



"RADIANT YOUTH."
A Child of the Yishub.

"And the streets of the city (Jerusalem) shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof." (Zechariah VIII).

THOUGH the playground movement is still young in Palestine, the first experiments have already proved that there is large scope for its development in the country. The climate being such that the children can be out of doors the whole year round, playgrounds can be open during all seasons. This makes possible continuity of work, which is a very important factor in educational endeavour. The scarcity of open spaces which in other countries constitutes one of the biggest obstacles in the way of playground development is not felt here. On the other hand, however, the need for playgrounds is greater here than elsewhere, as school programmes do not make sufficient provision for games and gymnastics. There is hardly a school which sets aside more than two hours a week for such activities, and many schools give even less time. The hours of instruction are, as a rule, in the mornings, and school supervision ends when the children go home. Owing to lack of municipal parks, the children are compelled to play in the streets, and are thus inevitably exposed to all the street dangers: to accidents and bad moral influence.

The playgrounds in Palestine, as elsewhere, aim to teach the child how to use his leisure in such a way as to develop his body and his character.

Although health problems are not dealt with directly in the playgrounds, the activities themselves, especially the outdoor games and sports, are an important factor in the health of the child.

In order to realise that play is not of secondary importance to the child, it is sufficient to watch him at play, to observe the intensity of his interest and the amount of energy he puts into it.

Play-grounds in Palestine

*A New Educational System that is Building
a New Youth*

By RACHEL SCHWARTZ

Along with heredity and environment physical activity is an important factor in the child's development.

THE most suitable and natural activity for the child is play. As the impulse to play is instinctive, it was thought in the past that the child himself would find a way of satisfying that instinct, and that there was therefore no need to organise play and provide suitable conditions.

But just because play is a natural urge, it may flow into undesirable channels if it finds no suitable outlet, and may even lead to delinquency and vice. A well-known judge in the United States has found that nine out of ten delinquent children are not inherently delinquent but have reached that stage through neglect and through their having been denied the necessary recreation. It is not an infrequent case, for instance, that children of the age of 12—14 organise themselves, as a game, into groups of thieves, and from mere play pass from minor to more serious offences until they reach the courts. Such children can be guided in the playgrounds where their adventure-seeking spirits would find outlet in sports, strategic games, bonfires, and torch processions.

Though play has as its primary objective the satisfaction and happiness of the child, it must not be overlooked as a valuable factor in the child's education and health.

Professor Dewey was among the first to stress that the aim of education is chiefly to mould character and not merely to impart knowledge and to form proper habits. With the new concept that it is more important to enable the child to form correct social attitudes and to act properly than merely to equip him with a store of information, play came into its own as a significant factor in education. Education, through play and activity, has become the password in modern pedagogy, and play, which satisfies and interests the child, develops him physically and mentally, has been acknowledged as the most suitable activity for character building.

AS a factor in health, play develops the muscles, improves respiration and digestion, and develops the senses, particularly sight, hearing and touch. Primarily pleasurable and satisfying, it reacts beneficially on the nervous system. It helps to develop the memory and to quicken thought and decision. The child cannot

be slow of thought in a game. He must act quickly in order not to lose. In life and at school it is sometimes possible to hide and cover mistakes, but not in games, where even the slightest mistake counts, especially in team games when the child is responsible to his group for every error.

With the new educational theory, on the one hand, and the development of preventive medicine, on the other, play is no longer considered a waste of time and luxury, and playgrounds have come to be regarded as an important institution in the life of the child.

Playground work in Palestine was inaugurated by the late Mrs. Bertha Guggenheimer, of Virginia, after her visit to this country in 1925. In her will she earmarked certain funds for establishing and maintaining playgrounds in Palestine. The first playground was founded in 1925 in the Old City of Jerusalem, but owing to lack of space it could not remain there long and was transferred to another site on Zion Hill in 1927.

In 1928, the trustees of the fund turned over the administration of the playgrounds to Hadassah, Women's Zionist Organisation of America. Since then, six other Guggenheimer playgrounds have been opened in the country—a second playground in Jerusalem (Machneh Yehudah, near the Alliance Boys' School), one each in Tel-Aviv, Haifa and Rehoboth, and summer playgrounds in Safed and Raanana.

All the Guggenheimer playgrounds are situated in the poorest districts and are frequented by the children of the various Jewish communities and also by Arab and Armenian children. Entrance to the playgrounds is free to all children, without discrimination of race and creed. The only control of the attending children is the medical inspection carried out by the Hadassah Medical Organisation.

THE playgrounds are equipped with various apparatus, such as swings, giant strides, Swedish bars, etc., and have a clear field for the various games. Each playground has shower rooms, nooks and shelters for reading, handicrafts, music and club work.

Out of the heterogeneous crowd of children who flock to a newly opened playground there evolves a crystallised nucleus, from which in time there develops a definite children's community. During the

early stages of the work, a children's council is appointed by the children themselves, which meets once a week to discuss the programme of activities. In the course of time, with the development of the children's community, groups or social units are formed on the basis of common interests. Each playground has its work corners, such as carpentry shop, gardening, pets corner, art corner, etc. These corners are also conducted by the organised children, but are open to all the children. As the children's organisation develops, the council comes to be composed of group representatives, work corner representatives and leaders, who submit weekly reports on their work and plan for future activities.

THE first afternoon hours in the playground are devoted to the general playground activities, such as, organised and free games, music, reading, story-telling, dramatisation, and the various handicrafts: drawing, modelling, basketry, carpentry, construction, etc. Each child may choose the activity of interest to him and engage in it for an hour or two.

The last hour every day is devoted to a special, usually a joint function, such as a concert, cinema performance, general discussion, clean-up day, or a joint game.

The evening hours are utilised for group functions and club work for older children.

Of special importance is the work with the adolescent, who is in particular need of a leader. The leader must help the adolescent combine the instruction he receives at school with his everyday experiences and adjust himself to conditions, to prevent him from losing himself in everyday prosaic life, to raise him above the material things and to enable him to strive for the ideal in life. The adolescents cooperate with the playground leader in all



In a Playground in Palestine.

his work and serve as group leaders for the younger children. Every playground has at least two paid leaders, who are either young teachers or young people specialised in youth education.

THE playground programme contains also special periodic activities, such as camping and excursions, parties to mark the end of a certain activity, such as Book Party at the closing of the Book Week, dedication of the hut at the completion of its construction, the anniversary of the playground, holiday and festival celebrations, etc.

The playground site on Zion Hill had to be rented for six years. The second play-

ground was granted by the Alliance authorities for five years free of charge. The third playground in Tel-Aviv was given by the Municipality without charge for ten years, and the Municipality also participated in its preparation. The fourth playground in Haifa was opened on the site owned by the Hadar Hacarmel Council and was organised by the Hebrew Women's Organisation, which also gives about 50 per cent. of the budget.

Despite the urgent need of an all-year-round playground in Safed, the playground there has till now been open only during the summer owing to lack of means to maintain it throughout the year. Next year's plans are to extend it to a year round project.

The playgrounds in Rehobot and Raananah were established and are maintained entirely with local funds and receive only supervision from the Guggenheimer Playground Administration.

The above-mentioned playgrounds should be regarded as only the beginning of playground work in Palestine. There is evident need of expanding the work, and it is hoped that the initiative taken by Rehobot and Raananah will set the pace for other communities. By the nature of their financial resources—the interest from a fixed trust fund—the Guggenheimer Playgrounds cannot be expected to expand in number. Their internal development, however, is constantly going forward. The Guggenheimer Playground Administration is, moreover, at the service of any community which turns to them to organise and supervise a locally supported playground. The leaders trained in their own playgrounds may be expected to be a nucleus for playground workers throughout the country, as the need arises.

The Rothschild Intermarriage

A MEMBER of the London branch of the Rothschild family has recently outraged the feelings of Jewry by marrying outside the fold and having her marriage sanctified by a Christian service in a Christian house of worship. While this is not the first instance of the kind in the family, the fact that the offender is the daughter of a highly-respected Jewish communal worker and the lay head of the premier Jewish religious organisation of England, the United Synagogue, makes the action doubly offensive. No blame can be attached to the father of the bride, who absented himself from the religious ceremony in the church, and it is quite likely that he was deeply pained at his daughter's action, which cast a slur upon her people and upon the religion in which she was reared.

IF there is one point in Jewish life in which all the various elements of thought and of practice are in accord it is the attitude toward intermarriage. Even those who have definitely given up all Jewish observances

feel an aversion to a mixed marriage, which implies a complete severance from the group. With the exception of the small minority of convinced assimilationists, who regard the ultimate absorption of the Jews in the melting pot of humanity as the most desirable state, the great body of the Jew-partner to the pact is thoroughly imbued with all the implications of his civilisation and with its tremendous worth for himself and the world, it will be a simple matter for him to withstand the impact of the new influence consciously or unconsciously brought into the home by the Gentile partner, and eventually convert the latter to think and to feel Jewishly. This is obviously so far removed from our every-day experiences that it may be regarded only as a theoretical speculation, of little value in practical life.

THERE is, however, no section of Jewry that would sanction a procedure such as was practised in the Rothschild nuptials. Many Jews would regard it as even worse

than outright apostasy. It is conceivable that one changes his religion out of conviction, and no blame could be attached to such a process. It is also possible to conceive of a person, with whom religion is not a vital matter, agreeing to accept formally another religion because of expected benefits to himself or his family. While this cannot be justified on moral grounds, it is at least understandable.

But when a person, avowedly remaining within the fold of the religion and of the people in which he was born seeks the sanctification of an alien ritual and in an alien house of worship, of such a purely personal matter as marriage, possibly in order to accede to the wishes of the other party to the agreement, it may well be regarded by the people with whom he was formerly associated as an unforgivable slur and an abject servility to the dominant church. Jews rightly resent such an affront, especially when committed by a member of one of the most prominent families in Jewry, a family that has maintained for generations a staunch adherence to the Jewish people and to Jewish ideals.—“Jewish Exponent.”