has promised to join *Our Circle*. Will you please welcome him (or her) to *Our Circle*.

Name

Now you need not cut out this little letter. Please re-write it, and add whatever you like to it. I shall be waiting for an enormously big post next week. You won't disappoint me. Will you?

GEORGE ELIOT'S ANSWER.

The famous English novelist, George Eliot, author of the *Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner*, *Daniel Deronda*, and ever so many other great books, was, as you know, a woman, though she chose to write under the name of a man.

She was a friend and admirer of the Jewish people; in fact, she had married a Jew, by name of Lewes.

Once it happened that George Eliot was at a brilliant concert given by the Philharmonic Society of London; and there she met the famous composer, Richard Wagner—who was known as a Jew-hater—and his wife.

Madam Wagner was charmed with George Eliot, and begged her to come with Lewes to stay with them for a month at Frankfort.

This was an invitation that anybody else would have accepted as a great honour, but George Eliot, usually very tactful, decided to be outspoken on this occasion.

"No, thank you, Madam Wagner," she said. "Your husband doesn't like Jews, and my husband is a Jew."

DEVOTION.

The story of how Elisha first received his call to follow in Elijah's footsteps is an interesting one. Elisha was a well-to-do farmer, the son of a judge. He was one day ploughing his land with twelve yoke of oxen, when Elijah stepped forward and threw his mantle over him. This was understood to be a signal that he was called to a higher life. He immediately said: "Let me go and kiss my father and mother good-bye, and I will go with you."

Then he slaughtered his oxen and broke his plough, and cooked both together as a sign that he was through with that part of his life. Then he followed Elijah, and his devotion to the older man grew day by day, until Elijah was called away from this world.

ADVENTURING.

I'd love to run away from home
And fly across the mighty sea;
I've often dreamed of being king
And having people kneel to me.

Or, better still, I'd like to sail
As captain of a great big ship,
And toss a swig of whisky down,
With a curse upon my lip.

Or maybe I could wear a sword,
Aswaggering from my side,
And lead my men to victory
And save my country's pride.
And when I'm dreaming of these things,
Then mother says it's time for bed;
She doesn't know how wide awake
We are up in my head!

A THOUGHT.

Use thy best vase to-day, for to-morrow it may be broken. Write a letter to *Cousin Helen* to-day. You may have more homework to-morrow.

Your loving
COUSIN HELEN.

[To become a member of *Our Circle* write down your name, age, address and anything else you choose, and send it to *Cousin Helen*.]

(Continued from Third Column).

from Life to religion, now ran from religion to Life. A new dualism was created, and the gospel became "Be a Jew within and a Gentile without." This impossible Jewish optimism, said the speaker, was both the good and bad fortune of the Jewish race; but a new world was being created which promised to be whole and undivided, our own and unborrowed. If this promise were to be fulfilled we could show the world that Schopenhauer was wrong—the world is far different from a bitter illusion.

"Pessimism in Judaism"

LECTURE BY DR. SACKS.

"Pessimism in Judaism" was the subject of a lecture delivered by Dr. J. Sacks, M.A., Ph. D., under the auspices of the Kadimah Association at the Zionist Hall last Saturday evening. There was a fairly large gathering present.

There were two ways of looking upon life, said Dr. Sacks. Life may be regarded as a huge mass threatening to crush us at every moment; as such it is full of dangers and horrors and all we have to do is to try to prevent our own destruction. If we are not afraid, however, the dangers seem non-existent and we see life in quite a different aspect—as full of beauty and colour and harmony.

Poets and thinkers build their own worlds in accordance with their own temperaments and we are all poets and thinkers to a certain extent and our world is what it means for us. "Life" is really our "weltanschauung."

The speaker went on to analyse Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy of life. As in every pessimistic theory, Schopenhauer's philosophy resolved itself into a dualism of body and soul. He looked upon the soul as "Will," and the body as adapted to obey this will in every organ and feature. This blind force of will is seen in the whole of Nature and therefore the real world is only a force which Schopenhauer calls "will," whose direction is uncontrolled and inevitable. From this point of view the world cannot be good; it is full of pain and boredom; pleasure is unsatisfying and happiness unattainable. According to Schopenhauer the only thing for man to do is to kill the "will to live"—to become a martyr. The other refuge is "Art" in which the world-will is expressed.

Schopenhauer, however, said the speaker, was wrong in looking upon art and religion as a mere refuge from life. Art is not abstract and metaphysical, but "Life" itself; it cannot express itself negatively, but must have light and colour. Art is the expression of admiration for God's handiwork. The speaker cited the paintings of Michael Angelo which lacked the rest and repose which Schopenhauer regarded as the highest requisites of art. His paintings are not in accordance with the "Christian" spirit. Therefore his frescoes are optimistic; his prophets are supermen, symbols of energy and strength. The traditional martyr, Christ, is not seen in the Sistine Chapel; there are no pictures of the birth and crucifixion, but in their stead illustrations of the Old Testament, most beautiful in conception.

Religion and art, the speaker said, are man's greatest blessings. The Jewish religion was essentially joyous and hopeful; only in the *Galuth* had this joyousness and hopefulness disappeared, and hence life became cramped and warped—a mere succession of dry rites and formulae in place of religion. Out of this, however, the Ghetto built a new world, out of which the Jews could not and would not escape. This world was friendly but small and dark; soon the Haskalah came and man who had escaped

(Continued in Second Column).