

## A Man of Many Parts

*Jerushalmy, the Palestinian Chauffeur, who can talk to you about Shakespeare or the Talmud.*

By Ethel Hayman

**T**HE Jewish chauffeurs in Palestine have formed themselves into a kind of hierarchy. In common, they possess certain outstanding qualities of skill and bravery.

But the Prince of chauffeurs is Jerushalmy. Jerushalmy, the guide, philosopher, and friend of so many helpless tourists; Jerushalmy, who is always requisitioned if someone very special has to be driven; Jerushalmy, the hero of a story which several people told me at different times soon after my arrival in Eretz Israel.

And this is the story . . .

Jerushalmy was driving a certain wealthy German-American through Palestine, some years ago. The man evinced no interest in Zionism, but in spite of that Jerushalmy contrived to take him to several colonies in the Emek and somewhat opened his eyes to the sacrifice and work done by the Chaluzim there. The next day as Jerushalmy conducted his passenger to the boat at Haifa, he was astonished to have handed to him a letter with the mysterious injunction: "Don't open this until I am right out at sea." When at length Jerushalmy slit the envelope he found it contained a cheque for £1,000! One must assume it was in gratitude for the lesson.

Jerushalmy continued being a chauffeur, but his young brother went to the University at Milan, and is now a Doctor of Philosophy, though that doesn't prevent him from taking night shift at the Dead Sea Potash Works, with the intention of going onto the land later, when practicable.

There is a story (an apocryphal one I imagine) to the effect that Jerushalmy once said to a tourist who didn't know him: "Don't leave Palestine without seeing Jerushalmy—he's one of the items of interest here."

### A Cosmopolitan.

**J**ERUSHALMY speaks eight languages. He has travelled all over Europe, and the East. He can bargain for carpets in the heart of Persia, and shew you the ins and outs of Paris, London and Prague. In Palestine he has friends in all the highways and by-ways, and so, under his aegis, one sees and does more strange and interesting things than fall to the lot of less fortunately piloted visitors.

If the way is long and dull, Jerushalmy will beguile the time by singing Hebrew and Yiddish songs, occasionally soaring into Italian Opera. Or he will discourse on Shakespeare and the Talmud, discuss modern literature, or quote the Bible.

He will shoot wild duck in the marshes and have it cooked for you at the next stopping-place. He'll show you where David killed Goliath, and he'll transport you back two thousand years or more by the words "There is Ruth gleanings," as he points to an Arab woman in the fields, clad in her tangerine robe with its sculpturesque folds.

During the war he fought in Palestine, and also took part in the defence of the Jewish settlements in the 1929 riots.



Jerushalmy (on right) talking to a pioneer of Kfar Gileadi.

And with it all he is simple and kindly, always eager to do someone a good turn. He carries cigarettes and sweets with him when he pays a visit to the colonies, and will tell you proudly: "I saw the beginning of this Kvutzah. I gave them a hand in putting up their first wooden shacks. . . There wasn't a fruit tree planted then. Look at it now . . . Aren't the children lovely?"

And they are!

(Concluded from next column.)

billy-goat. But Motele, the little orphan, is one of the most lovable types that Sholom Aleichem has created, and in the film he is wonderfully portrayed by a child actor whose family name is Silberman. His large opalescent eyes, with their distant look, his natural mannerisms make a deep impression. The film company appears to have assembled an all-star cast. No type of Jew in "Laughter Through Tears" will be easily forgotten, because they live—on the screen—the joys, the sorrows, the sufferings, the tragedies, the dreams of our immediate ancestors, so well perpetuated by Sholom Aleichem . . .

The film in its original form was a silent movie, but when brought to New York, the dialogue and music were added, together with the English titles. Technically, "Laughter through Tears" is much superior to the average Yiddish "talkie."

## "LAUGHTER THROUGH TEARS"

*Sholom Aleichem's Great Story Comes to the Screen*

**T**O see "Laughter Through Tears," the film version of Sholom Aleichem's remarkable story "Motel Pesse dem Chazan's" was like stepping into a different air from which the comfortable poisons which we usually breathe, without knowing it, have been purged. To the "Western" Jew it is a rarefied, freely moving, at first somewhat comfortless, but later a salutary and bracing air. Perhaps the writer has taken the Jewish galuth for his symbol, for he leads us through treacherous and devious paths; withholds all hope that we can arrive, and leaves the attempt with us as an image crystallising a conception of life.

Sholom Aleichem has written penetratingly upon Jewish life in the smaller communities and villages, but instead of brooding on their problems and shedding tears, he has seen the humorous side and presupposed a conception of our life that is all his own.

Transferred to the screen the story sometimes becomes extraordinarily inspiring and sustains a vitality unexampled in the average Jewish picture.

The film possesses an exhilarating movement and a supreme naturalness. The villagers utter tenderly, almost laughingly, the most profound or terrible things. The effect is all delight, the matter all darkness.

You see the entire village and all its inhabitants before your eyes, with all its poverty and all the consequent noise of a forgotten corner of a world that is so strange to us and yet so near . . . the struggling workers, the rich *bale-batim*, the religious officials, the melamed and his cheder, the romance of the tailor's daughter and the chazan's son, and the unfortunate orphan "Motele," whose soul Sholom Aleichem understood so well and portrayed so graphically—all this is thrown on the screen with so much attention given to detail, that you feel that you are in the age of television; seeing not merely a film, but actual life in an East European Jewish village. Yet this life was the ordinary everyday world for millions of our race in Old Russia.

### A Goat.

**T**HE central figure in the story is a goat much desired by Zipe Beila, the tailor's *yiddene*. Because of the goat the family life of the tailor was ruined, and heartrending indeed is the last scene, when the unfortunate family is compelled to leave the village, under an order from the Czar.

If you wish, you have in this picture, a symbolical picture of Jewish life in the Galuth . . .

The story in the original Yiddish carries the name of the chazan's orphan, Motele, but he is not the central figure in the film version, whose English title is "Laughter Through Tears." Rather would we point to Shimon-Eliyahu, who is a continual victim of the saloon-keeper who persists in substituting the tailor's nanny-goat for a

(Concluded in preceding column.)



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