

—Jewish Institutions in the Golden City—

3—The Jewish Orphanage in "Arcadia"

A SMALL party of people is being shown over an Orphanage—a place where children are living whom fate has treated more harshly than it has most other children.

Are these youngsters we see here orphans? Do they come from homes clouded by sorrow and hardship? Their faces, at any rate, show no evidence of it. They seem to be, one and all, the embodiment of childhood in its happiest, healthiest and most care-free aspects.

How does it come about that these children do not, to all appearances, feel the lack of home and parents and are so content here? The answer is to be found in the circumstances and mode of life within the Orphanage. The interested visitor seeing the children both at work and at play, soon realizes that such an environment cannot but make for happiness.

EACH one of these 225 children receives the utmost individual attention. He is not one among the crowd, he is a child with a known name and character, known faults and merits, known capabilities and limitations. In fine, his complex nature is studied as much as, perhaps even more than, it would be in a private home.

These boys and girls are brought up, first and foremost, as Jews and Jewesses. Our religion and our language are part of their daily lives—not matters delegated merely to the High Festival seasons.

Then they are trained as future citizens to be self-reliant, self-governing, responsible to themselves for the accomplishment of their tasks and fully cognizant of the necessity and value of work.

To children coming from poor homes, this new abode must indeed be a fairyland palace. Surrounded by over 28 acres of ground stands "the house beautiful"—cheery red tiled roof above white walls, pillared entrance porch, arched ceiling to the dignified hall from which ascends gracefully a white staircase with an iron balustrade of delicate workmanship. The main dining-room is a magnificent chamber. Its large dimensions are accentuated by the whiteness of the walls, whose beauty is made doubly effective by the brown of the timbered roof.

THE number of inmates has expanded so considerably of recent years that the older building is now used only for the boys and girls over the age of eleven. Those below that age are accommodated in a new wing, the "Joe Lewis" wing.

In the main building, as in fact in the rest of the premises, alterations and improvements are continuously being effected. The verandahs have been converted into sleeping-porches, while the indoor dormitories are spacious and airy.

The "Joe Lewis" wing for the younger children is most up-to-date in its equipment. The beds

are graded in sizes; and as we entered one of the dormitories, we saw in a corner a net-covered cot in which a sweet child of 18 months was having his morning sleep.

A treat is in store for the visitor, who has not been to "Arcadia" for the last few months. Tiny tots from the ages of about six to eight years have lately been formed into a Children's Band. Their instruments include cymbals, castanets, bells, a drum and tambourines. To hear the excellent rhythm and to see the serious yet satisfied expressions of these embryo musicians is sheer delight. The small children have their own kindergarten, which is supervised by a member of the staff. The hospital, erected by the generosity of Mr. Woolf Hillman and furnished by Master John Schlesinger, is certainly a model one of its kind.

THE older children have, like all children nowadays, to work hard at their studies. They leave for school at 7.30 in the mornings—the majority of the boys walking, while the girls are driven in the "Arcadia" bus—and do not return till 4 p.m. After a hurried tea, come two hours of Cheder, so that during term there is no time for such hobbies as gardening, carpentry and so on. In the holidays, however, such pursuits are indulged in freely, and on every side may be seen evidences of the children's achievements in manual work.

(Concluded on next page.)



A Group of Happy Babies at the Orphanage.

מצות כשר לפסח

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Jewish Orphanage in Arcadia.

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The brick wall, 500 feet in length, which fences off the grounds, was built by the boys themselves, while four boys are now busy with the construction of another similar wall.

The girls are highly domesticated. Dressmaking is taught them scientifically, and the matron herself instructs them in cooking. At a wedding held in Arcadia a few weeks ago, all the catering for the 300 guests was arranged by three girls, the eldest of whom was sixteen.

All the girls from the age of seven make their own beds, and the boys usually attain this goal somewhere round the age of ten! Strange how, in the girls' dormitories, one can detect the feminine hand, for there the bed-clothes are tucked in with a precision and neatness worthy of hospital-beds! In one room we came across some little girls of nine and ten years cleaning blazers and mending clothes.

AT present there are 37 Barmitz-vah boys and they take it in turns to conduct the services held twice daily in the Synagogue. All

the boys learn Hebrew, the girls attending Cheder till the age of 12, when they go to the sewing-classes in the afternoons.

Eighteen of the inmates are, at the present time, studying at High Schools, and one boy has been sent to University. The children are trained for whatever career is most suited to their personal abilities. Each of them belongs to the Boy Scout or Girl Guide movement. Lessons in pianoforte, elocution and art are given gratuitously by ladies and gentlemen interested in the development of the children. A physical culture instructor is included among the members of the staff.

THE master and matron, Mr. and Mrs. Shaer, are to be complimented on the excellent organization and on the understanding spirit they bring to their responsible joint work of the running of the Orphanage. The committee manifests an exceptional interest in its work, and must be admired for its unflagging devotion to the needs of the Orphanage.

The Hon. Presidents of the institution are Mrs. A. R. Bradlow, Messrs. I. Heymann, W. Hillman and I. W. Schlesinger. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman are Messrs. B. Kaumheimer and Bert

Mendelssohn respectively. The Hon. Treasurer is Mr. Henry C. Isaacs, and the Hon. Secretary Mr. B. Moss Morris.

One came away from a visit to the Orphanage feeling as if one had spent some hours in a large happy home. The idea of having been in an "institution" is entirely obliterated.

E.L.

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