

# Palestine's Children.

By SOPHIE SMITH SETTEL, M.A. (Columbia University.)

I can still recite Stevenson's "Child's Garden of Verses." But I always do it with a lump in my throat . . . pining for the days that are no more?—hardly. Why should anyone want to be five and have to go to school all over again?

I decided that something is wrong with Stevenson's children. They're playful little things . . . they play 'Injun and they play with their shadows. They romp about their trundle beds and sail into the Land of Dreams . . . But alas, they're indoor little oafs, trying somehow to make the best of their fate of being an only child . . . The busy world abounds with such as they—"in-the-way" little things, wistfully amusing themselves until a more self-assertive age.

Quite suddenly I fell among a new breed of children, who never heard of the word 'Injun.' They romped about in groups in front of their little gardens. They played together at farming or in the henery. They pretended to drive Afurtchik all over their favourite distant climes. They were a happy lot, these children of Kinereth; breezy, eager, young, free things, like the birds in the courtyard of the Kibutz. They were colourful and gay like little eucalyptus trees in the Meshek (farm lands). They were colourful and gay like the mountains that surrounded their little colony, now glowing with the joy of a new day, now beaming on the world and life, now gleefully subsiding into the calm rhapsody that all's well with the world.

I remember my first sight of these little urchins. It was afternoon tea-time at the Kibbutz when I arrived. I was quenching a mid-summer thirst when suddenly gay laughter and the jolly voices of children were heard. Everybody ran to the windows and watched with happy smiles. Usher was driving into the courtyard a wagon-load of little ones decked in white and pink and blue-coloured rompers with broad-brimmed white suncaps that fell over their laughing faces. They looked like little elves as they hopped about the wagon, jumped down and scampered off together. The older folk looked on with pleasure and smiles. The little ones had a way with them.

That evening as I was seated in my room absorbed in my study of Hebrew, a chorus of young voices in accompaniment to a harmonica poured in through the open door of the zriff (barrack). Cheerful music, sung with the abandon of Kibutz rhythm, drew me to the courtyard. There in a large group were the children, some on his arms, some on his back, and some just content to keep in tune with David and his harmonica.

Some of the chaverim (comrades) washed and dressed and waiting for the supper bell, came to watch the youngsters sing "Aze Pella" and dance the "Hora" (dance of the pioneers). Twilight was coming over us and the dance and song gave way to hunger. The children ran off to their own "cheder, haochel" (dining-room) for their broth. I was loathe to see the end of such sweet revelry.

After supper. Zussi, Amelia, Nira, Atria and Uriah knocked at my door. They were full of devilry. They thought it great fun

bewildering me with their Hebrew. Atria, a little girl of seven, and the senior of the children on the Kibutz, was more patient with me. She would point things out in my room and tell me the Hebrew equivalent for them. But the others thought it jolly to confuse me. And of course for their amusement I pretended to understand less than I did. They had me sing American songs and tell them a story of King Midas, who had much gold. The Hebrew word for gold is "zahav," but these children looked up and laughed. They thought I had made another error in Hebrew.

"Ain rak zahav," said one. "At rotzoh lehagid 'tapuchei zahav'" (There is no word gold. You mean golden apples, or oranges). The youngsters had never heard of gold except in connection with the golden fruit, as they call the orange. Gold, as money, is unknown to them, as money itself is not in use among their elders.

And yet, their world sheltered by the surrounding rolling hills of Gilead and Gilboah had much of the practical in it. It had in fact the very hardness and rawness of life which they came to recognise at a very tender age. One day I passed by Atria's room where she slept with her parents. It was early morning. The five-thirty a.m. bell for rising had just sounded. Atria was washed and dressed and was in the act of making her own bed. I started to talk with her but she was too much the little mistress tidying up her room for the day to be disturbed by my prattle. And then, as she was about to go off to school, putting on her white suncap, she remembered that she had not swept the floor. She made a dash for the broom and swept up as quickly as she could, just as the school bell rang. Then she gave one last look about her and satisfied that everything was in order, shut the door like a responsible person and ran off to school.

They had their duties to perform, and little responsibilities of their own. Until the age of six they lived in the children's institute, away from their parents and under the supervision of trained nurses. There they acquired all of the personal habits and duties which become part of their lives later as members of the Co-operative. They learned en masse to take care of their clothes, to brush their teeth, to make their beds, to wash their hands before meals, to respect their neighbours, to live together in peace and love. And so, until they were grown-ups of the age of six, they lived with each other on their own, yet carefully guided. They were little men and women.

I recognised here John Dewey brought to life. I enjoyed watching these youngsters move about in their representative world. And the games they played were amusing. Their toys were replicas of the tools they are looking forward to the near future when they too will work the land: pickaxe and shovel, washstand and scrubbing board, pots and pans, and little gardens of their very own.

Their parents came in to see them during "hafsakah" in the evening after work and on Shabbath. It was with the most genuine

joy and spontaneous love that the little ones would interrupt their games and jump into the arms of their parents. And for the parents it was the balm and compensation for a day's toil to hold their young one in their arms.

At the age of six they gain a bed in their parents' room. But, of course, they still eat in the children's institute and spend most of their time in the children's garden. But now they attend school too. Trained women are in charge of them—play with them, take them for walks and picnicking, swimming in the Sea of Genasarret (Galilee), and arouse their interest and curiosity in their surroundings.

I always felt that Sarah was just the woman for the charge of the youngsters. She was a brilliant-eyed and laughing-faced young Russian girl with a good deal of personal magnetism. The children loved her. She never wearied of them. At the seashore she played with them enjoying their sport as much as they themselves. Pick-nicking under an olive tree she told them stories of the Hebrew martyrs and poets and sang their songs. She was the grandest companion. They often trained her in her free hours, and swarmed into her room—because Sarah was one of them.

Kinereth had but forty-two children and more than thirty of them were girls. It was the biggest event of the year when a new child was born—and when it was a boy, there was no end to the Simcha. The whole Kibutz went up in song and dance. Wine was brought in and the chaverim prepared a special supper—with cake on the menu. And after the meal the tables of the dining-room were suddenly removed by strong, bronzed arms, and the "Hora" began. The whole Kibutz took part in the wild dancing, that went on and on until past midnight. "It's a boy! It's a boy!" The magic words drove the dancers into a frenzy of delight.

(Continued on Page 772.)

## Lake View K kosher Residential Hotel MUIZENBERG.

Close to the Beach. Hot and Cold Water. All Conveniences. Good Table and attention.

Under the personal management of

Mrs. E. HIRSCHBERG.

Terms Moderate.

Phone 8-1317.

## Zionist Socialist Party. Poalei Zion - Zeire Zion.

THE NEXT

### OPEN FORUM.

ZIONIST HALL, HOPE ST., CAPE TOWN, on TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5th, at 8.15 p.m.

Speaker: Adv. H. SNITCHER.

Subject: "Socialism, Fascism and War."  
ALL WELCOME.

## CONSECRATION.

SHAGAM.—The consecration of the tombstone to the memory of the late Morris Shagam, of Muizenberg, will take place at the Muizenberg Cemetery on Sunday, 3rd November, at 11.30 a.m.

## 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,

The Talmud tells a number of stories about Alexander the Great, which show us that though the Jews looked upon him as a great conquerer, they still thought that there were more important things in the world than power and conquest.

One story tells us that Alexander the Great once laid siege to a city defended by women, who sent out to parley with him. "If you kill us," they said, "people will accuse you of the ungallant act of murdering women. If, on the other hand, we defeat you people will point the finger of scorn at you as the Emperor who was conquered by women." So Alexander marched off with his troops and left them alone.

It is also told that Alexander asked these same women for bread and they brought him golden loaves. "Do you eat bread of gold?" he asked them. "No," they replied, "but if you wanted ordinary bread, could you not have got it in your own country without coming here?"

Another story tells how Alexander, in his travels in the East, one day wandered to the gate of Paradise. He knocked and the guardian angel asked "Who is there?" "Alexander," was the answer. "Who is Alexander?" "Alexander, you know—the Alexander—Alexander the Great—Conquerer of the World." "We know him not—he cannot enter here. This is the Lord's gate; only the righteous enter here."

Alexander then more humbly begged for something to show he had reached the heavenly gate and a small fragment of a human skull was thrown to him, with the words, "Weigh it" He took it away and showed it to his Wise Men who brought a pair of scales; placing the bone in one, Alexander put some of his silver and gold against it in the other; but the small bone outweighed them all. More and more silver and gold were put in the scale and at last all his crown jewels and diadems were in, but they flew upwards like feathers before the weight of the bone, till one of the Wise Men placed a few grains of dust

on the bone; up flew the scale! The bone was that which surrounded the eye and the eye of the greedy will never be satisfied till it is covered by the dust of the grave.

### Hebrew Kindergarten Concert.

A concert by the little tots of the Hebrew Kindertartens will be given at the Zionist Hall on Sunday morning at 10 o'clock. I hope you will all be there and I am sure you will enjoy it very much indeed.

### The Flower of Israel.

Once in a beautiful meadow,  
A beautiful flower grew,  
It was of a blue and white colour,  
Of those flowers grew very few.

Soon the flower was old and dry,  
And it had many seeds  
The wind arose and scattered them,  
All over the world like beads.

The seeds fell to the ground,  
And there they grew and grew,  
Could you guess what this flower was?  
That was the wandering Jew.

—Miriam Markman,  
Humansdorp.

### Correspondence.

*Anita Broide.*—Thank you very much for the 2s. 6d. for the Seaside Fund. Please write again soon.

*Zorah Brand.*—Welcome to the Circle. I hope you will write often.

*Miriam Markman.*—Thank you for your letter and poem. I hope to hear from you again soon.

*Abie Goldenbaum.*—Thank you for your interesting letter. I am sorry about the canaries. Please write again soon.

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.]

S.A. JEWISH CHRONICLE.

Send 12/6 for a year's  
Subscription Post Free.

ADDRESS:  
Box 2000, Cape Town.

## A Delightful Book.

A delightful book for children which has just reached us is "The Princess Elizabeth Gift Book," published by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton. It is beautifully illustrated and contains stories and poems by such eminent authors as Sir J. M. Barrie, Rudyard Kipling, Francis Brett Young, Compton Mackenzie, Walter de la Mare, Hugh Walpole, John Drinkwater, etc. A special feature of the book is the photographs of all the authors as children.

The proceeds of the sale of the book are in aid of the "The Princess Elizabeth of York Hospital for Children," which should benefit materially. The book makes a wonderful gift and would be treasured by every child.

## BARMITZVAH.

**KENTRIDGE.**—Sydney Wolf, eldest son of Mr. Morris Kentridge, M.P., and Mrs. Kentridge, will read a portion of the Law and Maftir on Saturday, November 9th, at the Yeoville Synagogue. Reception at the "Stephanie," High Street, Berea, Johannesburg, on November 10th, at 3 p.m. Will friends please accept this as the only intimation.

## PALESTINE'S CHILDREN.

(Continued from page 763)

Then the boy and its mother arrived home from the maternity hospital for all of the co-operative mothers. Those who were at work in the vicinity of the children's institute ran out to greet the pair. She was a heroine, a queen for a day and forever, among these her sisters, and the little lad was a hero as well, to be carefully watched and tenderly cared for.

The baby was carried into the institute by Gusta, the trained nurse, and the mother was sent to her room to bed. She was taken care of by Tchia, and given a special diet. When she felt stronger, she strolled about the Kibutz and at will, took up some light tasks, such as mending hose in the machsan (sewing room). She saw her child as often, as she desired and as was necessary. She came to feed him regularly. And so the two grew in strength and health. The mother, after two months, returned to the land, but still the lightest kind of work in the tree nursery or the gan (garden) was given her.

And the baby became a little man, living among his fellows and delighting in the hours when his (Ima) Mama came to see him. He soon began to know everybody in this big, happy family of the co-operative, not only Gusta, Berthah and Sarah, but even the many others who made up his little world.

He cannot be a shy one, backward, because he is one of the crowd. He cannot grow up into any complexes—he is so welcome, so desirable, so cherished a member of society.

So he grows up, bold and free and independent, and aware of the life about him. Aware of toil, of the land, of the ideal of work. He plays in the bosom of Mother Earth, learns to tend and love it. Then he goes to school to learn to read and write and he learns history, geography, arithmetic and Bible, and drawing and music, and gardening, and the practical studies of work on the field.