

# —□ Through a Woman's Eyes □—

## "Hadassah" in the Old City.

DESCENDING the narrow, stone-stepped passage which is called David Street, jostled and bumped by donkeys, Babylonian carriers with incredibly heavy burdens on their backs, and Biblical-looking Bedouin shepherds carrying a tiny lamb and driving a few goats before them; elbowing dignified Arabs wearing the green turban which denotes the achievement of a pilgrimage to Mecca, and gives them the title of Hadj; meeting dark Armenian, Copt or Abyssinian priests in their voluminous robes and queer black hats; ignored, in passing, by Orthodox Jews in long caftan and paiot; with ones' nostrils assailed by a medley of strange odours, one's eyes dazzled by a hotch-potch of colour, and ones' ears deafened by a cacophony of noises; resisting the blandishments of vendors of gigantic cabbages, radishes as large as cucumbers, and enormous purple eggfruit; resolutely closing ones' eyes to the allure of embroidered gowns, silk abayehs, brilliant saddlebags and patterned rugs; overcoming the temptation of buying some of the succulent cocoanut and almond sweetmeats cooking in a brazier, we made our way into the Hadassah Welfare centre, which is situated in the centre of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City.

To this centre come women of all shades and countries for medical advice and help, and to have their babies weighed and examined weekly. And in a room in this centre on Monday afternoons is to be found Mrs. Hyamson, who presides over a sewing circle of expectant mothers run by the Histadruth Nashim Zionioth, which is the Palestinian branch of the Wizo. This sewing class initiates its pupils into the mysteries of layette making, and is usually followed by a lecture on baby hygiene and pre-natal care of the mother.

### A Sewing Course.

When we arrived we found the little room packed. On the low benches round the walls sat Kurdish women, sallow, long-faced, with wild locks and black turbans. There were women from Morocco with well-groomed hair, and Bokharian women in gay gowns, and kerchief which covers the forehead tightly; small, well-bred Yemenite women, and women from Bagdad; in fact, every imaginable type of Oriental Jewess. They sat there quietly and looked shyly at us. Presently in came Mrs. Hyamson with a pile of tiny cut-out garments, and one was handed to each woman on payment of a piastre. (This small sum is exacted in order that the women shall feel that they have helped to provide the clothes themselves, and are not receiving charity.) Soon they were all busily, awkwardly, sewing, from time to time asking for help and guidance—some of them very obviously never having held a needle before.

The course covers ten weeks, and at the end each woman has made a layette of ten garments, towards which she has contributed ten piastres—that is, 2s.

Presently Mrs. Hyamson served tea, which was followed by a lecture by one of the Hadassah nurses, who, in her fresh green uniform and white apron, made a pleasing contrast to the blue painted walls and furniture of the room. The lecture was on baby hygiene. The nurse prepared a bath, produced a big doll which she took on her knee and carefully bathed, showing the women how to gauge the temperature of the water, dress the baby, and lay it down to sleep in a cot made from a small chicken crate. One or two simple, cheap,

useful devices, such as a clay flower pot which served to keep the baby's milk cool, and a sweet jar with a hole in the lid to take the tooth brush, were exhibited to the women.

### The Doll's House.

In a corner stood two dolls' houses made out of an orange box, with a glass front put on, and the women were taken to examine them. In the first of these houses the room was in a fearful state of confusion; the bed was soiled and tumbled, the floor filthy. Windows were dirty, curtains torn, tables strewn with greasy crockery and uncovered food, and a tiny doll was in a cot with its face grimy and its clothes in rags. Above this awful scene were the words, "How It Should Not Be."

In the second doll's house, underneath the proud legend, "How It Should Be," was a beautifully-kept room, tidy bed, baby clean and neat, a net over the cot and fresh curtained windows. Food was in a wire-covered larder, sink was scrubbed bright, and floor swept.

The women were entranced by this practical lesson, and a good deal of whispering and ejaculation took place. With this demonstration the class came to an end. The women said "Shalom," and made their way back to their poor homes; some of them to rooms into which the sun never penetrates; rooms with stone floors and no means of heating, without taps, without sanitation, where the woman pays for water at so much a bucket or tin, and has to carry it herself from the municipal pump which is often far from her home.

Yet, in spite of these overwhelming difficulties, and owing to the patience and devotion of the Zionist Women Workers of Palestine, cleanliness and hygiene are being introduced into the warren holes in which these poor people cluster.

Now—instead of the fatalistic shrug of the Orient—mothers help matters. Spurred on—often by their children, who usually come under the influence of Wizo and Hadassah before they do—mothers are being imbued with a desire to keep their children wholesome and fresh, and to take a pride in their tiny homes.

In consequence, disease and infant mortality have decreased enormously, and in addition a very real interest has been introduced into their limited lives.

ETHEL HAYMAN.

### Henrietta Szold.

A SHORT time ago Miss Henrietta Szold, one of the most noted of modern Jewish women, celebrated her seventy-third birthday. To signalise the event, members of the Hadassah gathered together throughout America.

Henrietta Szold was the eldest child of Rabbi and Mrs. Benjamin Szold, of Baltimore, U.S.A. She received a liberal general education, and at the same time imbibed Jewish culture in the school attached to her father's synagogue.

She made her first public appearance in 1886, when she assisted in the organisation of evening classes for Jewish refugees who had fled to America from the Russian pogroms. It was in the directing of these classes that she consolidated that feeling for Zionism which her education had instilled in her.

For many years she acted as the secretary of the Jewish Publication Society, and

was personally responsible for much translation work from the Hebrew, French and German.

It was in 1911 that Miss Szold first visited Palestine. On her return she gathered together a small band of American Jewish women, who were to work with this dual aim—for the practical health of Palestine and the fostering of Zionism in America. Thus was Hadassah formed. Today it has a membership of 50,000, and the value of the work it has done cannot be overestimated.

Yet Miss Szold has not been content to rest on her laurels. In 1927 she was elected to the Palestine Zionist Executive, a very great honour indeed, and for the last two years she has been closely connected with education in Palestine. To-day Miss Szold is faced with the problem of fitting child immigrants from Germany into existing educational conditions. In view of her past achievements, of her proved ability and her capacity for endless labour, there can be little doubt that she will succeed admirably.

### Huberman's Concert at Ain Charod.

The following translation from a Palestine Hebrew paper should be of interest:—

A CONCERT was given at Ain Charod by Huberman. For two days the concert became an integral part of our lives. Such an atmosphere I remember having experienced only in my childhood on the occasion of Pesach. In the afternoon the tables were brought out from the dining-hall and rough boards were brought by car from all parts of the Emeq. Supper was arranged on the verandah, a hasty meal. The babies were put to bed earlier than usual. The advertisements announced that the doors would be closed exactly at 8 o'clock, and those who had no babies to put to bed were there at 6.30 and 7. The audience consisted of 1,800 people. The hall was illuminated with electric lights arranged in a novel manner by our local engineer, and the platform was tastefully decorated by our artist. A piano was brought from Haifa. The children's school articles usually accommodated here were transferred for the evening to Tel Joseph. The dogs were tied up outside and the clock in the hall was temporarily stopped; the water taps in the hall were locked; the gates of the village were closed and not a single car was allowed to come through. A.L. kept guard outside that no strange dog should enter. In this way did we observe our promise to ensure 100 per cent. quiet during the performance.

### Modernising the Palestine Home.

WOMEN who have visited Eretz Yisrael will be particularly interested to learn that an organised attempt is being made to replace the ubiquitous Primus stove of the Palestinian household by more modern appliances.

Wizo, in Tel-Aviv, has appointed an expert in household management from Germany to demonstrate new apparatuses—a gasoline cooker, a baker and steam cooker, laundry machines and other cleaning machines.

Wizo is encouraging manufacturers to produce these articles in the country.