

# **Pictures of Jewish Home-Life Fifty Years Ago eBook**

## **Pictures of Jewish Home-Life Fifty Years Ago**

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# Contents

<a href="#">Pictures of Jewish Home-Life Fifty Years Ago eBook.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Table of Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Page 1.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">Page 2.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Page 3.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">Page 4.....</a>	<a href="#">11</a>
<a href="#">Page 5.....</a>	<a href="#">13</a>
<a href="#">Page 6.....</a>	<a href="#">15</a>
<a href="#">Page 7.....</a>	<a href="#">16</a>
<a href="#">Page 8.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">Page 9.....</a>	<a href="#">18</a>
<a href="#">Page 10.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">Page 11.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">Page 12.....</a>	<a href="#">22</a>
<a href="#">Page 13.....</a>	<a href="#">24</a>
<a href="#">Page 14.....</a>	<a href="#">26</a>
<a href="#">Page 15.....</a>	<a href="#">28</a>
<a href="#">Page 16.....</a>	<a href="#">30</a>
<a href="#">Page 17.....</a>	<a href="#">31</a>
<a href="#">Page 18.....</a>	<a href="#">32</a>
<a href="#">Page 19.....</a>	<a href="#">33</a>
<a href="#">Page 20.....</a>	<a href="#">34</a>
<a href="#">Page 21.....</a>	<a href="#">35</a>
<a href="#">Page 22.....</a>	<a href="#">37</a>



Page 23..... 38  
Page 24..... 40  
Page 25..... 42  
Page 26..... 44  
Page 27..... 46  
Page 28..... 47  
Page 29..... 48  
Page 30..... 50  
Page 31..... 52  
Page 32..... 54  
Page 33..... 56  
Page 34..... 58  
Page 35..... 60  
Page 36..... 61  
Page 37..... 63  
Page 38..... 66



# Table of Contents

Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
THE ARRIVAL IN JERUSALEM	1
THE OFFENCE	1
THE BOY BENJAMIN	1
FRIDAY EVE	2
WORD OF LOVE	2
UNCLE'S LETTER	3
THE HOLY CITY	4
THE PROUD BOYS OF JERUSALEM	4
THE WELCOME	5
THE CELEBRATION OF PURIM	9
THE BAKING OF THE MATZOS ADVENTURES	12
TEMPTATION—AND JONATHAN	13
SPRING CLEANING	13
LOTS OF FUN	14
THE BONFIRE	15
HOW TO ENJOY THE PASSOVER IN LONDON	15
LAG B'OMER	15
THE SABBATH IN PALESTINE	20
THE SUCCA	23
HOW CHARITY IS GIVEN	25
FATHER FROST IN JERUSALEM	27
ENGAGEMENT AND WEDDING CEREMONIES	30
APPENDIX	34
GLOSSARY	36



# Page 1

## THE ARRIVAL IN JERUSALEM

On a Friday afternoon everyone was very busy in Benjamin's home washing and dressing to go to Shule. The mother was getting the living-room clean and tidy for the Sabbath.

## THE OFFENCE

The family lived in a few rooms off Commercial Road, in one of the many back streets. The underground kitchen had to be used as the dining-and sitting-room, for they had not been many years in England and it was a hard struggle for Benjamin's parents to make ends meet and provide for a large family.

The father and the elder boys were dressing as best they could in this room. Just then the mother came in, very excited, and said to her husband: "What will you say to this? I gave Benjamin his Sabbath clothes and a clean tsitsith, and what do you think he did?"

"What?" asked the father, and stopped brushing his clothes.

"Why, he took the tsitsith and threw it on the floor, and said he would never wear it again. I punished him, and told him to put it on again. So you had better go to him and give him what he deserves."

"You are rather hasty, my dear wife," said the father; "for, before punishing him, you should have asked him why he did such a thing."

"What!" exclaimed the mother, "do you think I have nothing else to do but to stand and argue with him just before Sabbath, when I have so much work? You are far too easy-going, Jacob—you should really be firmer with the children."

"No, no!" said Jacob, who was a kindly man and understood human nature better than his hasty, but well-meaning and loving, wife. The struggle and constant hard work in keeping the home of a large family was telling upon her, and any disobedience in the children irritated her very much.

"We must not be hasty with the children," continued Jacob, "especially now-a-days, for they live under different circumstances from those we knew when we were young. Instead of hastily scolding and punishing them, let us rather quietly reason with them, when possible, and show them where they are wrong."

"Perhaps you may be right," said Benjamin's mother; "so let us leave the matter till you return from Shule and have had our Sabbath meal—then you can quietly ask Benjamin why he acted as he did."



## THE BOY BENJAMIN

An elder brother was sent to call Benjamin to go to Shule with his father and brothers. Benjamin expected a scolding from his father similar to that which he had had from his mother, so he came into the room looking very sulky. As nothing was said to him on the subject when he came into the room, he took his prayer-book, and followed his father to Shule.

Benjamin was like many other boys of 13, not very clever, but blessed with a good deal of common sense. His great ambition was to become a teacher, and so he worked steadily at his lessons. His reason for wishing to be a teacher was that he wanted to rule and to punish boys as his master did. Whenever he had a caning from his headmaster he always consoled himself with the thought that *his* turn would come some day—when he was a teacher—to do the same to other boys.



## Page 2

When they returned from Shule and nothing was said, even at the evening meal, about the way Benjamin had annoyed his mother, he was rather surprised. His mother, during the time they were at Shule, had made the living-room, which was really the kitchen, look so clean and bright with the five lighted candles placed on the snow-white tablecloth, and the old stove so well polished, that it almost looked as bright as a looking glass. What interested the young ones most was the saucepan which stood on one side of the stove waiting for its contents to be put on the table, and, oh, how they enjoyed the sweet savour which came from it!

### FRIDAY EVE

They all gathered round the table to welcome the Princess Sabbath. The father made kiddush, and the wine cup was handed round to all. Then they washed their hands and said a prayer before sitting down to the evening meal, which passed off very pleasantly, and zmires (or songs or psalms of praise) were sung at intervals during the meal.

When the meal was ended, and the grace said by the father, they all separated: one or two went out for a walk, while the other members of the family took a newspaper or a book and quietly read.

When the table was cleared, the mother sat down to rest. Grateful, indeed, was she for this Sabbath rest after her week's hard work. She often said that, for such as herself, no blessing was as great as the command: "Thou shalt not do any work on the Sabbath."

### WORD OF LOVE

When all were quietly settled down, Benjamin's father took him between his knees, and said: "My son, I wish to ask you something, and I want you to answer my question frankly and truly. What made you throw the tsitsith down on the floor this afternoon and say to your mother that you would not wear it?"

The boy Benjamin dropped his head and was silent for a minute or two, for to hear his father speak in a kindly way made Benjamin far more ashamed of himself and his deed than if his father had scolded him and given him a whipping—in fact, he felt so wretched that he longed to run out of the room and hide himself from everybody. His father's knowledge of human nature made him understand what was passing through Benjamin's mind, and he said: "Do not fear to tell me, my son, why you acted in such an unusual way, for there must be some reason for a Jewish boy to act so."

With his head still down, Benjamin said: "When I go swimming in the baths, my school-fellows see my tsitsith when I undress, and they make fun of it and pull it about, and say



all sorts of nasty things to me for wearing it, and it makes me feel I cannot stand it any longer. I will gladly put on my tsitsith at home in the morning when I say my prayers, but, Father, do let me go to school without wearing it?”

“I expected something like this,” said his father, looking at his wife. “Listen to me, my child—instead of being ashamed, you should feel it a privilege to wear tsitsith.”

## Page 3

“But I can’t see why,” said Benjamin.

“Well,” said his father, “I will tell you the idea of the tsitsith. When you say the Shema twice a day, as every good Jew is expected to do, you read in it that God commanded us, through Moses, to wear a fringe on our garment—the tsitsith, a visible sign to remind us of His Commandments, just in the same way as a table, spread ready for a meal, reminds us of our meals. Our religion is not a thing to be kept only for the Sabbath and the Holy Days, and left out of our minds on all other days. Our religion must be a living influence, always with us, so the tsitsith is a very simple kind of symbol to be ever worn to remind a Jew of his God, his duty to Him and to his neighbour. It is not only we Jews who have religious symbols; every other religion has them. Now imagine if you were to go up to a Christian boy and mock him and say nasty words to him for wearing a cross, or crucifix, he would turn round and fight you, and he would be right in doing so, for no one has a right to insult another for wearing or doing what he believes to be holy. Instead of being ashamed when you were mocked and laughed at by Christian boys for wearing your tsitsith, you should have asked them to hear you explain the reason for wearing it. I am sure they would not have laughed at you any more. They would respect you for trying to be true and to live up to your convictions.

“We Jews have, in the past, made a great mistake in not letting the outside world know more of the deeper spiritual meaning of each of our symbols. Had we not done this, we should have been better understood by non-Jews, and our children would not have suffered as you and many others also have done, through the ignorant mocking of your Christian schoolmates.

“I know that in Palestine the Jews, whether old or young, greatly love to wear their tsitsith, and take a pride in letting them be seen, so that the Arabs and the Turks look upon the tsitsith as a sacred garment.”

[Illustration: *The father teaching the child the meaning of the tsitsith (sacred garment)*]

## UNCLE’S LETTER

“How do you know this, Father?” said Benjamin.

By this time all in the room had dropped their papers and books, and were listening to their father.

“Well, this is how I know: nearly thirty years ago my uncle and his family went to live in Jerusalem, and for many years one of my cousins used to write to me about once a month. His letters were most interesting. When his letters came I could almost imagine, when reading them, that I was living in Bible times.

“Have you any of his letters still, Father?” they all exclaimed.



“Yes,” said the father, “I have many of them.”

“Oh, do read some of them to us!” they pleaded. “All right, I will; and I will first try to find the one about the tsitsith.”

## Page 4

The father went up to his bedroom, and soon came down with a bundle of letters wrapped in a newspaper. He started looking through them while all the family stood around him, watching as eagerly as if he were searching for an heirloom.

“I will choose a very short one,” said the father, “for it is on the subject I have spoken to Benjamin about; but if you like I will make it a rule every Friday evening, after our Sabbath meal, to read some of the letters to you.”

### THE HOLY CITY

When all were quietly and comfortably seated, their father started reading:

“My dear Cousin,—After a great many adventures and suffering (which I will write to you about another time) we arrived safely in Jerusalem. To me, it seemed rather dull after London, but both father and mother shed tears of joy when they at last arrived in the Holy City. Some people met us a little way out, for father had written telling them we were coming. We were almost royally received and heartily welcomed, for very few Jews come here with their young families.

“We must have looked a sight—you in London could not imagine anything like our cavalcade! First went Father riding on a mule, with Mother following on another mule. Mother’s saddle was made with pillows, for it is impossible for a woman to ride for sixteen or eighteen hours without a soft, comfortable seat.

“You go up high hills, and then down again, imagining every time you go down that you will topple over and fall over the precipice and be killed. In fact, your heart is in your mouth every five minutes, so that by the time you arrive in Jerusalem (which is surrounded by hills) you are almost too weak to rejoice at the beauty that greets your sight, for nowhere in the world can, I think, anything be seen more beautiful than a sunrise over the mountains around Jerusalem.

“Oh, I forgot to tell you that we youngsters were put into baskets on a camel’s back, and how we were shaken! I felt as if I were praying and shaking all the time, for it seemed as if we could never get to Jerusalem alive in this way.”

### THE PROUD BOYS OF JERUSALEM

“At last we entered the Holy City, and arrived at Father’s friend’s house, where we were made very welcome and treated most kindly. I soon made friends with the boys, for, you know, I can speak yiddish quite well.

“They are funny little chaps. They look like old men, with long kaftans (coats) and side ear-locks of hair, carrying their prayer book or Bible to Shule. The first thing I noticed

was the tsitsith. They wear really long ones, with long fringes hanging down about a quarter of a yard or more. They wear them as we do a waistcoat, so that they can be seen by everyone, not as we wear them in England, tucked away out of sight. Here young and old, even little boys who can only just walk and lisp their prayers,

## Page 5

wear them, and, what is more, take a real pleasure in wearing them. I asked some of them why they wore them so openly, and they answered: 'Because when we look at them we always remember that our chief duty in life is to try to obey God's commands, and if we had them tucked away out of sight we should forget to be obedient.' 'Besides,' they said, 'we are commanded in the Torah to do so openly.' Then I told them if we wore them so openly in Europe we should perhaps be laughed at by some people and made fun of. They said: 'Why should doing so make us be laughed at by other nations? Do we laugh at the symbols and charms that many of them wear? Every nation,' they said, 'has its tokens and symbols, and we Jews have ours, and we should rejoice in wearing ours when they are to help us to feel that God is near us when we think and act rightly.' All this made me think very seriously, and in a way I had never thought before. I began to realize that they were more in the right than we Jews are in England.

"So now I have decided to wear my tsitsith, too, on the outside, as the Jerusalem boys do. The boys never play except on the quiet, just now and then, for their parents think that their only duty in life is to study and do as many Mitzvoth as they can. Really, the boys are as full of fun and pranks as we English boys, and they just love a bit of play and larking when they can get it.

"I must now end this letter, but I have a lot more to tell you, and I will keep my promise and write you by degrees of all I see. Meanwhile, I send you the greeting of Zion and Sabbath. Rachael wanted to put a letter into my envelope to your sister, but she says she has not finished it yet, although she has already written ten pages. So I will wait no longer, in case I miss the post, as it goes only once a week from here, and sometimes only once a month."

Thus ended the first letter, and Benjamin's brothers and sisters were so pleased with it that they were delighted that one of the bundle of letters should be read aloud after the Sabbath meal on every Friday evening.

Benjamin was quite happy now, for, although he had done a thing which was not right, now that he had repented good would come out of it, for there was a chance of their now having pleasanter and more instructive Sabbath evenings than they had ever had before. Besides, he now made up his mind always to wear his tsitsith.

## THE WELCOME

On the following Friday, after the Sabbath evening meal, the boys asked their father to read them another letter from his cousin in Jerusalem. He was pleased at their



eagerness, and, while Upstairs getting the letter, some of the boys' friends came in and settled comfortably down, for all were eager to hear the letter read.

Mr Jacob said: "This time I will read a letter from your Cousin Dora to my sister which will certainly interest you, my dear," turning to his daughter, "but at the same time, I think it will interest you all."



## Page 6

“My dear Milly,—Isaac must have written to Jacob all about our arrival, so I will begin by giving you some idea of our life here and my impressions. The people, who so kindly asked us to stay with them till Father finds a dwelling, have a few rooms in a house, which has a marble paved courtyard. Six other families also have two or three rooms each. All the work is done in the courtyard, even the cooking; for each family uses tiny stoves, made of mud, into which they put a little lighted charcoal and cook just outside or near their own doors; for there are no kitchens or fireplaces in any of the rooms, and thus we see what each family cooks. The Sephardim (Jews who have lived here for years) eat their meals in the courtyard. They lay a mat on the marble tiles, on which they place a small low table, and they sit on the mat and eat. Two Sephardim families have rooms in the house and they speak Arabic and Spanish, and their ways of living are more like those of the Turks, just as the Jews in England live more like the English.

“Everyone seems most interested in us. Many people have come to visit us, to see the new arrivals!

“The evening of the day on which we arrived was Friday; there was a clear moonlight such as you would not often see in England, and it was very warm, too; so we and our visitors sat in the courtyard. All eagerly asked us many questions, till quite late; and thus the evening passed very quickly and pleasantly.

“After prayers on Sabbath some people sent a bottle of wine and a most delicious pudding, which is made nowhere but in Jerusalem. It tastes like milk and honey, with other tasty things mixed up in it. Others sent a lovely sponge cake, coated with different-coloured sugar-icing: many other good things were also given to us; and they lasted us for nearly a month.

“Later in the day the people who sent the eatables paid us visits, and ate some of the good things. It is rather a nice custom, I think, for new arrivals to have no bother to prepare food for their visitors, as it gives them time to enjoy their company. What a lot of talking there was! The men discussed several things with Father, while the women wanted to know many things about England which Mother could tell them. The boys and girls could not take their eyes off our clothes, so much did they admire them! It was quite amusing, the funny questions they asked us about them. They all promised to help us look for a dwelling; and they kept their promise. I can tell you it was a great help and comfort to us that they did, for I don't know what would have become of us out here, away from our old friends, where the ways of living are so different from what we have been used to. Whether it will always be so or not, of course I can't say—time alone will show.



## Page 7

“Very soon afterwards they found us a vacant dwelling, which Father was very thankful to get, and in my next letter I will tell you something of our life after we had moved in; but I must tell you more of what happened when we were staying with our kind host. The first afternoon, one of our visitors insisted on our I going to her home; so, when I and our youngsters arrived, we were taken to a room, and in it was a table covered with lovely apricots, and delicious-looking pastries and jams; also wine which only cost 3d. a bottle, so it is very nearly as cheap as buying water. When they handed us some of the good things we naturally took them and ate them.

“Suddenly I saw our host’s children move away from us saying: ‘She is a Shiksa,’ and ‘He is a Shakitz,’ and they kept on whispering and pointing to us. I could not think what we had done to make them act in such a way, and so asked their mother. She answered: ‘They are surprised to see you eating without making a Brocha (a blessing), for our children unless they first make a Brocha never taste anything.’

“You know, dear Milly, that, though we too were taught to do as they here, yet the hurry and scurry of going to school and the busy life in London have made us forget to practise these religious laws. We, however, felt very uncomfortable and ashamed of ourselves, and made up our minds to get into the habit of doing it—that is to remember to thank our Creator for every blessing we receive, including food—so that it should become a matter-of-course.

“Now I must tell you about our water-supply, for the scarcity of water struck us, very much, coming from London; for here every drop is precious and is used for several things, as every drop has to be bought, and money amongst our Jerusalem brethren is very scarce. In fact, it often costs more than the wine of the country.

“A water-carrier brings us up every morning a skin bag of water (it is made of skins sewn together, with a small outlet at the top); for it we pay twopence, which is equal to more than a shilling in London. The water that he brings he pours into a large earthen jar, which keeps it cool, and to it is attached over the mouth of the jar a sieve which is made of thick unbleached calico: if this were not done, hundreds of little red worms would get into the jar, because the water in Palestine is full of them. A law was made by the Jews that to drink water that had not been passed through a sieve was a sin; and, as little children are taught not to commit any sin, they do not drink any water that has not been passed through a sieve; owing to this, many illnesses are prevented among the Jews that are rampant among the Arabs and others.



## Page 8

“The Jews are also very careful about their water for ordinary use, yet they really employ it more plentifully than we do in London when used in connection with laws of health as laid down in the Shulchan Aruch (a book of laws). For example, as soon as you step out of your bed, you pour water over your hands, wash your face, gargle your throat, and rub your teeth with a clean finger and rinse your mouth. No one would think of moving out of the room without doing this. I know among the very orthodox Jews in London they do the same thing, but the average Jew does not do it, and here it is done by everyone—even a baby is taught to do it the same way.

“Later in the day, or when the men go to Synagogue, and we have finished with our household duties, we have the regular soap-and-water wash. Then again, everytime we have a meal we have to wash our hands and repeat a blessing; and, as this is done at various other times in a large family, it takes a good deal of water, but as it is used for cleaning purposes we need not stint ourselves. This law is especially valuable here, for it is very hot, and, if we were not very clean and especially careful about cleansing our eyes and mouths and throat, we should run the risk of catching a great many diseases which are quite common in the Holy Land at present.

“I remarked to some women that it surprised me how much water was used for personal washing considering how scarce it was, but they told me that they were as careful with every drop of water as they were with food; none was wasted. Where the religious laws commanded the use of water for personal washing and cleansing they did not grudge it; for was not the body of man the temple where the Holy Spirit of God dwelt? God’s spirit is in each one of us, and, therefore, we must do our best to keep our bodies clean for the presence of our Heavenly King, just as carefully as we should keep a house or palace clean in which our earthly king dwelt—more carefully indeed. What would courtiers around an earthly king say if they saw us take our food in the presence of the king, and praise him, with dirty hands?

“They save water in many ways that are rather amusing to a stranger until he gets to know the reason for it. For instance, they do not, at meals, use different plates on the Sabbath, when they have a few courses: they eat the fish on one side of the plate, and then they wipe it and turn the plate over, and have soup and meat on the deeper side—thus saving the washing of many plates.

“In my next letter I will write you all my tribulations and struggles in getting used to the new life when we moved into our own house. My great comfort is that we have got to know an American family, and they have been so kind to us and so cheery that it has made us feel a bit brighter, and Mother says that in time we shall get used to our new life. But I doubt it after living in London.”

When Mr Jacob had finished reading the letter the young folks began talking, the older ones listening and giving a smile now and then.



## Page 9

One said: "I should not like to be there."

"Neither should I," said another girl; "it must be awful after London."

"The only thing that I like about the life," said the former, "is the hospitality and the friendliness that they show to one another, and the jolly good time they give to people who are utter strangers to them. We don't do that here—we seem cold and unfriendly."

### THE CELEBRATION OF PURIM

As had now become a custom, the young friends of the Jacobs had all collected on the next Friday evening in the bright and warm kitchen-sitting room. After a short friendly chat with them Mr Jacobs said:

"As Purim will begin in two days, perhaps you would like to hear how our cousins saw it celebrated when they went to Palestine, so I have chosen this letter to read to you this evening:

"In Jerusalem a week is none too long to prepare for Purim. As you know, when we lived in London we always were strict about keeping our holy days; but while there I never realized the pleasure and excitement during Purim that one sees in Jerusalem.

"Old and young are equally full of fun and joy, and there is plenty of rushing about with sleeves tucked up. At other times the women here gossip a great deal, and the girls naturally copy their elders and gossip too; but, when preparing for Purim, they are all too busy to talk or even to ask questions. The boys, too, up to the age of twelve, are allowed to help. Some break up the big pieces of loaf-sugar, and beat up the eggs, and take the cakes, when ready, to the public ovens, for here there are no proper ovens as there are in London houses, so a public oven is built not far from the Synagogue. It is very large, and each family sends its cakes in its own tins to be baked in it. Generally about half a dozen tins are carried by each boy. Nothing I have seen before can be compared with the many kinds of delicious cakes and stuffed monkeys that are seen here. My mouth waters even when I think of the delicious strudels filled with sesames and plenty of raisins and shiros! These things are very cheap here.

"As there are not many boys free to help, you see quite young children, as well as young women and even grandmothers, going to and from the public oven, carrying tins of all the Purim delicacies. As they wait while the cakes are being baked, or waiting their turn to have their cakes put in, oh! what a chatter there is, and I imagine nowhere else can there be anything like it. I called it the 'Female Club' instead of 'An Old Maids Club,' as Mr Zangwill did, for there were no old maids waiting near the oven.

"Most of them come as early as 5 a.m., and none care to leave till they have their cakes baked, for, if you do, your tins will be pushed aside as you are not there to scream at

and scold the baker—if someone slips a copper into his hand he, on the quiet, puts their tins in first, though they may have come later!

## Page 10

“Besides, if you are not there to watch carefully (for the tins are not named or numbered), someone might take your tins in exchange for his own, if the cakes, *etc.*, look more tempting. During Purim this is not looked upon as stealing, but merely as a joke or a bit of fun. The youngsters will not move an inch unless they can trust someone to take their place. So I leave you to try to imagine the noise and the chatter. There is probably not a thing that has happened in Jerusalem during the last two months that is not discussed around the public oven while people are waiting for their cake-tins; and, as everyone wants to talk rather than to listen, the noise is like the buzz in a factory.

“After all the cooking and so forth was finished, of course we had to keep the Fast of Esther, and everyone, even babies went to Shule to hear the Megilla (the *Book of Esther*) read; and, when the Chazan came to Haman, the Gragers went off with just such a noise as they do in the London Shules in Old Montague Street or Booth Street. Then we went home; and after the evening meal the joyfulness began, for they did not wait till the next day, as we do in England.

“As only one room was lighted up by each family to economize light and for other reasons—there are no curtains or blinds to draw down—we were able to go through all Meah Sheorim and stop a minute or two at every lighted window and watch the goings on. We heard nothing but singing and clapping of hands, while the children danced. Sometimes one of the elders looking on could not resist joining in the fun, and tied his kaftan behind his back so as to leave his legs free, put one of the youngsters on his shoulders, and danced like a chassid or a jolly Irishman.

“As we went from house to house peeping in at the windows, sometimes some of the family would come out and drag us in by force, and make us drink wine and eat cakes. If we did not wish to join in the dancing, but wanted to leave, they would just say ‘Shalom’—‘go in peace but come again.’ I can tell you it was jolly, and nowhere else in all the world could Yomtov be kept up as it is here.

“We were given wine in so many houses that from the eldest to the youngest we were beginning to feel rather funny. Next morning, after being well shaken up by Father, and after we had had a wash with cold water in the open air, we made up our minds to be firmer at the next Purim.

“After going in the morning to hear the Chazan again, and coming home and enjoying the Hamantaschen and other good things, then begins the pleasure and excitement of sending Shalach-manoth to friends, acquaintances, and chiefly to the poor, and even to enemies if you have any. As you are supposed, if possible, to send back to the sender something similar to what is sent to you, things cannot be made ready beforehand. To the poor you always send useful presents as well as delicacies which are likely to last them for months or longer.



## Page 11

“As to the beggars, I never imagined there could be so many in one country. We generally get enough beggars coming to us on Fridays and before holy days, but at Yom Kippur and Purim they come in crowds. Most of them are Sephardim and Yeminites. It is true you give each of them only a para, which is about a quarter of a farthing, and they give you a blessing for it; but, if they come to a rich class of home and are not given there according to the style of the house, they upbraid the people, and even curse them, so the children are told to stand at the doors with paras and cakes, *etc.* At some houses they are invited in. Each carries a sack on his shoulder, expecting, I suppose, that it will be filled with good things by the time Purim is over; and, as they never pass a door without begging, they are not likely to be disappointed.

“The fun I enjoyed best was the uncovering of our plates and seeing what Shalachmonus had been sent to us. A cap had been sent to Father, made of velvet, with tails of sable and other skins round it. Father felt very downcast, for he did not at all like the idea of giving up wearing the high hat that he always wore in London on Sabbaths and holidays. Whether he will wear the velvet schtramel or not I cannot tell, but I will wait and see who wins—Father or the community—for we have some idea who sent it.

“Mother received a beautiful, soft silk kerchief to wear on her head, and it seemed a sign that the community wanted her to put her wig aside and wear a kerchief instead. I was most thankful they did not send me a pair of scissors. If they had, I should have thought they wanted me to cut my plaits off. Well, I should have fought for my hair as I would for life!

“In the afternoon I went to visit some friends, and I found a house full of men, young and old, with their schtramel on their heads, and their kaftans tied back, singing at the very top of their voices (and some have very fine voices); others were clapping their hands, while eight men, four on each side, were dancing what looked like a pantomime ballet that I once went to. It was simply grand to watch them, for some were old men with long, white beards, while others were serious-looking young men who are to be seen daily in the street walking to and from their homes and Shules, always deep in thought and so very serious-looking that you would imagine that they did not know how to smile. Here they were, on this Purim afternoon, dancing with all their might, and with bright, smiling eyes! You could see it was not wine that had made them bright and cheery: it was the spirit, or fire, of their religious zeal commemorating with thankfulness the anniversary of the day when their nation was saved from destruction. Of course I was too fascinated watching them at the time to think this was the reason for this unusual sight.

“After a while, they went to pay visits to the Rav and to others who were scholars or pious men in the community. Often when walking to the various houses they would catch hold of others and dance with them in the open streets as you see children doing when an organ-grinder plays.

## Page 12

“I was so attracted by them, and so was everyone who saw them, that we followed them at a respectful distance. Sometimes someone had had a little too much wine when visiting and it had gone to his head. Then some of the party would say: ‘Ah well, it is Purim—there is no shame.’

“I told Father this when I returned home, and he explained to me that their rejoicing during Purim did not mean simply a material satisfaction—it was a spiritual rejoicing, as on Simhath Torah, when the Reading of the Law was started again, so that during Purim and Simhath Torah allowance is made if a little more wine is taken than is usually the case.

“Then we had Purim Schpielers, who visited every house, dressed up very funnily and full of jokes; some acted, and some were disguised. In fact, it was the happiest Purim I have ever spent, and I doubt if there is any other place where it could be spent so happily. For here in Jerusalem we are all like one large family: respect is paid to the righteous and to worthy scholars, whether they are poor or rich. Money has not the same power here. There is a good deal of quarrelling and mischief going on among our female neighbours, but the quarrels are not very serious but more like quarrels in a large family. In another letter I will write about our ‘Female Club.’”

## THE BAKING OF THE MATZOS

Friday evening came round again, and the friends of the Jacob family were comfortably seated in the bright cellar-kitchen, eagerly waiting to hear another letter read, for old and young were equally interested in hearing details of life in Palestine so many years ago.

On coming in with a letter Mr Jacob said: “As preparation for the Passover is not far off, I think it will interest you to hear how it was done in Palestine.”

They all agreed, so he began:

“My dear Jacob,—Please forgive my not having written sooner, but I have really been too busy. We have just had Passover. I think you will be glad to hear how we prepared for it here. Each family is forced to bake its own matzos, as none can be bought from abroad. It was no easy matter, I can tell you, especially the baking, and it is a good thing we had strong teeth, as the matzos are not rolled out as thin as in London and are pretty hard to eat. There’s a lot of fun attached to making matzos, but I am thankful the baking comes only once a year.

“As each family in turn gets the use of the public baking-oven, it is necessary to start soon after Purim to prepare the special flour used for matzos. In every house a room is set apart and thoroughly cleansed for the wheat, which is laid out on large trays. Then



during the winter it is examined by the mother and girls to see that no dust be mixed with it, and sometimes neighbours come in and help. All who enter this room must have very clean hands; even the finger-nails must be carefully cleaned, and clean clothes put on, so that there is no chance of any chometz. When enough of the best grains have been selected, they are washed, dried, and then ground into flour.



## Page 13

“As each family’s turn comes round for the use of the bakehouse, those who help always wash very carefully and put on clean overalls; also new cooking-utensils are always used.

“Water is carried by a few of the elder men of the family, as the youngsters would not be trusted to carry it without spilling it.

### ADVENTURES

“There is great talking among those waiting their turn for the use of the oven, and great teasing, and sometimes fighting, amongst the boys. Now and then one of the elder men pulls their ears with a vengeance for being ‘shkotzim’, as he calls it. Then they keep quiet till he goes away. When our turn came, Millie kneaded the flour, while father poured the water on for her. You remember what a strong girl she is, and she did the kneading with such a will that I warned her not to get too hot. No flour-dredgers are used. My duty was to roll out the dough, but Mother wasn’t satisfied with the way I did it, and sent me to put more wood in the oven. When the oven was hot enough, I had to sweep all the burnt wood and ashes out to get it nice and clean.

[Illustration: CHADAR (*school*)]

“Then we started to put the matzos in, one by one. Oh, it was hot work! I hardly knew what to do, it was so hot. Mother came and pushed me aside, saying to herself I was good for nothing. In fact, my dear Jacob, one wants training to stand such heat, as one does to be a blacksmith. Mother said that making matzos teaches us to realize what some of the hardships were that our forefathers went through in Egypt. I hope it will become easier in time, for all the others are quite happy making and baking them, singing at the same time.

“Well, well! to be a true Jew is a hard matter. As I grow older and get more knowledge and sense I shall find a pleasure in doing these things.

### TEMPTATION—AND JONATHAN

“After a few hours of hard work all the newly baked matzos were put in a basket, in which had been laid a clean table-cloth; and, when all had been carefully packed in, they were covered with another white cloth. What I felt most was not being allowed to taste a bit, for it is forbidden till Seder to eat any of the matzos. As I was carrying the basket home, I felt as if the devil was in me, and the temptation was so strong that I undid the cord and took one out. Hearing someone coming up behind me, I slipped it hurriedly into my pocket and took up the basket and started off again.



“I heard the footsteps coming closer until who should come up to me but my best friend, Jonathan? He glared at me and said: ‘Oh you sinner in Israel!’ ‘Why, what have I done?’ I exclaimed. ‘I saw you put a matzo in your pocket!’ he said.

“I felt hot all over, for I did not want him to have a bad opinion of me, as we had sworn friendship to each other like Jonathan and David.



## Page 14

“So I took the matzo out of my pocket, threw it in the gutter, and jumped on it.

“‘Why have you done that?’ he said. ‘Because I don’t want you to think badly of me.’ ‘Yet you did not care for what God thought!’ he said. ‘Don’t you know that our Rabbis say that a bad thought is just as evil as a bad deed; for, if we check a bad thought or wish, it helps us not to put the bad thoughts or wish into action. If we were as anxious to please God as we are to please our friends, and to be as well thought of by Him, we should check our bad thoughts before they led us to do bad deeds.’

“He said, too, that he was sorry to see that I cared more for his approval than I did for God’s approval. I promised for the future to try to overcome any evil thoughts or wishes that came into my mind so that I should not be so tempted to do wrong—in fact I would try to check a bad thought in the bud.

“Then he forgave me, and we parted good friends, for I love him. He is exactly what I think Jonathan must have been to David, and I will write more about him in another letter.

“When I arrived home, we had to prepare and cleanse the house for Passover. We had to do all the work ourselves, for we could not hire any helpers except, by a stroke of luck, the ‘white-washers,’ as they are called.

### SPRING CLEANING

“All the furniture is put out of doors, not even a pin is left in the house. As everyone does the same, a stranger passing by would think there must be a ‘jumble sale’ going on.

“Passover time is usually like lovely English summer weather. As very little water can be got, guess how everything is scrubbed and rubbed!

“Outside Meah Sheorim there are large holes from which clay has been taken for building purposes, and during the winter-rains they get filled with water and they look nearly as large as ponds.

“We carried or pushed all the furniture to one of these ponds, took sand moistened with a little water, and rubbed the furniture till it was white and clean. This we have to do three times: such is the rule. If any of the furniture was polished, you can imagine that not much of the polish was left after all this scrubbing and rubbing.

“We threw into the pond whatever we could, and as it was not deep, we pulled up our trousers, and washed those pieces of furniture in the water. Some threw in boards, and we made see-saws and played on them till one of us fell in. It was such fun! Sometimes the furniture got mixed, and it was hard to tell to whom it belonged. Indeed,



I never enjoyed myself so much as on this Erev Passover. Even more than in London when I went to see *Sindbad the Sailor*. There is plenty of fun going on when we are left free, but that is not often, you may be sure. The best fun we had was when someone threw a chair into the pond and sat on it while other boys pushed it along. Somebody else threw in a barrel and a few of us got on it, and then over we went into the water.



## Page 15

### LOTS OF FUN

“We were not anxious to go home, even for meals, when our mothers called us. When we did get home, we found all the walls looking lovely with fresh whitewash. For a few days we were not allowed to go into the house unless we took our outer clothes off to prevent our bringing in some chometz. The weather was beautifully warm, so that we really enjoyed eating our meals out of doors and calling out to other boys as they ate theirs.

“On the eve before Passover we had the fun of going to the Turkish bath and then to Mikva and help to have all new things ‘tavelt’, and then the greatest enjoyment was on the day for the preparation of the Seder!

### THE BONFIRE

“Before I stop writing I must tell you of the bonfire we had on Erev Passover, when over a hundred of us each threw the wooden spoon and remnants of chometz on the lighted fire, and then there was such a blaze for nearly two hours! We caught hold of each other’s hands and danced round the bonfire. Oh! it was a grand sight. Now I’m called to go to a Bar Mitzvah, but will write you again very soon. How I wish you were here with me, Jacob!”

“I wish I was, too,” exclaimed Benjamin, who had sat listening quietly whilst the letter was being read. On the faces of several of the elder people there was a far-away look and sometimes a smile, for the scenes described in the letter brought back memories of their own childhood when the holidays and the preparations for them were similar to those in Palestine.

### HOW TO ENJOY THE PASSOVER IN LONDON

One of the boy-listeners said: “I see now why some of us in London do not enjoy the holidays. It is due to our surroundings. Many of us here have to work or go to business whether it is a holiday or not, and so we do not enjoy them in the same spirit as the boys and girls in Palestine, where they are freer to carry out the teaching of our religion.”

“Well!” said Benjamin; “there’s one thing at least I can do, and that is to help my mother to prepare for the Passover in my spare time.”

“And I, too,” and “I, too,” exclaimed others.



“Bravo, boys!” said Mr Jacob. “Even if you do not enjoy it so much physically, you will do so spiritually, for anyone who tries to help his mother to keep up our fine old customs will be blessed.”

## LAG B’OMER

It was a week before Lag B’Omer, and the friends of the Jacobs family continued to attend every Friday evening to hear a letter from Jerusalem read. There was only one drawback to these Friday re-unions, and that was that every week the little cellar-kitchen sitting-room got more and more crowded, for each friend became so interested that he brought another with him without asking permission. However, as no one complained, Mr and Mrs Jacobs said nothing, and were indeed thankful that so many were interested in those old letters; and Mr Jacobs at once started reading as follows:

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## Page 16

“*Dear Millie,*—I want to tell you how we spent Lag B’Omer here, for in London we used not to make much of a holy day of it. Here days are taken in preparing for it, baking cakes and preparing tasty meals. Both old and young spend that day in visits to the graves of our great Rabbis and in picnics on the Mount of Olives or in the cool shade of the many caves in the neighbourhood. Those who have large families have their hands full, for the walks in the open air give the children huge appetites; and, unless you are prepared for such appetites it is difficult to supply all that is needed, for you cannot buy extra food, as in England, except perhaps a few nuts and a drink of water.

“Before dawn, our youngsters awakened us and hurried us to get ready to start, as if we should not have quite enough of their pranks even if we left a few hours later. As we have to form ourselves into large groups, we arrange these a day or two beforehand, for there are a great number of Arabs and Turks about, and many of them are very wild. If you go alone, or even in pairs, they are often known to attack you, especially in the case of a girl or a woman. At first I laughed at the girls fearing to go alone when in the country, but, after having had an unpleasant adventure myself, I determined to be more careful and obey those who knew better than I did as to what was safe and what not.

“It happened in this way. One Sabbath afternoon I went out of the suburb with a few girls, who, like myself, had the spirit of adventure. As we went along chatting merrily together, we felt ourselves caught from behind by some Turks. Fortunately we had not got far, so that when we shrieked out our cries were heard in the town, and to our great relief we soon heard a horse galloping in our direction. We kept on screaming, and one Turk put his hand over my friend’s mouth; but she bit and scratched his hand. Then, suddenly, we were let loose, and the Turks took to their heels, for they saw Europeans galloping up to us. Two of them jumped off their horses and asked if we were hurt, for we had been so frightened that we could not quickly leave off crying. They kindly brought us home, and after that experience I never wanted to go out without enough men in our party to guard us.

“Now this Lag B’Omer a number of girls wanted to go to see some special places, so we formed ourselves into a large party and started very early, for you rarely get such an outing. It was a most glorious spring morning, and a few of us had donkeys to ride. To do so is not as much pleasure as you might think, for the donkeys in Palestine stop every few minutes, and, unless you beat them cruelly, which we did not like doing, they will not budge an inch. Sometimes they consent to be led, but they will not be driven, and you have a weary time of it. Now and then a donkey will suddenly start off on a quick trot, and, being thus taken unawares, the rider often falls off. You can imagine the laughter of your friends and how stupid the girl feels, but somehow it is always taken in good part.



## Page 17

“Our visit first was to David’s Tomb, but we were not allowed to go in. Next we walked round the walls of Jerusalem, climbed up the Mount of Olives, then rested under the shade of a large olive-tree, where we spread out our table-cloth and arranged on it all the good things we had brought with us. The long walk had given us good appetites. After we had finished our meals, other groups of friends came close to us, and then some of the men in turns told us tales of our nation’s ancient glory, and each one had something interesting to relate. Then a middle-aged man with a group of boys came near us. I think he must have been a teacher, for he started telling the boys about Bar Cochba and his struggle with the Romans.

“Fierce struggles for Jewish freedom went on for three years, and the Jews were proving so successful under the leadership of Bar Cochba that the Romans thought it necessary to bring their greatest general, Julius Severus, from Britain to command the Roman Army in Palestine. At last the Samaritans betrayed our people: our last remaining fortified city, Bethar, fell, and Bar Cochba died in defending it on 9th of Ab, 135 C.E.

“The Jews were the last people under Roman rule in those days to fight for freedom, and over half-a-million of them lost their lives in this long struggle. Rabbi Akiba, the wise and dearly-loved Jewish scholar, was taken prisoner and scourged, until he expired under his sufferings. Jerusalem was turned into a Roman colony called Aelia Capitolina, and no Jew dared appear in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, under penalty of death. Jews under the Roman rules were forbidden to practise their religion, and anyone found teaching or preaching Judaism was horribly tortured.’

“The Rabbi, continuing, reminded his boys that, in remembrance of the brave deeds of Bar Cochba and his Jewish soldiers, Jewish boys to this present time play with bows and arrows on Lag B’Omer.

“I was most interested to hear all the Rabbi had to tell his boys, and glad to feel I was at last living in the Holy Land where so many of our noble heroes of past ages lived and fought and suffered martyrdom. I could not prevent tears coming to my eyes when thinking on our nation’s past glory and praying silently we may come again into our own; but I believe it will not be so much by the power of the sword, but as the Prophet Zachariah foretold unto Zerubbabel: ‘Not by might, nor by power (or arms), but by *my spirit*, saith the Lord.’ Those who have been born here or lived here for many years cannot understand our feeling thus, though they love their country and their nation dearly.



## Page 18

“When the Rabbi had ended, we all stood up and received his blessing. We then went on to the grave of Rabbi Shiman, which was in a beautiful, cool, and shady spot. There we found numbers of people. Some groups were having a lively time singing and clapping their hands, while the men were dancing; but none of the women or girls danced, as it would be thought immodest of them, but they helped by singing and clapping their hands. Then other folks came to pray at the saint’s grave for the health of some of their children that were ailing. Others dropped letters or pieces of paper into the Rabbi’s tomb with special requests written on them. Some put money into the charity-boxes hanging at different parts around the tomb. There was also no end of beggars there. One nice-looking man went about with a red handkerchief tied up by the four corners, asking people to put in as much as they could spare to uphold the yeshibas and the hospital or the home for the aged, and other institutions. But as most of the people there around the Rabbi’s grave lived on charity, I could not see what they could spare.

“I happened to mention this to Father and said how I disliked seeing people living on Chalukha (alms sent them from Europe), and I could not understand why they were not ashamed to take it, for they did not look like ordinary beggars, but quite the reverse— independent, studious, and refined-looking, as I found out later when I spoke to them. They seemed indeed to think they were conferring a favour by accepting alms. Father said to a certain degree they were wrong, but from another point of view it is difficult for a man to progress in business and at the same time devote many hours to the study of the Torah. Our ancient Rabbis realized this, and said that those who had not the leisure or the inclination to devote much time to the study of the Torah should make it their duty to give of their means towards the up-keep of those who did. If they did this God would bless them. So it is now a recognized duty for every Jew in Europe who has any respect for the Torah and other religious learning or teaching to send his ‘bit’ towards the yearly support of the scholars here.

“The latter, who do nothing but study the Torah, think that it is through their efforts in this direction that Israel is saved. They do not consider the money given for their support a charity, but believe they hold a similar position in Palestine to that of professors and students who hold scholarships in the various universities in Great Britain and Europe. The Jews in certain countries send more money for the support of their fellow-countrymen who are teachers and scholars than the Jews of some of the Eastern European countries, and that is why some appear to be better off than many of their fellow-teachers and scholars.

“This chat with Father helped me to understand other things as well which had puzzled me before. About this I will write more in another letter.



## Page 19

“Now I must return to Lag B’Omer, and tell you what struck me as very strange on that day. As I went with a few of my girl-friends from group to group to see and hear all I could about what was going on, we came to a group of women, girls, and youngsters, and in the centre of them all a lovely little child about three years of age sitting dressed in silk, and a plate near by with some lovely black curls lying on it. I, of course, asked what it all meant, and was told that those people who had only one boy, or who had lost some by death, never cut the hair of their children till they were between three and four years of age. Then, when it was cut, they put all they had cut off upon a scale, and upon the other side of the scale copper, silver, or gold money, according to their means. If poor, they put copper coins upon the scales to test the weight of the hair, and then distributed these copper coins among the poor. In fact, it just looks as if those who receive charity take it in one hand and distribute it with the other.

[Illustration: YEUSHIVA (*talmudical school*)]

“Nowhere have I ever seen so much almsgiving as here. Alms-boxes are hung up in various places, where in Europe you would see only ornaments. For every joy or blessing and for those who have relatives or friends ill or in danger, money is freely dropped into the box. This money is given towards the up-keep of the hospital for the very poor, and so on. Really, it must be very hard for those people who have little to spare, but Father says this is one of the means by which every Jew in Palestine is trained to love his neighbour as himself. I feel he is right, for I never saw so much kindness and thoughtfulness for others as I have seen since we arrived here. Everyone naturally does what the others do, and it has proved to me how true it is that example is far more powerful than preaching or teaching.

“As we appeared so interested in what they told us, they kindly invited us to sit down and offered us wine, cake, delicious pasties, and jams, and later on baked nuts, though we were quite strangers to them. It is this kindliness that surprised me so much. Altogether we spent a very joyful day, returning home by moonlight, when we girls and women thoroughly enjoyed listening to the groups of men and boys who sang and danced on the way home.

“I don’t think I could ever make you realize all the drawbacks to the life here; but yet it has a very pleasant and happy side too, and you really see far more pleasure than you ever do in London. In my next letter I’ll tell you about the engagement and marriage of my friend who is only fifteen years old. Now I must stop, hoping that we may see you here some day soon.”



## Page 20

The older folks started discussing the life in Palestine. Directly Mr Jacobs had finished reading the letter, they agreed that it could only be in Palestine that a truly Jewish life could be lived, for everything depends so much on environment. "In London the surroundings are against a consistently Jewish religious life," said one; "if you try, it is just like swimming against a strong current." "But here comes our chance," replied another, "for if we fight or swim against the current, we gradually become stronger, and at last we are able to swim well in spite of it, and so win the race and prize. If we just swim with the current, or just suit our life to our environment, which of course at first is much easier and pleasanter, the current at last carries us along so rapidly that we are unable to avoid rocks or crags in the river, and then we 'go under,' or make shipwreck of our lives."

"That's true indeed," said all the elders, shaking their heads solemnly. "Then," replied Mr Jacobs, "our greatest duty is to have one thought and one aim constantly in our minds, no matter what our environment may be, and that thought is that God's Holy Spirit is in and around all who try to obey Him, no matter where they are; and it is only by the guidance and help of His Holy Spirit that we can lead true, consistent, Jewish lives, live up to the old familiar words of the Shema, and love our neighbours as ourselves."

### THE SABBATH IN PALESTINE

When Mr Jacobs' family and friends assembled again on Friday evening, he said: "You know what discussions there have been lately in England about the proper way to keep the Sabbath, so it may interest you to hear a letter from my cousin, giving an account how Sabbath was kept in Jerusalem."

"My dear Millie,—I will explain as well as I can what it means to prepare for Sabbath here, and how it is spent. About four o'clock on Friday mornings Mother and I get up and prepare the Sabbath loaves. I can tell you it is no easy matter, for, even when the weather is not frosty, the exertion of kneading the dough makes you perspire. If you finish kneading early enough, you get back to bed while the dough is rising.

"Early on Friday mornings beggars start going from house to house (especially the Sephardim and Yemenites or Arabian Jews). At each house they are given small, fresh-baked chola, bun, or beigel. No one refuses to give this. Later on, two respectable men or women go from house to house collecting in a large bag whatever anyone gives them, such as cholos, meat, cereals, oil, wine, or money. The Community know that these things are not for themselves, but are to be distributed amongst the sick and the most needy, who cannot beg for themselves. Sometimes we have as many as six or seven people who come collecting, and no one ever thinks of refusing them. In fact, everyone prepares for this, and gives most willingly, knowing that the Sabbath must be celebrated by rich and poor alike with the best one has.

## Page 21

“In a future letter I will tell you more about certain people who give up a part of their time to works of charity, and how they do it; for there is no Board of Guardians here, as there is in London.

“Then when Father and the boys go to synagogue, we start to prepare for the day’s work. First we take all the furniture we can out of the house, so as to leave the rooms free for the lower part of the walls to be whitewashed and the marble floors cleaned. Of course, we try to use as little water as possible, as it is scarce, but even so the floors must be clean and look well polished, and the wooden furniture washed and rubbed well with sand.

“Then the tea-urn and all the saucepans and trays, which are either brass or copper, have to be cleaned and brightened; and, as we cannot get brass-polish here, we rub them with fine sand. It needs plenty of ‘elbow grease’ to make them look bright, but the rubbing well repays us. Since we came here I quite understand how brass or copper looking-glasses were used by our ancestors, for, after rubbing very hard with fine sand and a piece of lemon peel, you can see your face clearly reflected in the trays. Some who had no mirror used the trays for looking-glasses.

“Mother prepares our Sabbath meals, whilst we girls are doing the hard work—hanging up our best curtains or putting our best covers on the beds and cushions, and spreading the Sabbath table-cloth. These are put away again on Saturday evenings. Those who have them also use special Sabbath china, glass, and silver for their meals.

“This work keeps us busy nearly all day. About three hours before sunset Father and the boys go to the public baths, and by the time they return we are all dressed in our best clothes, the samovar (the urn) is placed on a table in the porch, and we all sit there to rest and drink tea, awaiting the coming in of ‘Princess Sabbath.’ A matter of an hour before Sabbath a voice is heard calling out:

‘Sabbath is in, friends! Sabbath is in!’

“The first time I heard the call I could not understand the reason until Father told me that, as there are no bells in the suburb and very few people have clocks, one of the highly-respected members of the community undertakes the job of going right round Meah Sheorim every Friday, so that the women may know when to light their Sabbath lamps—for directly the Sabbath call is heard all the women stop whatever work they are at and go to light the Sabbath lamp, which has seven wicks, in a basin of oil hanging from the ceiling, for there are no candles here. When this is done the men and children go to synagogue, and some of the women too. As they all love bright colours, when you see them from a distance walking to synagogue, the suburb looks like a flower-garden.

“After Sabbath dinner, which consists of the *cholent* baked on the previous day, Father gathers the boys round the table to hear what lessons they have learnt during the



week. He discusses and explains part of the Torah to them, while mother and we girls read the Zeene ureene (a commentary on the Bible for women), the Ethics of the Fathers, and the like. This goes on for some time, and then we are free to go and visit our friends. We and several of our friends often go to an old lady's house, where we spend pleasant Sabbath afternoons.



## Page 22

“Years ago this dear old lady came from Russia to end her days in the Holy Land. She is well provided for by her children, so she has the time and means to lead a happy and useful life here, and does a lot of good quietly, by the cheery, sensible way she often gives a “helping hand” to those who need it.

“She so understands all our fun that we sometimes forget she is old. We just talk things over with her as we would with our young friends. Not only we girls, but young married women, just love spending part of the Sabbath afternoons with her. The room is often so full that we have to sit cross-legged, like the Turks, on the marble floor, which in summer time is quite the coolest seat.

“We then play ‘Nuts.’ Each one puts a certain number into a cap, but to win the game one has to be very quick and sharp: it is really quite exciting. What we like best is when the old lady sits amongst us and reads us a tale from a book, or some of the papers sent her from abroad. The stories are very tantalizing, for they always leave off at the most interesting part, and then we may have to wait a week or two before we get the next number! During the week we try to imagine what the next chapter will be like.

“Sometimes she reads from the Ethics of the Fathers—those wise sayings of the ancient Rabbis. I remember last week she told us of one of the Rabbis who wrote that ‘those who control or overcome their hasty tempers are greater than those who take a city from an enemy,’ She, as usual, asks us to give our views on what she has read, and an excited discussion follows. Those of us who naturally have a calm, good temper said that they did not agree with the Rabbi, because they did not think it at all hard to keep their temper when provoked. Others, who had hasty passionate tempers, said the Rabbi was quite right: it would be far easier, they felt sure, to take a city than to control their tempers, for the whole nation would help them to take a city, as it was considered a grand thing to do, but very few people would help them to control their tempers. In fact, even their relatives and friends provoked them to be hasty and passionate. When provoked or irritated the blood rushes so quickly to the head that it makes it very, very hard to remain calm, and then we often say or do things we are really sorry for afterwards.

“As we could not agree, we turned to the old lady, for she is full of wisdom and understanding. She tried to pacify us, for we were nearly on the verge of quarreling. She said that if, when young, we tried, with the Almighty’s help, to keep our hasty tempers under control, it would be easier to do so every time we were provoked, but the older we were before beginning, the more difficult it would be to be successful. Even then we had always to keep a watch over ourselves, for one of our wise sages wrote: ‘One is never sure of himself till the day of his death.’ We all saw the wisdom of her advice, and made up our minds that we must all help each other, for very often the calm quiet natures are those who love teasing and provoking the hasty-tempered ones, for the fun of seeing them get into a temper; and this, we realized after her talk with us, was not pleasing to God.



## Page 23

[Illustration: *The old lady*]

“After we leave her we take a walk outside the suburb. At sunset, when we return home, until the time to go to bed, we are kept very busy washing up all the things used at meals, as no washing up is done during the Sabbath. Then, too, all the Sabbath curtains, coverlets, glass, china, and silver have to be carefully put away.

“In my next letter I will write you more about our old lady.”

When Mr Jacobs had finished the letter, the usual talk started. One said that “Such a Sabbath might be all very well in Palestine!”

An elderly friend said: “Well! in Palestine they at least *know* what the Sabbath is, whilst here in London, unless one keeps it strictly and remains indoors all day, except to go to synagogue, one never sees any difference between the Sabbath and any other day of the week.”

Mr Jacobs said: “I think what you both say is true, and the only way is to try to keep our Sabbath in the spirit, as well as in the letter as much as possible. If each of us tried to do this in his own home, even in London, gradually a difference would be seen in the neighbourhood in which we live. A wise man wrote: ‘All reforms begin with *man* and not with *men*.’ The first important step is to think good thoughts; for ‘thoughts have wings,’ and, when expressed, they are readily impressed upon the minds of those in sympathy with the thinker.”

“True, very true!” exclaimed the others. “Let us each, with God’s help, strive to remember more often those thoughts of our Prophet Isaiah (chap. 58): ‘If thou call the Sabbath a delight, and the holy of the Lord honourable, and shalt honour it, not doing thy wonted ways, nor pursuing thy business, nor speaking thereof, then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will make thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and I will feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.’”

By this the Prophet meant that we were to drive all thoughts of business from our minds on the Sabbath. No thoughts of scandal, evil, or uncharitableness were to be harboured, but our minds and hearts were to delight in words of prayer, in the study of the Holy Law. It was to be truly a day of peace, a day of rest.

## THE SUCCAH

Mr Jacob told his friends the next Friday evening, when they arrived as usual, that he thought they would be interested in the letter describing the Succah.



“My dear Millie,—After the Day of Atonement, everyone was very busy preparing for the Feast of Tabernacles, which is still celebrated here as it must have been in Bible times.

“With great merriment all the young people decorate their Succahs, while their mothers with the baby in their arms watch the young folks at work.

“The Succahs in Palestine are not made as they are in Europe. The saplings are covered with palm-leaves woven together, the roof with branches of trees, as there is no chance of rain at this time of the year in Palestine. Everything that is beautiful in the home is brought out to decorate the interior of the Succah. The poor make their Succahs of doors or wooden boxes.



## Page 24

“As this was the first Succah since our arrival, we were invited by our neighbours to join them. The father, a patriarchal looking old man with a saintly face, sat at the head of the table, and we were fascinated by his looks. His eldest son came in soon after, followed by his other grown-up sons and his daughters. He greeted his aged father with a smile, and wished him good ‘Yom Tov’ and bowed his head for his father’s blessing. Then one by one all the children came to greet him and receive his blessing, with quite a number of grandchildren and great-grandchildren, and last but not least the little great-great-grandchild.

“When my parents looked astonished at the number, one of the daughters quietly said: ‘You see that here we marry our children while very young, so that the Psalmist’s words are very often fulfilled in Palestine, and nearly everyone has his quiver full.’ When all were quiet, our aged friend repeated a prayer over the wine, and the large silver cup was passed from one to the other. This was very solemnly and reverently done.

“After this, our aged neighbour’s children who had large families went to their own homes, while those of his children who had small families remained to celebrate the Feast with him. When he had washed his hands before eating and repeated the blessing upon the meal, he took his youngest great-grandchild on his knee.

“The only thing that saddened the scene was the empty chair beside our aged friend—his wife had died during the course of the year. The family all looked at the empty chair and sighed, and the great-great-grandfather, with tears glistening in his eyes, also gave a sigh, and then turned with a smile to his large family and said: ‘Let us begin. My little Samuel will start a Brocha,’ and the rest listened to hear how the little one lisped the words after his great-grandfather.

“The following day our aged friend sat like a king in his Succah, while relatives and friends came to pay their respects to him, and all was joy and merriment.

“Some of the younger grandchildren wanted to show their grandfather what they had lately learned, and there was quite a scramble around his knees to try and be first heard. With a wave of his hand he said: ‘I will hear you all in turn, my children.’ This quietened the eager little souls, and they waited patiently for their turns to come.

“While the children were thus busy with their grandfather, the elder sons and sons-in-law and their wives sat around, discussing quietly various topics of interest, till the time for Mincha came round.

“Then the great grandfather went to Shule, followed by all his children.

“Visiting other neighbours during the Succah weeks, we found that they preserved this beautiful and ancient way of keeping the Festival.



“I never realized till then what a great influence for good the surroundings and teaching in childhood can be, and how a father and mother can leave the impress of their teaching in early life upon both sons and daughters. It is the mother specially who forms the child’s soul, quite as clearly on the boys as on the girls from their cradle-days, and the father and the teacher only builds on the foundation laid by the mother: this is seen here more than elsewhere.”



## Page 25

“Very true,” exclaimed the others; “a great deal is done by the mother; but the environment has a great influence on the character.”

This caused a good deal of discussion and the meeting did not close till one o'clock in the morning.

### HOW CHARITY IS GIVEN

On the following Friday evening, the next letter that Mr Jacob chose for reading to his family and friends was on the way almsgiving, or charity, was managed in Palestine. Before starting to read, he advised his hearers not to forget that the Jewish community in Palestine was very small when this letter was written, and the majority of the people were very poor. Many had spent most of their money and worldly goods in the expenses of travelling there, with the object of ending their days in their beloved land, and being buried with their forefathers.

Mr Jacob then began the letter.

“My dear Millie,—You seem so interested in all I have so far told you about our life in Palestine, that I think you will like to hear of some of the ways that our poorer brethren are helped in Palestine.

“Many of the ways will appear strange to you; yet I think some of them are really better than those adopted by our community in England.

“Here, there is no Board of Guardians, so that the giving of charity, or a ‘helping hand’ to the sick or needy, is more of a direct personal matter. The givers strive to be wise and tactful, so that our people may not lose their self-respect; for, as a rule, they are naturally very sensitive, and if self-respect is lost some are encouraged to become beggars proper.

“Mother tells us that our Jewish ethics teaches ‘that true charity, or almsgiving, is to make personal sacrifices when helping others. There is no self-sacrifice in giving what you cannot make use of yourself.’ Indeed, one Jewish ethical teacher wrote: ‘If one who has lived a luxurious life becomes sick and in need, we should try to deny ourselves, in order to give the sick one dainties such as chicken and wine.’

“Really some of our neighbours here seem to rejoice in giving away not only all they can spare, but also in making personal sacrifices in helping to relieve a needy neighbour.

“From early childhood they were trained to give. In every Jewish home in Palestine we see from two to perhaps more than a dozen boxes placed in various parts of the house, and written on each is the special charity to which the box is devoted. Into these boxes even tiny children are trained to drop a coin at special times, and it is considered a

happy privilege to do so at times of Thanksgiving to God. The coins thus collected are from time to time distributed amongst the sick and the needy.

“There is one hospital near us; and, though it is known to be well managed, very few Jews whom we know go there for treatment, for it is a Missionary Hospital, and we strongly object to the methods of Christian missionaries. Instead of many of them as formerly, persecuting us for clinging to our dearly beloved religion, they now try, by acts of kindness in times of sickness and poverty, to influence our people in favour of accepting their religion.



## Page 26

“Indeed, I have heard some of our people say that they would rather go to the Arabs for treatment than enter the Missionary Hospital! Therefore those who cannot nurse the sick ones at home take them to the Bikkur-Holim, which a doctor visits once every few days. A mother, wife, or father goes with the patients to give them the necessary food and medicine, for in the Bikkur-Cholem there are no trained nurses. The relatives also keep the patients clean and tidy; but little cooking is done there, as the food is generally brought cooked from the patients’ homes.

“I once went to visit the Bikkur-Cholem. One patient I saw had a jug of cold water brought to her, and, though her own lips were very parched, she would not take even one sip, but had the water given to those near her, who, in a very high state of fever, were clamouring for water. Other patients I saw were cheerfully and willingly sharing their food with those who had none. Until I had visited that Bikkur-Cholem I had never realized what real charity meant. For these sufferers, in their love and thoughtfulness and genuine self-sacrifice towards fellow-sufferers less fortunate than themselves, were obeying in spirit as well as in the letter the time-honoured commandment given us ‘to love one’s neighbour as oneself.’

“The arrangements in the Bikkur-Cholem are most insanitary; disinfectants are unheard of; and I greatly pitied the poor unfortunates that have to go there.”

Mr. Jacob was too overcome by his feelings to continue—so for a few minutes there was a deep silence. Then one of the listeners said: “One is thankful to remember that this letter was written fifty years ago, and conditions must have improved since our writer first went to Palestine.”

“Yes, thank God!” replied kind-hearted Mr Jacob; and then he continued reading the letter.

“Most of the patients die; but a few get cured and leave. If they do, it is certainly more through faith in God’s love and mercy than through the remedies they receive while there.

“Now, I want to tell you of a voluntary service which respectable, well-to-do men and women, and even scholars, do, for the poor who die. These kind folk are called ‘the Chevra Kadisha.’ No doubt because of the heat, there is a strict law that no one who dies in Palestine is allowed to remain unburied long; and it is believed here that the dead continue to suffer until they are entombed. So the custom is to bury within twelve hours every one who dies. The Chevra Kadisha look upon such a deed as a Mitzvoth. If a poor woman dies, one of these kind women at once goes to wash the corpse and lay it out ready to be put on the bier—then when all the relatives and friends of the deceased have given vent to their sorrow by weeping, some men and some scholars belonging to the Chevra Kadisha voluntarily carry the bier on their shoulders to the

place of burial (which I think is the Mount of Olives), while others dig the grave and a scholar or two read the Prayers over the Dead.

## Page 27

“By the Chevra Kadisha beggars and tramps are thus washed and buried when dead, free of expense, by these good, self-sacrificing people, at all times and in all weathers, as a sign that in death all are equal. The people who can afford it leave enough money to pay all their own burial expenses or these are paid for by their relatives.

“Acts of charity towards very poor girls who have no dowry or suitable wedding-clothes are very touching and generous. It is considered a disgrace to the community if a poor girl is not given the opportunity to marry, and a community not only provides a dowry, but also seeks for a bridegroom for her. The housewives willingly and generously prepare the wedding-feast, for everyone is willing to give something from their store-room. No shame is attached to poor girls accepting such help; for it is considered a duty by all our brethren to provide what is necessary for a bride who has not the means to get things for herself.

“I am sorry that I cannot write more by this mail.”

One listener interrupted, saying: “Most of what you have read Mr Jacob happens in Russia and in other parts of the world where Jews live in ghettos.”

“Quite true,” said Mr Jacob, “for wherever Jews live together they keep up old customs, and all old customs are more or less alike in all ghettos. It is only when we Jews live outside the ghettos, under different surroundings, that we are tempted to throw over many religious customs. The unfortunate thing is, that we are too often inclined to throw off the really good customs rather than the useless ones, and more inclined to adopt the bad traits and customs of our neighbours rather than the good ones amongst whom we live, be it in England, France, Germany, India, or elsewhere. This is a bad habit, and we must do our utmost in the future to guard against it; for, if we all made an effort to retain our own ancient customs that are really good and beneficial to ourselves and others and adopt only the good and healthy customs of our neighbours, then, indeed, we might feel we had a right to call ourselves and be recognized by those we live amongst as ‘God’s Chosen People.’”

## FATHER FROST IN JERUSALEM

The next Friday evening Mr Jacob read the following letter.

“My Dear Cousin Mill,—I have not yet written to tell you how we manage during cold weather. Before we arrived, we were under the impression that it was always warm in Palestine. Certainly the sun does shine more in winter here than in England, and while it shines the weather is very pleasant; but we get very cold weather, too, especially in Jerusalem. We get very little snow, but a good deal of frost, which no one enjoys. No doubt you wonder why, because we all enjoyed the cold and frost in England, and loved the skating and the snowballing.



## Page 28

“The reason is very clear, for here we have no cheery open fireplaces, which give out so much heat in England; in fact there are not even any steel or iron ovens, and the result is, the Palestinian houses are intensely cold in frosty weather. The ceilings are all lofty and in the shape of a dome, which, with the very thick stone walls is very pleasant in summer but very cold in the winter. Then there is very little firewood to be had here, as the Turks try to prevent much tree-planting, so fire wood is a luxury which very few can afford. Instead, we have all copper buckets pierced with holes standing on a tripod and filled with burning charcoal, which is placed in the middle of the room.

“How we all eagerly cluster round it and watch the red hot charcoal, hoping that by *looking at it* the warmth will go into our bodies! Such a small amount of charcoal as we can afford does not warm a room very much, so all the windows are closed tightly to prevent any cold air coming in. This also prevents the fumes of the burning charcoal from escaping, so naturally the air gets very stuffy, and many suffer from headaches or fall into a heavy sleep.

“You will wonder why it is many people do not get frozen. Well, the old proverb holds good here, that ‘Necessity is the mother of invention,’ so even in the coldest weather we have a remedy; for we heat also our brass samovar, which holds about thirty glasses of tea, and we drink a glass of hot tea every now and then.

“As the samovar boils all day the steam also sends out some warmth into the room.

“Then, again, the younger children are during the very cold weather kept warm in bed with feather coverlets and pillows, which the elder people try to keep warm in doing the necessary household duties. Very few go out in the streets, except the men when they go to Shule, and the elder boys when they go to the Yeshiba or Cheder, and even they are very often kept at home.

“One comfort is that ‘Father Frost’ does not stay long, so we can manage to bear his icy breath: the greatest hardship is when he visits us on a Sabbath, for of course on that day we cannot heat the samovar and so we have to do with less tea.

“We prepare our Sabbath meals in a small scullery, or porch, in which a small brick oven is built to keep the food hot for the Sabbath. A few pieces of wood are put in, and, when well lighted, the oven is half-filled with charcoal-dust—this again is covered by pieces of tin or lime, and, on top of all, the saucepans are put containing food for the Sabbath meals: also bottles or jars of water are thus kept hot for tea or coffee. Neighbours who are not lucky enough to have such an oven bring in their food, and we let them put it in our ovens. In this way we have enough for every one to drink who may come in. Sometimes twenty poor people come in on a Sabbath day and say: ‘Spare me, please, a little hot water?’ No one would think of refusing to give them some, even if they had to share their last glass with them.



## Page 29

“Generally on cold Sabbath afternoons our parents have a nap after eating the nice hot cholent, and we girls and the young married women go and spend a few hours with our old lady friend, who always entertains us with stories and discussions on various interesting subjects. So the time passes very quickly and so pleasantly that we forget how cold it is. About twenty or thirty of us all sit close together on her divan covered up with rugs, and this with the excitement over the tales she tells us, helps to keep us warm.

“Last Sabbath our old lady was not very well, and we were feeling very miserable without her entertaining tales. Suddenly, one of my girl-friends asked me to tell them about our life in London.

“As they had never read or heard about life outside Jerusalem, it was most amusing to hear their exclamations of wonder; for they could hardly believe what I told them was true, till our old lady confirmed our statements.

“First, they wanted to know how young men and women behaved toward each other.

“I told them that every man and every woman, whether young or old, either in the street or in-doors, always shook hands with friends—at this they looked very surprised and some seemed even horrified, exclaiming: ‘What a sin to commit.’ I asked them where it was written that this was a sin? ‘Well,’ some replied, ‘our parents or husbands say it is a sin,’ ‘I don’t think it is a sin, but only a custom,’ said I. ‘But it *is* a sin,’ insisted one little wife of fifteen ‘to touch one another’s hands.’ I tried to explain to her, but she would not listen to me and we were on the verge of quarreling but as usual, when there was a difference of opinion between any of us, we always appealed to our old lady and she agreed with me that there was no sin in shaking hands. ‘Sin,’ she said, ‘comes from thoughts—if while talking or laughing or even shaking hands, evil thoughts pass through the minds of men or women then, and then only, is the act likely to be a sin. In Europe,’ she went on to say, ‘it is quite a natural thing for men and women to shake hands and talk to each other naturally.’

“Then I asked my new friend Huldah (a young wife of fifteen years of age) to tell us all about her own love-affair and marriage. She was greatly shocked to hear me speaking of love *before* marriage—‘Such a thing could never happen to a modest Jewish maiden in those days,’ she said.

“I told her that it did happen in Europe. ‘May be,’ she replied; ‘it may happen in lands where Jews mix with non-Jews and copy their ways!’

“As I rather liked to tease her, I said she was mistaken, for here in Jerusalem did the great Rabbi Akiba fall in love with his wife before marriage. ‘Oh, that was quite different!’ she replied. ‘Not at all,’ said I, for were not feasts and rejoicing held so that youths and maidens could meet one another in the vineyards and dance in the

meadows?—Look in the Bible,' I continued, 'and you will see it is mentioned there.' Then all looked abashed. The only one who smiled was our old lady.



## Page 30

“Don’t unsettle their minds, dear,” she whispered softly to me. ‘I don’t want to,’ I said; ‘I only want to show them that, though such things are done in other countries, there is no sin in it as they have been brought up to believe.’ ‘Well, well!’ she said, ‘let us hope God will restore our beloved land to us in his own good time, and then we shall again, as in days of old, celebrate such Festivals!’

“We all said ‘AMEN,’ most heartily, to this wish.

“In my next letter I will tell you of our friend’s engagement and marriage. Your loving cousin, Millie.”

## ENGAGEMENT AND WEDDING CEREMONIES

The hearers waited with eagerness for the next Friday evening, as they enjoyed so much hearing those interesting letters.

The next Mr Jacobs read was this:

“Hulda is only fifteen years of age, and has already been married six months. If she were dressed as girls are dressed in England, she would really look beautiful; but her beauty is, I think, marred by the silk handkerchief she wears on her head, which covers half her forehead and her ears, so that none of her hair can be seen, I mean that part of it that was shaved off. Over the silk handkerchief she wears a black velvet band, to which gold coins are attached and these are put on so coquettishly that it makes the head-gear look quite artistic. Sometimes she wears ornaments with pearls in them. These special trinkets are, of course, worn only on Sabbaths and Festivals or some other special occasions.

“The shaving of part of the young wife’s head the day after her marriage is a custom to prevent young married women from being tempted by vanity to show off their hair, which is generally in Palestine very beautiful. The poor things cover up the part so well that there is no fear of any of it being seen.

“Hulda is tall and well-developed for her age, and lively as a cricket, always ready to play and laugh and joke with us. She started by telling me: ‘I was invited to visit my betrothed’s family during the holidays, and my future mother-in-law let me help her with the baking and cooking, and was specially pleased with the way I stretched out the dough for the lockshen—I made it look so thin, like a paper wrapper. She told me that I would make a good housewife. Then I showed all the family some of the linen garments I had made and had with me, and the crochet I had trimmed them with.’

“Here Hulda turned to me and said: ‘our mothers encourage us at eight years of age to begin to make garments for our trousseaux, and at the age of ten we start to crochet lace and embroider, so by the time we get married we have all our things ready, for they

cannot be bought ready-made in Palestine. When we become betrothed we work our future initials on our things and make our dresses.'



## Page 31

“While I was staying at my betrothed’s home, we never spoke to each other, except to say Good-morning and Good-night. Sometimes when no one saw us we looked at one another, for already I liked my young man, though he was not handsome. A wise girl does not want good looks in a husband so much as that he should be a good Talmudist and be a good character; this he is, and I could listen to him for ever,’ she said, blushing like a rose; ‘when he sings Zmires, his voice is like a nightingale, and even in the mornings, when he thinks I am asleep, it is just lovely to hear his sing-song as he studies—it is to me the sweetest of all music,’ she said.

“‘So it should be, my child,’ said our old lady, ‘and it is a privilege for us women to help them to study.’

“‘So my mother says,’ said Hulda, naturally.

“At the same time I thought to myself: ‘A nice thing it would be if only our men were to study and our women to work, as they mostly do here and in Russian ghetto towns. No,’ I thought, ‘I would rather that the men did some manual labour as well as study, and the women have some time for study as well as for household work.’

“But I kept these thoughts to myself, while Hulda continued to tell me what a longing she had to see more of her betrothed; but she did not see him again till after the marriage ceremony.

“I will try to describe the ceremonies to you in detail, as I have now been to several weddings here, and I think you would like to know.

“A week before the wedding, all the relations and friends come to help bake and prepare the wedding-feast; for, as these proceedings last about eight days, it is no easy matter to celebrate them.

“The bride’s trousseau is shown to the guests who come, and everything is examined and counted by all, especially the relations of the bridegrooms. When there happens to be less than expected, woe betide the bride, for she is always reproached about it by her mother-in-law or his other relatives.

“On the Sabbath before the marriage the bridegroom is called up to read the Law, and friends pay him visits.—First they send him nicely baked cakes or puddings and a bottle of wine. (It is a good thing that this is the custom, or else a poor man would be ruined by the cost of all the feasting that he is expected to provide).

“During the week the bride’s friends come every evening and dance and sing in her home, coffee and cakes and baked nuts being handed round.



“The morning of the wedding, both bride and bridegroom fast, and each goes with his or her parents to the Wailing Wall in Jerusalem, to pray for a blessing on their married life, and then they go to be blessed by the Rav.

“When the bride returns home, she is dressed in her bridal dress. Then she is led up to a chair that has been raised off the floor; her hair is unloosed and allowed to hang over her shoulders; and this is the last time, for the next day most of it is shaved off.



## Page 32

“Her young friends stand near her and each sings a song, bidding good-bye to her maiden days; and the bride weeps, fearing what the future may hold in store for her. Then the bridegroom comes in, led by his friends, who carry candles. He is given a veil, which he throws over his bride’s head, and then leaves with his friends for the Synagogue.

“Though some parts of the ceremony look ridiculous, yet all is carried out so solemnly that one feels very much impressed.

“The bride is then led by two of her relatives or friends, who carry candles, and all the other friends follow them through the streets, some also carrying candles. As there are no carriages to be had in Jerusalem, they have sometimes to walk some distance to the Synagogue.

“The usual bridal canopy is in the Synagogue, and they walk round it seven times; then prayers are said, and the glass is broken; Mazzeltov is said, and with songs and clapping of hands the bridal pair is led home again. Near the home a large Bagel is held by a friend, and as the couple cross the threshold it is broken over their heads, and the pieces are distributed among the guests. The bride and bridegroom are then led into a room, and the door is closed for five minutes—I suppose to be sure that they are the right persons, anyhow the bridegroom lifts the bride’s veil and gives her the first kiss he has ever given her. (I do not know if she kisses him, for she may be too shy: they will not tell when I ask).

“After the five minutes have passed, the bride is led out of the room to a room where the women-guests are assembled, while the bridegroom goes to a room where the men-guests are. The feasting lasts for a few hours in each room. Then the bride is led by some of her women friends to the room where the men are, and the bridegroom takes her by the hand and starts dancing; the other guests follow suit. It is amusing to see the old grey-bearded scholars, who, one would think, could not move their legs, dance and rejoice while the lookers-on clap and sing. It is far more exciting than a wedding in London, for it is considered a ‘Mitzvah’ to rejoice with a young bridal couple.

“The dancing goes on for some time, the only miserable pair, I expect, are the bride and bridegroom, who generally become very weary of it all, for they started their wedding pilgrimage very early in the morning and had fasted till the feasting began late in the afternoon—I often wonder that they have any energy left in them, poor things, for they cannot retire till late at night.

“The next day comes the ceremony of cutting off the bride’s hair. The bridegroom’s mother hands her a few silk handkerchiefs to be worn on her head on special occasions. Sometimes the poor little bride is so young that she cries while her beautiful plaits are being cut off.



“At times a quarrel begins between the two mothers: the bride’s mother sometimes insisting that her child’s hair shall only be cut short and not shaved, and she generally gets her way.



## Page 33

“Some brides do not mind being shaved, for they like the idea of wearing the pretty coloured silk handkerchiefs.

“At nearly every wedding a table is spread for the poor, and I was present at a wedding when more than a hundred poor men came regularly for eight days, and the table was spread as bountifully for them as for the other guests. Here in Palestine the poor share in the joys of their richer brethren.

“When the eight days of Festival are over, the young couple usually settle down close by or in one of their parents’ homes, who give them a room. A great deal of the happiness of young couples depends on the character of the mother-in-law, for they have the power of making or marring their happiness more than anyone else.

“Huldah told me that she would have been quite happy in her mother-in-law (for she really was a good kind woman) if only she would more often allow her to talk to her husband, ‘and I do so like a talk with him,’ she said to me with a sigh, ‘for he is so wise. When my mother-in-law sleeps after the Sabbath dinner, we go into the next room and we sit talking, and he tells me tales from the Talmud, and sometimes reads aloud from it. I do so enjoy those Sabbath hours,’ she continued, ‘for I have only my bedroom which I can call my own, but I am not allowed to be much in it,—the little time I have with my husband each day makes me very happy, for I know he loves me dearly (although he does not say so), for when he comes home his first word is for me,’

“Sometimes, when my mother-in-law is in a good temper, she lets us eat out of the same dish, and then he jokingly puts the daintiest bits on my side; often when I wake in the mornings I find pinned to my pillow a few words he has copied from the *Song of Songs*, put there before leaving for the Synagogue.’ Then Huldah added ‘After returning himself from the Synagogue on Sabbath Eve, my dear husband always looks at me with a loving smile when he reads that part where it says: “The price of a virtuous woman is far above rubies, the heart of her husband trusteth in her.’ ‘Yes indeed,’ she said, ‘thanks be to God—I am a very happy wife, and when God blesses us with children, my cup of joy will be very full.’

“And this child-wife of fifteen did indeed look very happy as she spoke—and I, deep down in my heart, thought, ‘What would they say to such match-making in England and Western Europe,’ and yet in Palestine such marriages arranged by the parents are nearly always happy.

“I must close now, Your loving Millie.”

When Mr Jacob had finished reading, some of his young listeners said they thought it was a very foolish way to arrange marriages. One of them remarked: “How could there be any love, if a couple rarely met each other before marriage.”

Another said: “For my part, I would never marry unless I felt sure that I was in love with my husband to-be and that he also was in love with me. Love is everything in life, I think.”



## Page 34

Then said a middle-aged lady, much loved and respected by all the listeners: “How often has many a marriage not turned out well, even when as young people a husband and wife had a passionate love for each other. The seed of love may be sown before or after marriage; but, unless carefully cultivated during married life by both husband and wife, through deeds of kindness and thoughtfulness and forbearance and mutual sympathy and understanding, the tender plant may soon wither and die. The old customs of our race, which this letter shows are still kept up in Palestine and I believe in other parts where ghetto life still obtains, if they are not carried to extremes, are, I think, very wise; but, unfortunately, our people are very tempted to go to extremes, and a good custom can thus be distorted and brought to ridicule.”

“True, true,” murmured some of the older people.

“In all things moderation and balance are safe guides to follow,” said Mr. Jacobs.

The next book will be all about Millie’s love affairs and marriage and her life, impressions, and tribulations in Palestine.

## APPENDIX

### THE CELEBRATION OF THE JUBILEE OF ZORACH BARNETT

(Translated from the *Palestine Daily Mail* of Friday, December 2nd, 1921).

Those who felt stirred to celebrate the jubilee of this illustrious old pioneer did very well indeed. For a young man who leaves all his business enterprises far behind him in London and who migrates to Eretz-Israel over fifty years ago—at a time when Jaffe did not possess even a Minyan foreign Jews; and at a time when the way from Jaffe to Jerusalem was a very long and tedious one—aye, a way fraught with all possible dangers, and moreover, teeming with robbers, a journey which lasted three whole days, such a Jew is indeed entitled to some mark of appreciation and respect.

A Jew who has worked for the re-building of our land for over fifty consecutive years in which period he visited the lands of the Diaspora fifteen times and all that he did and profited there was afterwards invested in the re-building of Eretz-Israel such a Jew has indeed merited to be praised even during his life-time.

A Jew who was one of the first to found the colony of Petah-Tikvah and therefore merited that people in Jerusalem should mark him out as an object of derision and scorn because he was a dreamer—a man who built the first house in this Petah-Tikvah—who was one of the founders of the “Me’ah Shearim in Jerusalem—who constructed perfect roads in Jaffe—who founded Zionist Societies in the lands of the Diaspora at a time when Zion did not occupy such a foremost part in the heart of the Jew—such a

Jew is indeed worthy that a monument of his splendid achievement be erected for him even during his life-time!"

It must, moreover, be mentioned that Z. Barnett and his wife are one of the remnant of those noble men who participated in that famous assembly of Kattovitz—that noble gathering of illustrious men which can be verily described as the Aurora as the Dawn of the conception of the Restoration of the land of Israel.



## Page 35

The celebration took place on Sunday, November 27th, in the private house of Mr. Barnett. Those who had assembled were many, in fact, there were present representatives of every shade and section of Jewish communal life in Palestine. Thus there came along Rabbis of all the various congregations, various Jewish communal workers, heads of colonies, teachers, business men and workpeople and even beggars who came to enjoy the material blessings of this great national festivity.

Mr. Joseph Lipshitz opened the proceedings by explaining the importance of this great red letter day for Mr. Barnett and then called upon Rabbi Auerbach of Jerusalem who had come specially to take part in this celebration. Rabbi Auerbach delivered a long Talmudical dissertation in which he recited the great merits of the jubilant. He compared Z. Barnett to a king, because he based himself on a Talmudic statement concerning Omri which asserts that he who builds a little town or village is worthy to be called a king. The learned Rabbi also emphasised the importance of acquiring land in Palestine by many pithy remarks. Then spoke the Rabbis: Joseph Ha-levi, Shneiur Lenskin, Joseph Arwatz and Joseph Rabbi. All these testified to the great qualities of their host, who besides being a great idealist was also a very practical man too.

After the Rabbis, Mr. S. Nissim, chief of the colony of Petah-Tikvah spoke. He narrated in a very realistic and eloquent way how that pioneer Zorach Barnett came fifty years ago to build up the ruins of the land and how he bought up the land of Petah-Tikvah, which was now a flourishing colony, but which was then a howling desert wilderness, such as only insane men could ever think of converting this into an habitation of men. At the present day, thousands of pioneers are flocking to the land, but they are only a continuation of the pioneering of Z. Barnett and his stalwart companions. The speaker concluded by blessing the jubilant that he should survive to see thousands of Jewish Colonies in Palestine and tens of thousands of pioneers flocking here from every part of the world.

Mr. I. Adler, chief representative of the Council at Jaffe, also spoke on this great member of the Jewish community at Jaffe. Such men are really a blessing to the whole of Israel; they are not only Banim (sons) of the Jewish people, but also Bonim (builders).

Many were the letters and telegrams of congratulation received on this occasion from various ranks of Jewish representatives in Palestine. The private secretary of Sir Herbert Samuel wrote: "I am commanded by His Excellency, the High Commissioner, to acknowledge your invitation to partake in your celebration of the 27th inst. His Excellency, is, however, restrained from accepting this invitation owing to the various duties which occupy him at present. He sends you his blessing and hopes that all your ambitions will be realised with, the greatest success."

## Page 36

The Chief Rabbi of Eretz-Israel, Rabbi A.I. Kook, wrote: "I should very much have wished to be present at the occasion of the jubilee of my dear and respected friend, who first trod upon this Holy soil over fifty years ago and who has since then been building up the ruins of our land, but, unfortunately, to my great pain, I am not able to realise this my wish, owing to the present troubled state of the Jewish community. Please accept my heartiest blessings for a happy old age, in which you may verily see the re-birth of our People and of our land."

Rabbi Rabbinowitz wrote: "I bless our jubilant from the depths of my heart. This occasion is not only a happy one for him, it is also for us. This shows that though the enemies of re-building Palestine were, and are still, many, Palestine is, nevertheless, steadily but surely being rebuilt."

Mr. Diznoff, in the name of the Colony of Tel-Avis wrote: "On this great occasion, we should like to say, that as you have merited to see that the "howling desert" you have found, you have succeeded in creating into a "Garden of Eden," thus may you merit to see the flourishing state of the whole of Palestine."

Mr. Ephraim Blumenfeld wrote: "Though I should have very much have liked to be present, yet my present bad state of health does not enable me to do so. This is a happy moment for all lovers of Zion. May you merit to see with your own eyes the restoration of Israel on its own land."

Messages and telegrams were also received from the Yeshivah Me'ah Shearim, Mr. D. Slutskin, from the scholars of the Yeshivah "Or Zoraiah" of Jaffa and many synagogues. Also from Mr. Friedenberf of Jerusalem, Mr. S. Tolkovsky, Dr. Eliash, from the Chief Rabbi of Alexandria, from the "Old Aged" Home in Jaffe, from the Mizrachi, from Rabbi S.L. Shapiro of Jerusalem, *etc.*, *etc.*

At the request of the host, who is a British subject, a special prayer was offered up for the Divine protection of King George the Fifth, and also prayers in the name of R. Barnett for the health of the High Commissioner, the Secretary, the leaders of the Zionist Movement—Weitzman, Sokolov and Usishkin, for the Chief Rabbis of Palestine and for the Rabbi Sonnenfeld, Rabbis Diskin, Epstein, *etc.*, *etc.*

Mr. Barnett offered a certain sum in the name of each, and among the numerous institutions to which he contributed were the following: Hebrew Archaeological Society at Jerusalem, the building of a synagogue on the site of the Old Temple Wall, the school for the blind, the poor of Jaffe, the Home for Aged Jews, *etc.*, *etc.*

Mr. Barnett was then enrolled in the Golden Book by those present. Great indeed was the honour which R. Zorach Barnett and his wife received on that day, but they were really worthy of it.

May theirs be an example to others!

## **GLOSSARY**



## Page 37

**BAR COCHBA.** The heroic Jewish leader who led the final revolt against the Romans in the year A.D. 123.

**BAR MITZVAH.** Confirmation of a boy at the age of thirteen.

**BEZEL.** A cake made in the shape of a ring.

**BIKKUR-HOLIM.** Used to denote a Hospital.

**BROCHA.** A blessing or a thanksgiving used on various occasions.

**CHALLAH.** White bread shaped as a twist used for the Sabbath sanctification.

**CHASSID.** Pietist; a name assumed by a sect of Jews mainly in Galicia established by "Baal Shemtob."

**CHAZAH.** A cantor, or Synagogue reader.

**CHEVRA-KADISHA.** A burial society.

**CHOLENT.** A dish of various vegetables and meat, eaten on the Sabbath.

**CHOMETZ.** Leavened bread.

**EREV.** Evening.

**HAMANTASCHEN.** A triangular cake eaten on Purim, shaped according to the hat Haman was supposed to have worn.

**KAFTAN.** A long coat, worn by Jews in eastern Europe.

**KIDDUSH.** A blessing of sanctification over wine, said at the ushering in of Sabbath and of Festivals.

**LAG B'OMER.** The 33rd day of the seven weeks between Passover and Pentecost: a students' holiday.

**MAZZELTOV.** A greeting signifying Good Luck.

**MEAH SHEORIM.** A Hundred Gates: the name of a suburb of Jerusalem.



MINCHA. The afternoon service.

MITZVOTH. Acts of piety.

PARA. A Turkish coin of small value.

PESACH. Passover.

PRINCESS SABBATH. A poetical expression, used for welcoming the Sabbath.

PURIM. The Festival referred to in *The Book of Esther*.

RAV. One learned in rabbinical lore.

SAMOVAR. A tea-urn.

SCHPIELERS. Strolling-players.

SCHTRAMEL. Head-gear worn by Chassidim.

SEDER. The Service on the first two nights of Passover.

SEPHARDIM. Jews of Spanish or of Portuguese origin.

SHALACH MANOTH. Gifts—especially used with reference to distributions on Purim (vide *The Book of Esther*).

SHALOM. Peace.

SHIROS. Oil made from the sesame seed.

SHULCHAN ARUCH. The Jewish religious Code; compiled in the middle of the 16th century and regarded as of high authority.

SHULE. Synagogue, derived from the German *Schule* (school).

SIMHATH TORAH. The festival of the Law, following the Tabernacle festival when the reading of the *Pentateuch* is completed and recommenced amid great rejoicing.

STRUDEL. A sweet pudding or cake.

SUCCAH. The tabernacle used as a dwelling on the Feast of Tabernacles.

TAVELT. Immersed; used in reference to the Ritual Bath.



TORAH. The Law; specially referring to the Mosaic code and its derivatives.

TSENNAH URENNAH. A Jewish German translation of the *Pentateuch*, embellished with legends for the use of women.



## Page 38

TSITSITH. Knotted fringes worn by men according to Mosaic injunction on Tallith or praying-scarf, and also used for a small four-cornered fringed garment worn on the chest, under the coat.

YEMENITES. South-Arabian Jews.

YESHIBAH. A Jewish theological Academy.

YOM KIPPUR. The Day of Atonement.

YOMTOV. Holy-day