SCHOOL DAYS
—IN—
HOME TOWN

By

ABRAM S. ISAACS



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SCHOOL DAYS IN HOME TOWN

"Here where as children our life began,
  Hither our steps retrace,
Mile by mile, where we walked or ran—
  Nearing again the place.

"The happy place that our childhood knew;
  Rewinding the tangled skein,
Following breathless the mystic clue,
  We have come home again."

PREFACE

Boys care as little for a preface to a story book as for a chat before griddle cakes or apple pie. But their elders and parents are more interested, if the preface be not too lengthy.

In our hurrying age when fashions are changing in every sphere, from munitions to millinery, and possibly in no line with more feverish rapidity than in Education, the attempt is made in this little book to rescue from forgetfulness the story of a Jewish school whose atmosphere was undoubtedly old-fashioned.

Now change is imperative. One cannot remain stationary. The impulse which drives us forward is not to be despised. The world must progress. Stagnation is unthinkable.

Yet in the effort to advance, may we not deceive ourselves and fail to grasp realities? Is there not a danger that we may sacrifice too much for the passion of change? Is it not possible to build on something more durable than shifting sand, no matter how artistically colored and pretentiously designated?

The scenes and characters of school life here presented are by no means imaginary. While they may be somewhat idealized—few of us can resist such an unconscious process as we recall the distant past—there has been no undue exaggeration. If at times the tone may appear too

serious for its special audience, it is hoped that the variety of incident will be found in helpful contrast.

In the education of our young people in this stirring era, a more earnest, inspiring note must be sounded. Our Jewish boys and girls must be fitted for our day, it is true, but not for our day alone. Past, present, and future can never be separated in Israel, nor can solemn obligations be lightly blown aside as empty bubbles. Reverence and knowledge must go hand in hand. The old fashions which developed faith and joyousness, modest living and resolute character have still their potency and cannot be abandoned without the gravest peril, as history so unerringly proves. Methods may change, but the foundations cannot be moved.

If "School Days in Hometown" will help, in however modest a way, to shape our thought and tendency in such a direction, it will have achieved in large measure its purpose.

ABRAM S. ISAACS.

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I

"ALL IN!"

"All in!" "All in!", and at the words, which echoed forcibly in all directions, a group of boys from about ten to fourteen years of age came rushing into the schoolroom from the playground where they had romped or rested during the hour's recess. All kinds of boys—fair haired and dark haired, in short trousers and long trousers, bright-eyed and dull-eyed, thin and stout, but healthy and alert every one of them. It was not a very large assemblage—perhaps twenty to thirty, but they made up in animation what they lacked in numbers. Refreshed by the hour's intermission in the fresh air with lunch and play, it is not to be wondered at that their voices had gained in strength. The entire time they were out there the combined noise they made was not insignificant, but as the period for return to work approached, it kept on ever increasing, and now when the bell had sounded, the volume of noise became almost deafening. Yet such was the atmosphere and training of the Hebrew Home School that as soon as the school gate was reached and the lads began entering the class room, there was sudden silence. The merry laugh, the bright retort, the loud exclamation, the shouting and the scuffling, all had ceased, as if the good fairies of order had been at work with quick results. And the founder of

the school, a rather short stout figure with fresh color in his cheeks, gold spectacles on his nose, and wearing a house "wrapper" that hung closely to his form, after a smile at the principal who sat at his desk on the platform in the center of the large class room, slowly retired, shutting the door softly behind him. It was his invariable custom to enter for a moment at the hour of afternoon assembly.

While the classes in the various grades are being heard and the boys are displaying how much or how little they know in the common subjects in the afternoon schedule, let us make a closer study of the school. Was it really worthy of detailed attention or was it merely like the average school, with its good qualities just balancing its defects?

In our days of rapid progress in all directions, there are many kinds of schools adapted for many kinds of pupils and many kinds of work. You only need to consult the educational directory of any city, large or small, in any section of the country, to realize the remarkable development of our schools in numbers, size and character. Whether the school be public or private, it must be built on a broad and ambitious plan. If a private foundation, its separate buildings must rival a pretentious university. If a modern public school, it must contain not only ordinary class rooms where boys and girls can be taught to read and to write, to spell and to cipher, in the different grades, with the usual educational subjects, but there

must be a laundry, a bakery, a cookery, a gymnasium and a swimming pool, with sometimes a theater and a dancing floor. What a blessing to be young nowadays! What bliss to enjoy the privilege and pastime of going to school under such conditions! It is a wonder that children go home when the day's work is over and it is not surprising that hundreds crowd around the doors of the school long before the opening hour.

Now when the Hebrew Home School was founded—it was over sixty years ago—the average school was managed in an entirely different fashion. It was a place of study, not pastime, and its atmosphere was somewhat serious. Of course the boys and girls were rather cheerful from day to day, save when some of them were to be punished for misbehavior and the whirr of the descending rattan was drowned in somebody's loud sobs, as if somebody's heart was breaking. But the wise teacher knew that the louder the cry the less likely that any serious damage was done to the offending pupil, who a few minutes later would be just as gay and unconcerned as ever, after his eager promise to be good and obedient and never to be naughty again. The building, too, was very plain and consisted merely of one or two floors, for only a few hundred children were gathered within. The classes were not many, the studies limited. It had more the air of a machine shop or factory than of a school, and while the teachers were faithful and the pupils generally diligent, it did not take many years after graduation to show how

much the students had failed to learn, how poorly they were fitted for the great school of life in which we all must play our parts, rich and poor, strong and weak. Going through school does not always indicate that one is educated to begin his work in the calling best adapted for his abilities. For Jewish boys in those days there were no general facilities for education in the knowledge of their religion and the history of the Jewish people. The synagogues, as a rule, had no Sunday or religious schools, and when classes were arranged they were managed without system or order. Here and there were some boarding schools; but the really efficient ones were decidedly few and not too attractive to the young. A principal's undisciplined temper would leave a permanent influence on his pupils, and their impressions of the Jewish religion would be associated ever afterwards with their experiences in such a school.

It was largely to supply what did not then exist and to remedy evils which were only too evident, that the Hebrew Home School was organized. In an old-fashioned spacious dwelling in the residential district of Hometown, there was found ample accommodation for class rooms, an assembly hall and a comfortable playground, admirably adapted for thirty boys. The founder, David Jacobs, a minister of one of the leading synagogues and formerly a school teacher himself, was an Englishman by birth. He thought it might be possible to combine religion and general education for a limited group of lads of good family

connections, to prepare them for high school or college, while familiarizing them at the same time with the Hebrew language and the history and traditions of their race.

He was a man peculiarly fitted for his task. Bred in the strict conservative fashion of his day, he had broadened by intercourse with the world, without losing reverence for the faith and forms of his fathers. He loved literature and young people—excellent qualities for the teacher, when combined with knowledge and industry. He had the good fortune to be liked by his people for his sincerity, kindness and sterling character, which is better than being admired for more showy qualities. He did not come to a final decision before consulting many friends who agreed with him as to the need of just such an institution. So he quietly began the work, which was a success from the start. It was not to be a reformatory or an asylum, but a home school for the sons of representative Jewish families. In a few months the attendance had reached its limits. Many of the boys came from the South and West, one or two from the West Indies. It thus became more than a merely local enterprise. In fact, had Mr. Jacobs possessed the requisite business sense, it could have readily developed into a pretentious academy. He was satisfied, however, with very modest returns, grateful if he could be the means of inspiring his boys with love for their ancestral faith and the need of a consistent Jewish life.

He was none the less an ardent American, full of pride in his adopted country and the opportunities it offered to

every man, woman and child for growth and happiness. He was strict but not stern, earnest but not bigoted; he knew boys would be boys and did not strive to make them old before their time. Yet he taught them that their youth would not lose any of its magic if they would try to be kindly, generous, helpful, considerate, self-controlled. It was not surprising that the lads liked their new surroundings and went to work with enthusiasm. Happily, with such care were the pupils chosen that there were no black sheep in the crowd. Mr. Jacobs gave his personal attention to the religious training, while the general instruction was placed in the hands of a principal, a capable American college graduate, and several assistants. The majority of the pupils were boarders; the others, who were Hometown natives and lived within walking distance, came for the day and for special studies. All formed a truly harmonious family, for all were busy and contented. Progress was not expected to be rapid with the weekly and monthly reviews, but the boys soon learned to be thorough.

If such a school would be considered now as somewhat out of date, one must not forget that modest Hometown then was not the glorious Hometown of today. Sixty years ago it was a quiet country town, compared to its present size and importance. There were no elevated railroads, no trolleys, no motor cars, no vast parks, no huge apartment houses. Stages went leisurely up and down its chief streets, with curious little boxes in front, close to the

driver's seat, to receive the fares. Nobody hurried as they do now. For recreation, people went across the river and saw a baseball match in the fields or had coffee and cake at a summer garden near by. Many took the round trip in the little ferryboats. The upper portion of Hometown consisted of open lots and whole rows of steep rocks, upon which small huts were built by adventurous settlers, who enjoyed the fresh air without cost. Of an afternoon, portly negro women would call out in shrill tones; "Hot corn, hot corn, who likes hot corn, smoking hot!", as they offered their fragrant wares from a steaming kettle. The latest ballads were neatly hung on the iron railings of downtown cemeteries and sold for a penny a piece. During the day, too, droves of sheep, cattle and pigs would pass through some of the streets, raising clouds of dust and not the sweetest of odors as they tramped from the ferry to the slaughter-house yards. All the boys stood in great awe of the policeman. In fact some of them honestly believed that Pop Willis, who was in charge of one of the parks and had a venerable appearance, had actually fought in the Revolution. On the Fourth of July, to be allowed to discharge fire-crackers instead of tame torpedoes, was an honor that made a boy as proud as the first time he wore long trousers and had his hair curled for an evening party. What a happy life it was! How distant now those quiet evenings, undisturbed save when the fire engines, hauled by rows of shouting firemen in red shirts, loudly clanged, clanged on their way to a fire. To be first on the

spot was a recognized distinction and was often the cause of fierce conflicts between rival fire companies.

But a change was coming—some knew it. The eclipse of the sun foretold a calamity. Yet most of us were dreamers in those dreamy days. Dreamers have their awakening sooner or later, and city and country were to be rudely awakened in due time as the storm of Civil War burst upon the land.

II

SCHOOL BOYS AT HOME

Within a few months after the school was founded, the accessions were so many that it was deemed wise to add very cautiously to the number. There were few vacancies the following year. Quality, not quantity, was Mr. Jacobs's motto. He did not wish to have a large crowd but a select group. His aim was not a popular but a helpful school. He had no desire to build up a pretentious academy and secure a country-wide patronage so as to become rich. His purpose, rather, was to establish a school for a couple of dozen Jewish boys who would adapt themselves to the school's requirements and whom he would help with all his power to obtain the only kind of wealth that would endure for all time—wealth of character. He did not care how few there were so long as they agreed to live in harmony with each other, had will-power enough to obey the few simple rules for their guidance, and showed in their conduct and disposition a proper appreciation of the spirit of home and school. Each lad was to learn his duty and do it fully and cheerfully. No shirkers or slackers were allowed—that was understood from the start. A certain average in lessons and behavior was insisted upon—if this mark was not reached in two consecutive months, the parent or guardian was notified and the boy dismissed.

It was not Mr. Jacobs's intention to be too harsh or too rigid, but he felt that the school must be run on firm principles, without fear or favor, in order to achieve the best results.

Now do not imagine that the school was like an angelic choir and the pupils went around with hushed voices, downcast eyes, and slow measured footsteps. They were just healthy boys, willing boys, active boys, ready for study and ready for play. They all liked fun but their fun had no element of malice. They had happy memories of their life at home and were proud of the chance now afforded them to gain knowledge. In such a group there were all kinds of varieties. Some were gifted lads who needed no spur to drive them forward; others were naturally slower and required steady encouragement before they acquired more speed. Some were so fond of books that they had fairly to be driven to take a walk or a ride in the open. Others would scarcely glance at a newspaper, and then only to read about the sports of the day or the current anecdotes. Boys of their type had to be shown books that appealed to the young and did not weary them after ten minutes. A few were fine players at chess or checkers. In those days athletics were not so general, and swimming facilities not so common, as in our time. Yet all were required to go through regular daily physical exercises; and many were expert at baseball and other out-of-door games.

It was a little world in its way—the playground or the assembly room when the entire school gathered. Ameri-

can, English, French, German, and occasionally other nationalities were represented there, with many of our states from Massachusetts to Texas. Of course the majority were natives of Hometown, and proud of the distinction; but others came from large cities and small towns. The few older boys who had passed their "bar mizvah" and were about to enter college or business life formed a special set by themselves, had some privileges of their own which were highly valued, and were regarded with much awe by the younger lads, who were longing to acquire similar dignity. They were at ease in the founder's home circle, and admitted to close intimacy with the founder, whose kindness shone from his face, upon which was written the law of wisdom and the wisdom of law. The majority of the boys belonged to the lower grades; there was no primary class except in the afternoon Hebrew studies. Mr. Jacobs's method of teaching Hebrew was so simple and thorough that few boys left the primary without sufficient love for the language to make their progress in the intermediate and higher grades satisfactory and rapid. He taught not so much for the year or two at school as for the long after years, so that these boys might become intelligent Israelites at home and in the synagogue.

While there were no natural leaders—boys who stood head and shoulders above the rest and led easily in every activity—a few approached that type and could be depended upon in any movement. Jack Russell, for instance, was a Hometown product, about fourteen years old, and

the politician of the establishment, who knew how to carry his point in face of all opposition. He was clever in adopting what he called a platform. If any society was to be started—and new ones arose by the month and died by the month—he was the one to write out the plan and purpose. He also arranged the offices and was generally president. Israel Cohen was just as clever a diplomat, but he had the gift of apparent indifference. He did not care what the rest would do and how they would arrange matters, but he succeeded generally in managing things just as he wished because he never made it appear that he wished to control them. He committed scarcely a blunder because he never attempted anything without thinking it all over in advance, and he never lost his patience. Both Russell and Cohen left at the end of the first year—perhaps the school was too small for boys of their abilities, which required a much larger field than the Hebrew Home School could give them.

Max Canter was long the musician of the school—as a pianist he had no equal. He loved to improvise and always drew a number of the boys to his neighborhood when he played. As his tones, at first so soft and gentle, grew clearer and stronger, all talk ceased—at the heart of each of them was a love of music, which seems almost a Jewish passion, when we consider how many of Jewish birth have become famous in music and song. He was clever at languages, speaking French and German with equal ease. In debates and at school entertainments he was the

most eloquent of all the boys. His size—he was the smallest in the school although he had passed his fourteenth year—did not expose him to ridicule. In fact all had respect for his strong fists, which did not hesitate to strike when anybody taunted him for his small stature.

Leonard Abrahams liked all kinds of sport and was happiest when a half-holiday came and he could put on the fascinating costume of a baseball champion and head a number of the boys at that pastime. The fact that he often returned with a sprained wrist or a broken finger, with a damaged eye and a bruised chin, did not weaken his love for the game, and made him the greater hero among his companions.

Philip Spanier loved animals, and in the early months of his life at the H. H. S. he kept a number of them in his desk. How he trained them to be quiet during school hours was a mystery that he never explained. Some of the boys thought he knew the language of rabbits and squirrels, and that gave him control. In reality it was his unfailing kindness that made them so quiet and obedient. During the long winter evenings it was his habit to display his treasures, to the great delight of the younger boys. Another trait developed later in Phil—he grew fond of the theater and took special interest in coaching some of the lads in various plays. He was important on Saturday evenings, which was the school's night for theater, concert, or minstrel show. Then he was in his glory, with his whispered comments on actors and acting. You might have thought

him a young Booth as he criticised one and all who appeared on the boards, with the air of an old hand, whether it was comedy or tragedy. He was fond of referring to one of his mother's cousins who had been an actor in one of the far Western cities and had won fame—so he said—as a Roman Emperor—he did not remember whether it was as Julius Caesar or as Hamlet. He aroused quite the envy of the boys, until Sam Frank, a chubby fellow of ten, was lucky enough on a New Year's morning to receive a letter, heavily marked with foreign stamps, from India. It was from his uncle, a British officer long in service, who had fought gallantly, been wounded many times, and was likely to become a general. As a result Sam became a greater celebrity than Phil, and for a while that bright youth was somewhat overshadowed, but not for long.

Another notable boy was Henry Goldsmith, who was proud of the fact that both his grandfather and great-grandfather had been famous rabbis in Europe. Perhaps as a consequence, he was very eager to have a creditable "bar mizvah," for which he was studying hard. He was very fond of Hebrew, made light of its difficulties, which appeared as huge as mountains to many others. He could repeat in right order the names of the Hebrew months, the short commandments, nearly the entire blessing after meals, all in Hebrew, without the least hesitation, and was beginning proudly to study his "parashah" or portion from the Sefer Torah. It was not so much the extent of

Henry's knowledge as the ease and familiarity with which it was displayed that aroused the wonderment of his classmates. He had not yet made up his mind whether he would become a rabbi or a soldier, and would often ask for advice on the subject. He thought it would do no harm to learn more and more Hebrew; for if he became a captain and had Jewish soldiers under him it would be fine to give special orders in Hebrew which no spies or enemies could understand. For the rest Harry was a good-hearted fellow, and would give away his last penny to help a beggar. He would often return to the school room in a tearful mood after seeing a blind fiddler or a poor lame child. Henry is still living but not as a rabbi — he is a retired theatrical manager of good repute.

The pets of the school were the twins, Eddie and Teddy Levy—happy boys of nine on their arrival from the West, big-hearted for their years and ever ready to help in any way they could. Nothing was too troublesome for them. They would run on errands a dozen times a day. It cannot be said truthfully that they were bright scholars, but they took pains to study their lessons and were so prompt and obliging that they were greatly liked. It was a glorious day for the school when their parents visited them, especially in winter, when they came in a beautiful sleigh all covered with fur robes. How the sleigh bells tinkled as it drew up to the house! Possibly one reason why the day was so glorious was the fact that they always brought lots of "goodies" for their sons, who quickly shared them

with their younger comrades, some of whom, particular chums, would be asked to accompany the Levy family on a sleigh ride, with a theater party afterwards, when all would enjoy real ice cream, not the mild rice and milk custard which was so often given as a melancholy substitute. The boys knew the difference. It was a sad morning at the school when the twins left on a journey around the world with their parents. The era of sleigh rides and real ice cream for some of them had ended.

The senior of the school in age and ability was Bernard Gomez, who attended only a few of the classes but was a boarder. He was studying privately for the University. He was nearly sixteen, a native of the West Indies, and a youth of much promise. He was Mr. Jacobs's right hand man, upon whom he could always rely and was of great value in his influence on the boys in general. Of course he felt at home in the Jacobs household. Fond of the best books, he did much to create a literary taste among those of his comrades who cared to improve in that direction. Boys of his type were not so rare decades ago, and they merited the best training so as to reach out and attain the highest excellence, as Bernard seemed likely to do. His one fault or weakness was his remarkable seriousness. He never appeared to enjoy the ordinary amusements of the schoolboys, although he was not reserved or selfish. His nickname at school was "Old Steady."

So the school had many types and characters, not all equally clever or brilliant, it is true. That would have

been impossible and perhaps not desirable if the words meant mere cleverness and brilliancy in learning and reciting their lessons. Book knowledge is very necessary and indispensable for most of us in certain lines of work, but it is not so vital as other qualities that are needed in every station of life and every kind of work. To tell the truth, to be quick to obey, to act with kindness, to put aside evil thought and cherish no unworthy motive—these are qualities which are vital everywhere. They are the essentials in all systems of real education, and these were the essentials, the unwritten law, at the Hebrew Home School. Such qualities did more than anything else to shape the character of the boys, young and old, and to keep for many a year the dear old days in loving memory.

III

THE NEW ARRIVAL

"Say, Spanier," Arthur Davis exclaimed one Sabbath in early May as they were coming from synagogue, "did you hear the news?" Arthur was a good-natured but very fanciful boy, quick to jump at conclusions and spread whatever he heard. In fact they called him the reporter.

"News? What news, my dear boy?" Phil rejoined. "Have the Dutch taken Holland? Or is the river frozen in May?" Phil liked his jest on all occasions—it created an atmosphere of dignified comedy.

"No, no, I am not joking. It is a fact. Did you hear it?"

"Hear what?" And Phil was really growing curious to know, although he distrusted the reporter.

"Well, I heard Mr. Jacobs tell our principal yesterday," —the words came pretty fast, like a stream of water that had long been held back,—"that a little colored boy—a little colored boy was to come to the school in September. Now what do you think of that? Do you think we fellows will stand it? Not one of us. All will leave, that is certain, Phil."

"See here, young man. You are riding the horse—shall I say donkey?—of your imagination, that is all. As usual your genius as reporter has played you a trick. It is not

so—the dreadful story you tell. You have heard with one ear only. Now let me a different tale unfold, and listen, I pray, with both of your good-sized ears. I heard the whole story from Mr. Jacobs. A new boy is coming from the South—so far your report is correct. But he is as white as you are, do you understand? As if Mr. Jacobs would have a colored boy at his school! The idea! Why it is enough to make a cat laugh or the house roar until they cry—Roar again!"

Spanier's effective rebuke was not lost on Arthur, who thought it prudent to be silent on the subject, and the months passed without any further allusion until late in August the boy did arrive from the far South—small of size with piercing dark eyes, a little snub nose, a face somewhat tanned by the sun, of very rapid speech, and clasping a banjo, with his long wiry fingers, close to his side. At first he seemed forlorn, until a smile lit up his features, as the boys crowded around him. It took quite a time, however, before he felt at home among them all. No wonder he was homesick so long. His old home near New Orleans was in the heart of a vast plantation—he had a dozen little comrades at his beck and call, as he ran or climbed or bathed in the quiet river. He could not get used to the closed doors and windows at school nor to the long succession of streets, the thousands of strange people, the deafening noises day and night, the absence of birds and trees and flowers. City life, with its many restrictions, appeared to him so dreary after the South's

air of freedom and ease. Why Edward Lazarus came to school a thousand miles from his father's home, can best be explained by the following letter which Mr. Jacobs received towards the end of April:

My dear Sir:

I understand from some friends in Hometown that you have established a Hebrew School, combining general and Jewish instruction for lads from eight to fourteen. This is an opportunity which I have long desired for my son Edward, for whom I cannot obtain such advantages here in the South. Now that he is nearly eleven I wish him to be reared in his ancestral faith and at the same time be prepared for college. It is too early to tell for what vocation he will show distinct aptitude. He is extremely affectionate, with loving ways and not more inclined to mischief than boys of his age. He has been taught the simplest beginnings and his companions have been untamed youngsters. Yet he will be found both truthful and obedient. He is in fine health, having lived mostly in the open air on my plantation, where he has roamed at will. His heart goes out to those who are good to him and I know he will be grateful for all that you do in his behalf. Let me know, dear Sir, your terms and when you can receive him.

I remain, with every expression of esteem,

Sincerely yours,

GEORGE SINCLAIR LAZARUS.

A few days later Mr. Jacobs spoke to his principal, Mr. Milner, on the subject. His only fear was that the boy who had evidently grown up all by himself might be hard to manage at the school, which was not a reformatory or a workshop under rigid discipline. A boy of that type might be welcome—he certainly had good qualities according to the father's statement, and yet until the school was older and its general system more matured he might not be desirable.

"What is your opinion, Mr. Milner?"

"Mr. Jacobs," the principal's answer came after a few moments' reflection, "I think you are taking too serious a view of the case. Let us consider it once more. Suppose he has good and bad qualities. Such a lad, of course, may require special treatment. If this appears to you too burdensome—it is a plan you have already adopted in several cases—you are under no obligation to keep him if after a month or two he fails to respond to the efforts made. That is simple enough. On the other hand, the boy evidently is affectionate and truthful, and with these qualities as the basis we can handle any pupil. Do you know, Mr. Jacobs—" he continued more earnestly after a pause —"I rather like the idea of having him among us. We have many types of boys—let us add this Southern lad. I do not doubt that he is a dark little fellow, tanned by the sun in the open air life he has followed."

"You put the matter in a new light, Mr. Milner," Mr. Jacobs responded. "That banjo of his rather appeals to

me, I confess. It will be quite an addition to our attractions, will it not?"

"Without any doubt," Mr. Milner replied, "particularly if Phil Spanier pounces upon him for the school entertainments." And they both laughed and turned to other topics, neither being conscious of the fact that Arthur Davis had been within hearing distance, the school reporter and gossip, who was already seeing a little negro boy as a playmate among the boys in the near future, and was in a fever of excitement until he could spread the news.

In those days sixty years ago and more the negro problem was a pretty serious one and its solution seemed impossible, with the sharp antagonism between white and black, which extended even to the North in some measure. The mere idea of receiving such a lad in the Hebrew Home School and associating with him was enough to make Arthur's eyes open wide with horror. The secret was too precious to be kept. It must be told at whatever cost, although he would be sorry, so he thought to himself, if the school would close in consequence. Mr. Jacobs was such a good teacher. Perhaps if he knew how all the boys felt, he might send a letter and have the fellow kept at home. He would find out how they all felt and then decide as to what plan to follow. Arthur was in his element as he let his thoughts move along without harness.

So Edward Lazarus arrived and speedily conquered all hearts. From the beginning all seemed to realize that he

was a bit lonely and missed a good many things in his new surroundings. Hence they redoubled their efforts to make the stranger feel at home, from Mr. Jacobs and the principal, to the Levy twins. Some of the boys had heard that he was full of mischief—the report had spread, no one knew how—and they were waiting to see what kind of pranks he would play. They were sure that he would not set the house on fire or jump from the third story window to the flag-staff on the playground. Perhaps he walked in his sleep, like Lady Macbeth in the play, which they had recently seen. Anyway, they held back for a while and were somewhat reserved until his piercing eyes and bright smile won them over and made them ashamed of their old attitude. It was, however, his banjo, which he treasured so closely, that gained the victory and opened to him all hearts. The first plunk, plunk of the instrument, as he sang softly a weird plantation melody one evening in his room—he was given a little room all by himself for a time—brought all the boys to the door at the unaccustomed sounds, and he had to come down to the main hall and repeat the song amid the enthusiasm of his audience. Such a scene he had never thought possible in the olden days. It was a proud moment in his life and he was homesick no more. From that hour his name was changed to "Plunk." School boys and soldiers are quick to give nicknames.

The next day at recess Phil Spanier who had warily watched for him in the playground, rushed up to him as he was munching an apple:

"Say, Plunk, that was great last night."

"Oh, it was nothing, Spanier—I was just tuning up. That old banjo gets out of order if I don't attend to it now and then."

"Tell me on your honor, on your honor, boy," he repeated, as he gazed at him earnestly, "Did you ever, did you ever play on the stage?"

"The stage? Oh, yes, I did, I did," he replied mimicking Phil's question.

"Heaven bless you, Plunk. The future is serene. I have bright plans for both of us. I shall be your manager, now don't blush at the honor. On what stage did you make your first appearance? Do you remember?"

"It was on the stage—a very tiresome one—between Donaldsonville and New Orleans, that was all."

Phil was much disconcerted by the reply. His vivid fancy had already made Plunk a star, a popular star, winning thunders of applause and whole bags of dimes as they journeyed merrily from place to place and gave entertainments on the road and in every hall in Hometown. He concealed his disappointed hopes bravely and began again with his old jaunty air:

"Say, Plunk, you will have to appear in our next olio."

"Who? What is an olio? I never heard of such a thing."

"An olio? Not know an olio? Have you forgotten what

Richard the Third said in the new version of Shakespeare? —'An olio, an olio, my kingdom for an olio!' "

Plunk did not seem to be greatly impressed.

"Ah, Plunk, my son, you have much to learn. It is too late now to tell you what an olio is—the cry is 'All in!' " And as the cry was caught up by the boys, the recess ended. But Edward soon came to know the mysterious word. Before evening, won over by Phil's persuasiveness, he had promised to take part in the next olio to be given at the school under the direction of Mr. Philip Spanier, who would at the same time respond to a special request and exhibit for this time only some of his tame animals.

It must be confessed that while Edward did fair work in his general studies, he found Hebrew very difficult, and Mr. Jacobs, who was used to all kinds of boys and their whims, had to employ every expedient to arouse and maintain his interest. It seemed to him so dreadfully dull. To learn the alphabet with its strange sounds was no little task, to master the simple syllable a harder struggle. Yet step by step, letter by letter, syllable by syllable, word by word, sentence by sentence, the task grew easier, until at last with patience and perseverance the battle was won. How had Mr. Jacobs managed it?

"Edward," he said one day, as the boy was ready to give up in despair, "I know it is a hard task for you. I understand all that. But just think of the pleasure it will give your father and mother when I can write to them

of your progress in Hebrew. Just think of their happiness, my son."

It was very natural that Edward should find the study of Hebrew so difficult at first. He had never heard it spoken or read out aloud at home. He had never gone to a synagogue. But Mr. Jacobs had found the key to Edward's heart and mind.

"That is a wonderfully affectionate lad," said Mr. Jacobs to his wife one evening. "I have rarely if ever met his equal. He is so quick to appreciate an act of kindness."

"I fear, my husband," she replied, "that he is of too sensitive a nature. Such natures lack strength and reserve power in case of illness."

"You are too apprehensive, I fear. The boy will grow stronger with the years. He must keep up his open air exercise. That must not be neglected."

IV

A SATURDAY NIGHT

It was early in September—the days were shortening little by little, the heat became less severe, the longer evenings growing more and more inviting. In the promise of comfort ahead, how quickly we forget intolerable conditions that made us lose our relish for work or play and reduced us almost to despair! That was the case with Hometown which had become weary of its successive hot spells and longed for the breezes of October. What dissatisfied people we are! A rhymester has put the matter very aptly in the simple verses:

"When the weather is wet,
We must not fret;
When the weather is dry,
We must not cry;
If the weather is cold,
We must not scold;
When the weather is warm,
We must not storm;
But be thankful together,
Whatever the weather."

The holydays were now only a week or two distant—a period of much interest to the school, for a number of the boarders were accustomed to spend the season at their homes and only morning sessions were held, giving the boys who remained considerable leisure, with which they were delighted. It was an era of busy preparation in Jewish households, as if some important visitor was expected, to whom all honor was to be paid. The dwelling was thoroughly cleaned; each room carefully swept; curtains, carpets, rugs, all dusted and renovated. Nothing old or unsightly was permitted, and no expense was spared to create a new atmosphere among rich and poor. The holyday prayer book was taken from its shelf or drawer, where it had reposed since last New Year's. The older folks naturally felt the influence of the season in reviving old memories, and the boys and girls felt no less some coming change, quite apart from the religious associations, which could readily be understood by them. New hats and shoes and garments of varied kinds began to be bought or ordered, not to mention the cake and fruit, the nuts and raisins which were now sent home in large packages. The old rabbinical saying: "There is no pleasure without eating and drinking," was abundantly confirmed when the holydays arrived. Boys and girls today have plenty of happiness, but the children's joy in old time Jewish households was of a peculiar quality which cannot be described as merely pleasure. It was a many-sided joy, in which the home, the father and mother, the religion, and the chil-

dren themselves were included. Hence it was happiness of almost magic character,—not to be forgotten when the little ones grew old and feeble.

The first Saturday evening in the month had been anticipated by the boys of the school with feverish anxiety —it was the regular amusement night and the decision was to be made between the minstrels and the circus, both powerful rivals for popular favor. As a rule the minstrels were the greater attraction. There was a magic spell in the performance of the opening number of the entire company — a medley — all attired in sober black. Brother Bones at one end and Brother Banjo at the other, both with wide spreading collars, glittering eyes, and big painted lips, which contrasted so markedly with their blackened faces, were a host in themselves, as they sang or skipped or told diverting anecdotes. The rest of the company included good talent, and the different acts were never tedious. That week, however, the circus was not to be despised, with its advertised attractions which aroused the lads' curiosity to fever heat, such as unrivalled clowns who had performed before the crowned heads of Europe; curiosities from the South Sea; the "What is it?"—a remarkable animal that talked as well as it sang, so it was announced; pole-climbing and horseback riding. The boys formed two parties according to their preference and it came out a tie, after three trials. It was a stormy afternoon, and the skies were watched by despairing eyes for a sign of clearing that never came. At seven the downpour

was unchecked, and all hope of going out that evening had to be abandoned.

It was not a very gay group of boys who gathered in the assembly hall that night after supper. In those days supper was still the evening meal. Some began to read, others to play checkers, a few strolled up and down the room, several were writing letters to home folks. But the atmosphere lacked zest. Such an air of dejection was not common to healthy boys. Evidently the disappointment was keen. Phil Spanier, perhaps, was the saddest of all—he did love to go to a show under whatever name, circus, minstrels, theater, particularly then, because there was some talk in the school about forming a dramatic company that winter to give occasional entertainments for their friends and raise some funds, perhaps, for a deserving charity. He wanted to get all the "pointers" he could, so as to train a first-class crowd. Plunk was as gloomy as his best chum, although only a new comer and hardly entitled to express his opinion. He, too, liked excitement, but his disappointments were never very serious, and were soon forgotten. It was altogether a melancholy set of boys and one can very well understand the situation.

A little after eight, Mr. Jacobs entered the room, and taking a chair from the platform placed it on the floor so that he might be nearer the boys. Then as they all wondered what was going to happen, for they knew his appearance meant something, he said in his hearty way:

"Need I tell you, my sons, how sorry I am that we could

not go out this evening? It was a great disappointment to me, for I like an occasional visit to the show as much as any of you—even as Phil there, who might be taken for a tragedian out of a job, to judge from his somber looks. A little rain would have been of no consequence, but the storm was too much for most of us. There will be many more Saturday evenings, no doubt of that, and an enjoyment is only postponed, is it not so? Now I propose a kind of substitute, which may or may not be as attractive. I want to talk to you a little tonight. It is a good opportunity, too good to be neglected. No. It is to be no lecture,"—and Mr. Jacobs smiled and the boys smiled in return. "It is to be no lecture. Let me tell you why. Last week I met a young man who used to go to synagogue in his boyhood and he said to me: 'Do you know, Mr. Jacobs, I always looked upon a lecture as a sort of punishment. Whenever I was naughty, and that was now and then, my mother would say, "All right, Fred — I'll tell Mr. Jacobs, and he'll give you a lecture!" ' So now you will have no lecture—just a straight-out talk, my sons, you understand."

To judge from the applause that followed and the repeated peals of laughter, the audience certainly did understand the points in the speech and waited eagerly for the next statement. They knew Mr. Jacobs was fond of giving a surprise.

"The holydays are now close at hand—some of you will soon leave for home, the rest will have no full school work

for nearly a month. What does it all mean? This change, this new departure in our lives and habits, must have a meaning."

"It is our New Year, Sir," Bernard Gomez said gravely. "Yes, yes," others exclaimed, "Our New Year."

"Of course it is our New Year. But that answer, correct as it is, does not fully explain the matter. When I was a boy, I heard it called 'house-cleaning' time, and my father said, 'No, soul-cleaning time.' I could not understand that phrase then—I was not seven years old. All of you may understand the term if not very clearly; some of you, you older boys, must realize its meaning."

"Oh, Mr. Jacobs"—it was Arthur Davis who spoke in his rapid way—"I read a funny story about the soul the other day. Can I tell it?"

"Go on, my son."

"Well, a little fellow asked his brother where his soul was. After much thinking the brother answered: 'It is in my stomach.' 'Why in your stomach?' 'When I had a pain there, they all said to me, Oh, you poor soul!' "

Mr. Jacobs rather welcomed the story, which relieved somewhat the tension produced by his serious way of talking, and he waited a few moments until the laughter had ceased. Then he continued:

"Our souls are our real selves—that which is real and permanent. Surely our hats and shoes and clothing are not our real self, even if some of us think a great deal

about them. Nor is the money in our pockets or in our bank our real self, even if it is in our thoughts most of the time. Now these holydays—holy not hollow days—are intended for the souls of our people, so that that which is real and true and lasting in the Jewish people should assert itself and renew its association with our good Creator, who has kept Israel these thousands of years."

"But, Mr. Jacobs," Bernard asked, "has He not kept other people, too? Is He not Creator of the whole world as well as of us?"

"Why, surely He is. Do you not learn that when you sing our old time hymn 'Adon Olam,' 'Lord of the Universe?' And when you repeat the wonderfully stirring 'Alenu' prayer, do you not realize that He is Lord and Creator of all? We are not taught to regard the Almighty as ours alone. Who gave you that impression? You must have misunderstood."

"But, Mr. Jacobs," Phil inquired, "Are we not the chosen people?"

"Yes, Phil. In our Torah our fathers were thus called, not to arouse any feeling of superiority as if God were our exclusive possession, and nobody else had any claim to Him. The purpose was to awaken in us a sentiment of loyalty to Him, of gratitude for His constant guidance through flood and fire, through sword and famine, and of devotion to the principles of the religion which we have chosen."

"What has that to do with the holydays, Mr. Jacobs?" asked Max Canter a little nervously. He rarely asked questions.

"I am coming to that now. In the old legend—and our old legends are as worthy of being studied as the legends of Greece and Rome and they should not be neglected by Jewish boys—we are told that the Law was offered to all the nations, but each refused it because each found that it prohibited the very things which they enjoyed and commanded the very things which they were unwilling to observe. It was not for them. But Israel alone agreed to hear and obey at whatever cost and sacrifice. Hence the Law was given to Israel. It chose the hard path, the struggle, the agony, and became the people chosen for a divine purpose—to teach mankind the unity of God and human brotherhood. The Jew has journeyed from land to land, and despite the long ages of struggle and persecution he has spread that ideal. And these holydays are annual reminders of the old pledge—I hope I am not preaching after all—which we renew from age to age, wherever we are and under all conditions. We keep the holydays with the same spirit, though the forms may have changed here and there, in Europe or Asia, in Africa or America, on the hills of Palestine or in Hometown. They renew our loyalty, they revive our religious feelings, they bind us more closely together, Jew to Jew, the whole world over. And they teach our neighbors of other creeds that we are a grateful, obedient people,

whose law is good, refreshing the soul. But I fear, my sons—"and Mr. Jacobs smiled again—"I fear that I am beginning to lecture after all when I only wanted to have a quiet little talk. Do pardon me—I will never be so forgetful again. But, my sons, it is growing late. It is almost bed time and still raining heavily."

"Mr. Jacobs," Phil exclaimed slowly as if he wished to say something very clever, "Your talking and then your lecturing reminds me of a story about a colored man who was fishing one day and hooked such a big fish that it pulled him overboard. As Pomp went over the side of the boat and tore through the water in the wake of the big fish, he cried out: 'Wot ah wants ter know is dis—is dis niggah a-fishin' or is dis fish a-niggerin'?' "

"Very good, Phil, very good," Mr. Jacobs repeated, joining in the laugh. "It is a good joke for your next olio. Come, Max, a little music now and then lights out."

And Max Canter played some of the Jewish holyday melodies that he had learned in his childhood from an old uncle, which made a fitting close to an enjoyable evening despite the rainstorm.

V

IN THE SUKKAH

The New Year's and Day of Atonement had passed and the boys who had stayed at school shared the usual festival experiences. Study was not wholly neglected, but they had much more time to themselves, to which they did not object, and occupied their leisure in long walks; or, if the weather was very unfavorable, in the school library—a spacious room with its desks and small tables for reading or writing. As a rule boys know how to amuse themselves. It was on one of these walks, as a number were sauntering along and spiritedly talking about various matters—it is curious what an amount of talking boys can do in a few minutes—that Phil suddenly exclaimed:

"Fellows, I have it!"

"Have what?" Arthur Davis responded, "The measles?"

"Nonsense, Arthur. Don't you all know that we shall have Sukkot in a day or two?"

"Of course we do," replied Max, "What of it?"

"Well, let us ask Mr. Jacobs to allow us to build a Sukkah in the playground, close to the house, and build it in fine style, too. Boys, it is a grand idea!"

The matter was carried unanimously, with cries of "Hurrah!", "The very thing!", while some threw their

caps into the air, catching them deftly on the rebound. Plunk's hurrah was loudest of all. Immediately on their return, the plan was made known to Mr. Jacobs, who gave his hearty consent.

"That is a fine idea, Phil," he said. "You have not too much time, for there is much to be done. However, my wife and I will help all we can, if you are energetic."

The boys did not delay but worked with the ardor of veteran carpenters and builders. They selected the site, marking it out according to a regular plan which Bernard prepared, and while some were busy clearing the ground, others went to the woods not very distant, bringing back a mass of boughs of different sizes, all heavily laden with leaves, which were cleaned of dust. A visit was paid to the carpenter shop, but no suitable material could be found. Further ransacking brought to light portions of an old fence and sundry bits of lumber which with the carpenter's aid formed the light frame-work of the structure. It was fine weather, too, with the snap of autumn in the air. All worked with a will and soon the frame-work assumed a more home-like appearance. Little by little, the boughs overspread the building, being strewn plentifully over the roof, until they formed a graceful covering—the foliage not being heavy enough to shut out the gleam of the stars. The structure might not have passed the criticism of a master mechanic, but it was the perfection of beauty to its joint builders and amply served its purpose.

When the work was finished, the boys were fairly tired out and needed no cradle song as they went to bed. Such lads rarely need aids to sleep. One element of anxiety, however, was there. Suppose a storm broke out that night—a hurricane which would devastate the playground and sukkah. It was very lightly put together and would offer no resistance to the shock of a storm. Happily all fears were dispelled, as they gathered around it early next day and found it even more satisfying than at first.

"Say, fellows!" cried Philip, startling the birds from the trees, "what makes our Sukkah greater than Rome?"

Of course nobody could guess Philip's riddle. Attempts were made which only aroused his derision. Some of the boys tried to think very hard and screwed up their faces in the effort, but without avail. They had to give it up.

"Well, you are a smart set of fellows. I thought you had more brains. Don't you really know? Then I'll tell you. Rome was not built in a day, but our Sukkah was! What do you think of that?"

A loud shout of merriment was the response given with so much noise that Mrs. Jacobs hurried to the spot and saw the Sukkah for the first time. "That is simply lovely, boys. It is a fine piece of work," and again she looked at the structure with the sunbeams shining through the foliage. "Now I want just three of you to help—only three, remember. Too many cooks can spoil even a Sukkah. The rest of you can go for a walk or to the library—we have important business, have we not?" and

she smiled at Phil, Arthur, and Plunk, as they followed her to the house, the happiest boys under the morning skies.

What took place then and there had no chronicle, no tell-tale observer. There was much bustling about, carrying to and fro, a good deal of laughter and quiet, whispered talk, as if they were in a great hurry and did not wish to be disturbed. It was a secret, a secret which they dared not tell. What would the world be without a secret? Who knows where the songbird learns its melody? Do the clouds gather around the setting sun, to get some of its rosy radiance? Why must the raindrops patter on the roof just as a fellow wishes to go to sleep? Who told mother just what a boy wants for his birthday? These are secrets past finding out.

Now this secret which Mrs. Jacobs and her three helpers were guarding so carefully was not to be kept forever, fortunately for all parties concerned. It was to be revealed that very evening as Sukkot was ushered in, with its charm and gladness, its simple home prayers and songs, its joyous atmosphere which cannot be forgotten by those who have shared its magic. Within the structure the fairies had been at work, real tiny fairies with gossamer wings or perhaps good sized fairies of flesh and blood. It was undeniable. In the old tradition, when the temple of Solomon was built, no sound of the hammer was heard. A wonderful architect saw to that. And so it happened out there in the school playground. Not a sound of a

hammer was heard. Perhaps now and then a light laugh was caught up by the friendly breeze, perhaps a merry jest or two was wafted away by the wind, which strayed thither out of pardonable curiosity. But that night after Mr. Jacobs and the boys had returned from synagogue and were about to enter the dining room for the evening meal, fancy the surprise, the delight of all as Mr. Jacobs suddenly turned and led the gay crowd out into the playground to have their first festival repast in their Sukkah under the stars, which were twinkling very suspiciously as if they knew what was going to happen! Those old stars are very clever. We call them old, but they are really very young, just as the great world that God has made is always young to the heart that is young and full of kindness.

With Mr. Jacobs at one end of the long table and his wife at the other, the boys found no difficulty in settling down to the reality of the scene after a few moments. For at first they were under a spell. The shining lights, the pictures and portraits that hung on this side and on that, the snow-white table itself, which bore such tempting food, with fruit and cake conveniently near, with the foliage that they had gathered so close to them, and the leafy roof a marvel of beauty, made them strangely silent—for boys of good appetites. Mr. Jacobs recited the customary blessings. The delicious raisin wine in tiny glasses, the sweet bread-cake in small slices, were passed around, and the meal followed. Then came the *benschen*,

recited by the boy who was next to become bar mizvah, "a son of the commandment," having reached his thirteenth year.

"My dear sons," Mr. Jacobs spoke in rather serious vein, as if the occasion demanded it, "you never thought that in building a Sukkah you were carrying out one of the essential ideals of our religion. The tabernacle and Israel are inseparable. What do I mean by the phrase? You think first of the synagogue and the Sukkah. Yet these do not exhaust the number. The home is a tabernacle ever near, urging us to right living. You have built this structure with your own hands, and with your own hands you must build that other tabernacle—the tabernacle of life."

He paused a moment, and before he could resume a clear little voice was heard—it was Plunk.

"Mr. Jacobs, can you tell us a story?"

"Is it not rather late?" he asked.

"Oh, no, Sir, it is never too late for a story," was Plunk's quick reply. "We don't mind how late it is, do we, boys?" And they all laughed at the idea of any hour being too late for them, even such of them as had had a double portion of fish. So without further preamble, Mr. Jacobs told them the story:

Always Ready

Once there lived a king—a king of great power and wisdom who had prepared a banquet of the rarest viands

and had invited to it not only his own courtiers but all the people who chanced to enter his realms. To all he sent messengers and bade them get ready for the festivities, to have their garments in best condition, to anoint themselves with fresh oil and be prepared for the event. The date was not told and all remained in doubt when the great feast was to occur.

Intense excitement prevailed throughout the kingdom. All loved the king and were happy to be his guests. However, there are always people of different minds. Some are careful, others are careless. The wise ones duly prepared themselves for the banquet without any further notice. They put on their white garments, spotlessly clean, and anointed themselves with oil as they had been commanded, and then gathered before the king's palace and patiently waited.

"It may occur at any time," so ran their thoughts. "In the palace of a king, all things must be in order without any outside announcement. It may come at any time. One must be prepared."

But the foolish ones were in no hurry. "Time enough, time enough," they said to each other. "Why must we rush and get out of breath? See how peaceful the palace looks. No stir, no excitement, no crowds of servants running in all directions, no carts and wagons with food and wine. There is ample time. Why prepare now? We shall wait and at the first sign of excitement at the palace we shall get ready."

So those who worked at metals kept on working, those who labored in the ditches continued their toil. The dealers in the market, those who sold leather, the barber, the plasterer, and the rest, all continued their work. Plenty of time, was their cry.

How sudden the whirlwind! How quick life's calamities! They send no heralds ahead but come upon us without warning. So it happened in this instance. One day the king announced through his messenger: "The banquet is at hand. Let all come at once." So just as they were, the people hurried to the palace. The wise, who had already prepared themselves, came without fear but full of hope. The foolish, who had to rush to the banquet clad in their work-day garments, torn, dusty, muddy, and with untidy faces, arrived heated and uncomfortable, at the same time feeling that they had done wrong and deserved punishment.

With the wise, who had obeyed his commands, how the king rejoiced! Their faces shone, their hearts were radiant, even as their garments were white. But his anger was kindled against the foolish who had disobeyed his words and attended the banquet in such untidy fashion.

"Ye wise ones," said he, "who prepared yourselves and were ready for my call, you shall feast at the banquet. Happy shall be your lot. But you foolish ones who did not get ready for my summons will have no repast with me. Depart!"

So the faithful Israelite who wishes to gain divine approval must always be ready for the call, with his garments white, his character without a stain. Who knows when the summons comes? So be always ready when He bids us enter the palace and share His favor.

It was a rather sober story, and the swaying shadows added to the effect on the boys' imagination. The town was asleep—not a sound save here and there a cricket in prophecy of coming changes. As they returned to the house and began to mount the stairs, Plunk could not resist crooning:

"Good night, shadows, till the morning.
Come again, sunbeams, in the dawning.
For the evening is for dreams
But the day is for the gleams
Of that happiness which comes
When He calls."

VI

THE MAIL BAG

With the weeks and months in swift flight, the Hebrew Home School kept to its usual routine. There were not many changes. Some of the boys left, others came. The general progress was not to be mistaken; occasionally a new subject or department was added. Mr. Jacobs adopted no one method—most schools in his day boasted of their special and superior methods with high sounding names. He had one aim, however, to advance his pupils in knowledge and character. This was the basis of all teaching. His task was not easy, but it was succeeding. He was aided, too, by his capable principal and assistants. The influence of Mrs. Jacobs was also marked. She had a happy, motherly nature, was active and energetic, and did all in her power to make the lads feel at home.

It was rather a stirring period in American history. Our country was beginning to be aroused in many ways. Signs of a new era were at hand—there were notable new happenings. Japan sent its embassy to show its desire for further friendly intercourse. The cable flashed news across the Atlantic. The Prince of Wales, a very slender youth, was about to visit our shores. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was being read by young and old, and Whittier and Longfellow were the favorite poets. John Brown's

attempt to free the slaves excited the entire nation. The largest steamship in the world, "The Great Eastern," was fast being built. Rumors began to spread of a coming struggle between North and South.

While the schedule of studies at the school was closely kept, current events, the rumors and gossip of the day had their influence on the boys and were reflected in the letters which were sent home. The comments on school affairs were always frank and showed at times a refreshing boyish humor, as these selections will amply show.

My dear Parents:

I am getting along very well. Mrs. Jacobs thinks that I am growing fat. I ought to, considering the good things they give a fellow here. Rare roast beef, fine soup, all kinds of puddings, lots of fruit and vegetables, and fish, too. So far have had only three demerits—all because I cannot keep the ink from my fingers. We played baseball last Wednesday afternoon, and I made a home run. Great excitement last night. A fire broke out in the Brewery across the street in the rear and we had lots of fun watching the hook and ladder men in their red shirts climbing up to the roof and pouring streams of water into the building. They put out the fire. Phil said they put out the beer, too. He is a fine fellow for cracking jokes. I would not care to become a fireman—I would rather help my father at the mill. He'll need me soon, won't you, Pop? Am getting along very well in Hebrew—can

already translate the entire Shema Israel, and am soon to be promoted. Well, as it is time to go to bed, I shall bring this letter to a close.

Affectionately,

Harry.

P. S. If dates can be bought in your neighborhood, I know a boy who is very fond of them and would not refuse a box of them. You can send them by express. Love to all.

Dearest Mother:

We had a holiday yesterday—all in honor of the Atlantic cable and Cyrus W. Field. You can now send a message right across the ocean. What a parade it was—soldiers, policemen, firemen, large floats, big banners, long carts carrying printing presses at work, also girls sewing as hard as anything. At night we had splendid fireworks and a torchlight procession. I stood on a big box to see it all and had a fine time. If you had only been there, I would have been as happy as anything. I just love Mr. Jacobs for letting us have a holiday. He does everything he can for us boys. At Mr. Jacobs' birthday party, I had my hair curled and wore that pretty bow you sent me. I played the banjo in honor of the occasion. I think my best suit is not quite so good as it was—it will do very well for a second-best, don't you think so? Mr. Woolf says I am improving very much on the piano and would do better, if I practised more. But the days are

getting shorter and I have many lessons to study. In the spring I can practise more. The boys are singing a new song: "Oh, Willie, I have missed you, far, far from home." Do you miss me, mother?

Edward.

Dear Grandma:

I hope you are all well again. I am always well here and have had the doctor only once. He said it was too much cream cake. I am glad it was not the measles. I am having a very nice time. Mr. Milner is a good teacher. He said last Friday that I was every inch a man because I recited my piece about the boy standing on the burning deck without a single mistake. The weather is getting cold and my gloves are too thin. Most of the boys have heavy woolen gloves. I have lots of friends here—I like Sam Frank—he is kind to me when I want to know about my lessons, but Harry Goldsmith gives me cream cakes and I think he is very nice, too. Don't you, grandma? Mr. Jacobs has engaged a dancing teacher for boys who wish to learn dancing. I shall not learn, for I think, and so does Harry and lots of others, that dancing is only for girls, and I don't want to be a sissy. We are all going to see "The Ravels" at the theater next Saturday night. It will be lots of fun. Well, it is time for supper. So good night, grandma dear.

Fondly,

You know who—don't you?

N. B. Shall I get the heavy gloves myself? You know my size.

Dear Brother:

I would write more often but there is little to tell that would interest you now that you are in business by yourself. Everything goes on splendidly and I was promoted —the second time in a year. Phil says if I get promoted so often, there will be nothing new to teach me. They have a mighty good way of teaching how to read and spell. Well, we all read out loud, every fellow in turn, and he who reads best for two weeks gets a book. Then words are given us to spell and define from the reading lesson and it is very exciting, as the boys are divided into squads, and the squad that makes the least mistakes is called the banner squad for the month. The boys are very nice and friendly and play lots of games. I have improved in checkers. I wrote about that little chap who came here from the South. Well, he is awfully good. At first he used to speak so fast that I couldn't understand all he said, but now he talks just like the rest of us. He plays the banjo grandly—Plunk we call him.

One of the greatest sights was the firemen's parade. They all had torches which looked fine as they blazed away in the darkness, and the men marched with one hand on the rope which dragged the fire engine and the other holding the torch high up in the air. All the fire companies have names and numbers and the boys have

their favorites. Mine is the Oceanics, who are the Elevens. It always runs first to the fire and gets a medal, they say. If a company wins four medals, they let the men have a full holiday. We are going to have a school paper soon. I think Phil will be editor. He is a very smart boy and has two of the cutest rabbits you ever saw. Now I have told all the news and hope to hear from you soon.

Artie.

Sister Alice:

I just bet you would have wanted to be a boy if you had been here last Wednesday afternoon when the Eagles and the Swans had their finals in the field. The whole school took part and we were all excited, as it lasted quite a time. I belong to the Swans and the Swans won. It was great. It is true, we won by one run only, but it was victory on a narrow margin, as our trainer said, and a victory is a victory anyway. After the match we treated the Eagles who looked pretty tired,—we fought them hard—to sarsaparilla (that is a tough word to spell) and jumbles. It was hot—and it tasted fine. When we got home, what do you think? Why, Mr. Jacobs treated both teams to real ice cream and it was bully, but not as good as mother makes. We are all singing a new song that Plunk plays on his banjo and some of the verses go like this:

"I wish I was in the land of cotton
"Cinnamon seed and cedar bottom.
"In Dixie's land where I was born in,
"Early on one Sunday mornin'."

Everybody sings it. We get Plunk to play it fifty times every evening. It has more snap than "Yankee Doodle." Tell ma that my neckties are getting lost and I would like a few more. Don't let her send them all of one color. The narrow ones are the most stylish, the fellows say. Well, good bye, Sis.

Bob.

P. S. Don't forget about the ties.

Dear Father:

Matters are very quiet just now—in a few weeks we shall have our Spring recess and I shall be glad of a little holiday. I find the boys improve very much—we have no black sheep. Some of them come here pretty raw, as the saying is, but they soon change for the better in the school and out of it. Mr. Jacobs is very particular about what he calls the quality of voice. He says the voice is the best index of character. He insists that in the house the boys shall talk quietly and not with their hands as some do at first. The real gentleman or the man of refinement is known by his poise, his perfect self-control. To lose one's temper is to lose oneself. To fly into a passion at the least provocation is to confess our weakness and that we are in the wrong. Of course there are times when we cannot

always be calm but as a rule we can be more restrained. In our debates, he urges the boys to consider different points of view before we come to express our opinion, and in general he tells us to be slow to take offense, to be quick to admit a mistake, and to put away a spirit of revenge.

The other evening he took down from his library a very old book bound in vellum, and told us some fine stories about Jewish history in Eastern lands. How our ancestors had to suffer in those days!—whole families perished, and others that survived were compelled to wander from place to place until they found welcome on foreign soil. That is how so many Jews came to dwell in Poland. Turkey, too, gave them a refuge. He said that good men then helped us just as Adolph Cremieux and Moses Montefiore are helping us today. Without their aid, thousands of our brethren in the Orient who are accused falsely of various crimes would meet a terrible death. He talks so entertainingly that he is giving us a real interest in Jewish history.

When I get to the University, I shall make that one of my chief studies. I only wish it were properly and thoroughly taught, but it is in Europe alone, Mr. Jacobs says, at the old Universities, where one may find the opportunity to carry on Jewish studies. He thinks, however, that the time will come when chairs of Hebrew and Jewish history will be founded at some of our American colleges for students of every creed. Wouldn't

it be fine if I could occupy such a chair in the future? Why must our Jewish boys learn to become business men only? Everything in time, says Mr. Jacobs, who is always hopeful.

Why not try to visit Hometown before the school closes for the summer? Do come, Father. You will certainly enjoy the trip and so will your fond son.

Bernard.

VII

THE OPEN FIREPLACE

One of the centers of attraction at the school—and these were few—was the open fireplace in Mr. Jacobs' study, with its crowded bookshelves lining three sides of the room which, while fairly spacious for its special use, was none too large when on cold and cheerless winter evenings it was filled by the lads eager to enjoy its attractiveness. Of course they had their comfortable quarters for studying or writing, for playing music or indulging in a game of chess and checkers. But that made no difference, however much they liked their own assembly hall. If the study door was open, that was a sign which was full of meaning. It was an appeal that was not to be evaded, an invitation which needed no further comment. Sometimes the door remained closed for weeks—Mr. Jacobs was busy and not to be interrupted. But when the blaze of the log fire shone through the open or partly open door, it was easy to foretell what would happen. It did not take many minutes before the boys found their way, one by one, to the study and rarely left before bed time.

Mr. Jacobs was wise in not opening the door too frequently, because the boys would not have appreciated the privilege so much had it become too common. If we had sunsets only once in every week or two, how we would

rush to view so wonderful a sight and how we would talk to one another about the magic clouds of color that fade away into darkness! They are so frequent that we regard them as a matter of course and their beauty generally awakens no sense of wonderment. The sweetest song heard too often loses much of its melody. So Mr. Jacobs planned very shrewdly in his management of the door, and it never lost its charm.

If the fireplace in the evening was a center of attraction, in the daytime it became a confessional for any lad who wished to have a private chat with Mr. Jacobs. He had only to knock and at the words "Come in!" he would enter the study and approach the fireplace near which stood Mr. Jacobs' desk. What interviews did not that fireplace witness! and it never revealed the secrets told. What precious counsel did it not hear, what stern reproof, what tender encouragement! He must have been a wonderful man, that kindly teacher, to have the power to change the boy's mood and countenance, to banish his care and sorrow, and to dismiss him with a smile. In every boy's life, Mr. Jacobs knew, were moments of doubt and anxiety, and a word of admonition, a simple suggestion, a frank interchange of views, would clear away the clouds and start the boy aright once more.

Many a man, looking back to those early school days, will bless the teacher who had won his confidence, and he can trace his later success and usefulness in large measure to the influence of the teacher's golden words and attitude.

The lessons of the classroom, however helpful and necessary, were for the classroom. The advice, the censure, the encouragement, given frankly and sincerely in the privacy of the study, were for all time. It is said that Napoleon and Wellington won their great victories when they were schoolboys. Our defeats in manhood, too, go back to our youth. Many of us in mature age feel that our course in life would have been different if our school teacher had tried to shape conduct and character at just such precious moments when problems in life more important than those in fractions or decimals were to be solved.

It was to Mr. Jacobs' credit that he never was inquisitive, although he seemed to know the difficulty in every case. The lad who came to him so trustfully never left the fireplace without being lightened of the burden. It is not correct to say that boys have no cares or troubles—these may appear trivial to their elders, but to them they are intensely real. Happily such worriments soon take flight in the sunshine of good counsel.

"Fellows," Phil exclaimed one particularly stormy evening in November, as they were more or less occupied in the assembly hall, "I wonder if that door is open. Run, Plunk, run, and let us know." Swift as a flash he returned with the welcome news, and it did not take many minutes before a rapid movement set in toward Mr. Jacobs' study.

"Well, my sons, do you know? I was just thinking how nice it would be to have you all here. I have nothing special on hand, and you are welcome. Max, put on

another log or two, and let us have a little more blaze. Come, just gather all of you around the fireplace. You need not crowd so—there, fall back, Phil. There—now you are all comfortable, like peas in a pod."

"Or fish in the pan," whispered Fred, "all ready to be fried."

"What shall we talk about to-night?" Mr. Jacobs asked. "Make your own choice."

"First of all," cried Harry Goldsmith, whose voice was rarely heard in a crowd, "let us have the banjo. Come, Plunk."

"All in favor of the motion," Phil shouted, "will signify in the usual way."

All seemed to favor the motion, it was carried unanimously, and Plunk needed no further invitation. He had grown amazingly in the short time up North. Perhaps he was a little too pale to please Mrs. Jacobs, who was always urging him to eat. It was not a very lofty production, Plunk's effort—merely about a little yellow dog in the canewood, who fell with a thud in the mud and had other mishaps of the kind. But the odd, haunting melody caught the boys' fancy, and when the words and air were suddenly changed to the more familiar "Uncle Ned, who lived long ago, long ago," all forgot the snow and sleet dashing against the window panes.

"Mr. Jacobs," said Leonard—one of the quiet ones, "when Plunk plays, it seems just like summer time in the woods."

"My dear son," Mr. Jacobs rejoined after a pause, "I envy you, although envy is not the best word to use. Perhaps I should say I call you and your comrades the happiest of the happy that you have youth and health, with the big world before you to work out your plans. We older people can be happy, too, but we are fast reaching our world's end."

"Why, Mr. Jacobs—" it was Bernard's deep voice—"I think you are as young as any of us."

"I think an older person loses some of his age when he has young friends and shares their young thoughts. That is an advantage which the teacher possesses. Some say that we are as old as our hearts. If we keep our hearts young, that is all we have to do. No other remedy is required against old age. Happily no one can see if the heart grows gray or bald or wrinkled. But let us change the subject; it is a little too deep for us. What question have you to ask to-night?"

"I have one—" it was Plunk. "Who wrote our Hebrew prayers?"

"I am glad you asked that question. You are none too young to learn about such an important matter. To put it in a familiar, if not very exact way, our old prayer book is an album of pressed flowers which come from different places, and each tells a different story. Some of the prayers go back as far as the Pentateuch and the Psalms —take the *Shema'*, for example and the *Hallel.* They were composed by the sages of the Great Synod who

lived in the five or six centuries between the return of the exiles from Babylon and the second century of our era. Among other labors of theirs, besides arranging our Scriptures or, as it is termed, fixing the Canon or the number and order of its books, they gathered the chief elements in our liturgy. These were the sections grouped together as the Shema' and the standing prayer, called *Amidah* or *Shemone Esre*, the eighteen benedictions."

"But, Mr. Jacobs," Bernard interrupted, "our prayer-book contains much more than those portions."

"Surely, and that is easily explained. Those are largely additions by later authorities for special occasions. You can call them growths, as our people spread from land to land and gifted writers wished to enrich the collection. If I had an edition of the *Siddur* or ritual of R. Amram,—I hear one will be published soon—from the early part of the ninth century, and compared it with the prayer-book I use in my synagogue, you would be startled at the contrast in the amount of prayer. Often, too, specimens of our best Hebrew poets would be included—men like Gabirol, Judah Halevi, Moses Ibn Ezra, and others. Our prayer-book, therefore, is literature as well as liturgy. Of course the worshippers were expected to understand their prayers.

"It is well to bear in mind," Mr. Jacobs continued, "that our prayer-book contains not only petitions to the Almighty, but also thoughts of much beauty which are interwoven with the prayers and are very uplifting. I

know of no single prayer in any language which surpasses in charm those few sentences which we repeat each day, beginning: 'My God, the soul which Thou hast given me is pure,' or the words from the evening benediction which begins: 'Let us, O Lord our God, lie down in peace.' You see, my sons, a prayer among us is not a mere bubble of fancy or emotion—it is not a jingle of rhyme or sentiment which defies meaning or sense. Our prayers spring from the soul of our people and were written often in times of keen distress. Our prayer-book, too, is history as well as prayer; for many of our prayers are based upon historical events. Sometimes they condense Jewish doctrines, like the Yigdal hymn. The subject is possibly more adapted to older people, but enough has been said to answer the inquiry."

"There is one part which you have not touched upon," Max Canter said. "How can we feel at home in our prayer-book? It is so hard to study Hebrew. At least I have always found it so."

"You are mistaken, Max. You are entirely mistaken. The beginnings are not easy to boys who find Latin or Greek difficult—that is, it has taken you longer than most of your comrades. Besides, some boys really have no taste for any language. That class we need not consider. Ask, however, any of your companions who have been here a year and they will tell you that Hebrew is not so difficult to learn. You must first climb the mountain tops to enjoy the plains. Easy or difficult, the Jewish boy or

girl must consider this. Hebrew is one of the treasures of Israel, our heritage of which we must be proud. It has a history and a literature with which in some respects no living language can compare, for these are but dwarfs while that is a giant. The little time we spend in its study does not interfere with our other duties. At least that is my experience."

"You put the case strongly, Mr. Jacobs," was Bernard's comment.

"Phil," Mr. Jacobs exclaimed, "on that third shelf from the top, among those small books, is a little work in leather, with a torn cover. Yes, that is it. Now bring it to me. Thank you, Phil. You have here some of the writings of a famous scholar in her day—about three hundred years ago—Anna Maria Schurman. From her portrait, which you can see here on the first page, we may judge that she was rather clever if a little severe. There follows an address to the reader in which the Belgian worthy is greatly praised. Among her writings included in this volume are a number of Hebrew letters—see the signature —which show fair knowledge of Hebrew style. Now, if it was an easy task for a woman so many years ago—one who was not a Jewess and yet thought Hebrew a necessary language to study, shall any Jewish boy or girl today hold back and refuse to give it the attention it deserves?"

"Are we making fair progress, Mr. Jacobs?" Leonard asked.

"Most of you are doing well—some surprise me by their interest and ability. I hope next year to begin, with the advanced grade, the study of a number of our mediaeval writers—historians and poets—and shall try to make their study of special value. But it is nearly ten, past bed time for you younger ones whose eyes are still wide open. The logs are burnt out at last—so you must go. Good night, good night! First, Philip, you might restore Anna Maria Schurman to her shelf. Good night!"

VIII

THE CIRCLE

"Say, boys!" Philip exclaimed one Sunday afternoon as a number of the lads were preparing to take a long walk to the Park, which had been planned a year or two earlier and was already beginning to assume a hopeful appearance; "Say, boys! I have an idea."

"Quite a novelty for Phil," Sam Frank observed.

"Let's hear it, Phil. Cut short the agony," added Max.

"Let's have a school paper. We'll all help, and it will be fine. I am sure Mr. Jacobs will favor it and do his share. Each of us can write something, and you, Bernard, can be chief editor and read it out Friday evening after supper to the whole school, perhaps once a month. What do you think of the idea?"

"Will it be printed?" Arthur Davis asked.

"That will be pretty expensive," Henry Goldsmith rejoined. "Printing costs a lot."

"Fellows," said Bernard, who did not rush into speech, but who, when he spoke made it worth while listening to, "the idea is fine. No doubt of that. The only difficulty is how to go about it. It must be worthy of the school. The best plan is to talk over the matter with Mr. Jacobs without delay. We shall then consult the entire school, choose an editorial board, and hit upon a good name."

"A good name is better than riches," whispered Phil.

"As to the name," Bernard continued, "Let us not worry about that now. Let us defer the whole thing until Mr. Jacobs has given his advice. That's the best plan, is it not?"

All agreed with him as they left the house and were soon among the trees and shrubberies of the Park. It is needless to add that the boys could not keep from talking about the proposed paper and its name. Each seemed to have a favorite to suggest. "Knowledge Seekers," "School Companion," "Our Regular Visitor," "Jewish Comrades," "Our Scrap Bag" (which last gained favor until Phil said it sounded too much like "Scrap Heap") were among the titles discussed with much animation. No decision was reached until they came to an open space shaped like a circle, when Plunk shouted:

"I have it. Let's call it 'The Circle.'" The boys thought it the best suggestion so far, and Bernard was authorized to submit the name to Mr. Jacobs.

The interview was held in due course. Bernard told Mr. Jacobs about the boys' idea of a paper and that they wished his advice. It did not take very long to consider the form, character and arrangement; the name "Circle" was approved, and every detail settled without delay, happily for the peace of the school. The few minutes' interview seemed hours to the impatient boys, and their joy when they heard of Bernard's success can hardly be described in sober language.

Bernard found it an easy task to gain Mr. Jacobs' consent and make him an enthusiastic supporter of the scheme. In his original plan of socializing the school, a paper was to be one of its leading features; of course a school paper for the lads alone, which would contain school news, prize essays, brief notes on Jewish affairs at home and abroad, and a few humorous items. The boys could send copies to their families and friends. At times, he had thought it might develop into a regular monthly or weekly for the American Jewish household, but he kept that idea prudently to himself as decidedly premature. Meanwhile he suggested that the two literary societies of the school, the "Hebrew Literary Club" and "The Excelsiors," be invited and the paper be issued under their common auspices with Bernard as managing editor, to whom all minor details could safely be entrusted. In addition Mr. Jacobs promised the boys that if they held together in their interest and support for a year he might—he did not say he would—have one issue at least, one issue if not more, really and truly printed. The expense of a small edition would not be very staggering, and he thought the money would be well spent, if the boys developed thereby a certain literary taste and broadened their general point of view as well.

"My sons," he said to a number of the boys on one of their many consultations, "our school must be more than a place to study and to recite, to have merely lessons in geography or grammar or history or languages. It must

bring you together in many ways. A school paper is a kind of debating society on a quieter and more effective scale. It will help you to express yourselves in good vigorous English. It will teach you other points of view than your own and give you a general knowledge more rapidly than you can imagine. Besides, and this is a vital matter for us, it will supply an opportunity for original and translated articles on Jewish history and literature by those of you who are more advanced. Perhaps, too, some of your friends, who do not attend our school but who are at college or law school, may be glad to write for us and you can tell them that they will be heartily welcomed as contributors."

A day or two later, he was so carried away by the boys' enthusiasm that he said: "You may not realize what an important work you are doing. Perhaps one of these days your 'Circle' may become one of our leading Jewish papers and have its readers and supporters by the thousands. Who knows?" and he smiled at them until his face was almost as boyish as theirs.

The first number of the Circle, after weeks of preparation, was to be read on a Friday evening in March without further announcement. How slowly the days dragged until that eventful night drew near! How restless the lads were after the close of school on that fateful day! The services at synagogue, it seemed, would never end. Even the supper, with its customary stewed halibut as chief attraction, its fragrant tea, its crisp rolls, its fruit and

cake, with the Sabbath lights shining from the mantel piece, appeared to the boys interminably long. For once they sang the responses mechanically, but how their jubilant voices rang out in the final *'Ose Shalom*, as if they were rather glad that the *benschen* was over. Boys will be boys even at a Hebrew Home School, and who would have the heart to condemn them? Mr. and Mrs. Jacobs both knew what was at the root of the boys' impatience and they forgave them if they seemed to hurry over their food, their prayers, and everything.

Then the moment came, the long-expected moment. Without stirring from their seats at the table, which had been cleared, they braced themselves for the next number on the program as Bernard, at a nod from Mr. Jacobs, slowly rose to his full height and walked with all the dignity of a managing editor to the upper end of the room. Then, taking from his pocket a roll of manuscript tied in red, white, and blue ribbon, he opened it and gave it a little tap with his hand, as if to put it on its best behavior. Next, bowing to his audience, all impatient for the show to begin, and clearing his throat slightly, while the room grew as silent as midnight is supposed to be among poets and dreamers, he began to read The Circle, selection after selection, without comment or criticism, making a brief pause between each article, so that the audience might absorb each properly and get its full meaning.

THE CIRCLE

PAGE I

A Little Story

Adapted from the Hebrew

Once upon a time a mouse was born—a plain ordinary mouse, and one morning as he began to go in and out of his father's house, as if he was the biggest mouse in the world, his father said: "My son, be very, very careful as thou goest out to get food for us all. Beware of traps, and most of all look out for the cat. Keep far away from him, for he is our worst enemy. Now do not forget, do not forget."

"Oh, father," the mouse proudly replied, with as loud a voice as he could squeak, "do not worry about me, I am no fool," and he swung his tail in every direction. "Nothing can ever happen to *me*."

He had scarcely started out that day when he saw a big horse standing by itself in the dusty road. Greatly alarmed, he lost no time in running home to his father and cried aloud in terror: "Father, father, I have seen him, the great and terrible enemy, I have seen him. He stands on four huge legs, and his head rearing upward reaches the skies. He shakes and tosses about his long locks of hair, fire darts from his eyes and flows from his nostrils. He strikes his foot in his anger, and tramples upon the dust in his fury." "My son," his father replied smilingly,

"be not afraid of him. He will not harm thee. Go back, but beware of the cat and obey my commands."

Again the mouse left, with his confidence fully restored, and again he swung his tail proudly in all directions, as if he were a big, big rat with a tail as long as a mile. Suddenly he saw an ox in the field. Once more he was terrified and, hastening back to his father, he exclaimed: "Oh, father, father! I have seen him, our cruel foe. He has tremendous horns with which he gores everybody. His eye is terrible. I could not go further and had to rush back to thee." "My son," came the answer as the father smiled, "again thou art mistaken. The ox will not harm thee. Go on thy errand, but keep my commands and live."

Once more the mouse went forth and stayed away for quite a time, and then returned, when the father said, "Why the delay? What has happened?" "Oh, father, I had so much joy all the time I was away. I saw a beautiful being, the delight of my heart and my eye. A glorious skin, all black spots with white, but he has no pride, he bows his head like a bulrush. How precious will be his friendship. Surely, father, he can do no ill. I wished to go and speak to him after long gazing at him, but was afraid to approach so holy a being."

"Fool!" the father exclaimed, "Thank the Almighty who has saved thee this day. Thou hast seen thine enemy face to face and thy soul was rescued. It was the cat; beware of him, however beautiful his appearance. His evil is hidden in his heart. Beware of him!"

What Children Say

It was a little boy of five, who said, "Oh, mother, it is so hot. I'm half a little oven and half a little pond."

"I want five cents' worth of starch," said a little girl to the man at the grocery. "What do you want five cents' worth of starch for?" he asked. "Why, for five cents," she replied.

"What is nothing, my dear children?" asked a pompous visitor to the schoolhouse. "I know, Sir," piped a little voice from the front row, "It is what you gave me yesterday for holding your horse."

A rabbi's daughter once was asked: "Rachel, does your father ever preach the same sermon twice?" "Yes," came the answer, "I think he does, but I guess he hollers in different places."

"Frank, on your birthday I shall get you a nice present," said his grandmother, "but first I shall ask your teacher about you." "Grandma, if you want to know anything about me, please don't ask the teacher."

The Banjo

I am fond of a banjo, even if my name is Plunk, as Phil says. Now why do I like my banjo? Because my banjo loves me. It never says a cross word but is always quick to answer cheerily when I sing to it. If the day is gloomy, the banjo sends the clouds away, and if the day is bright, it chirps its merriest. I like the banjo when we are all in the assembly hall, but I love it most in the open field.

I hear the banjo calling,
Far away, far away;
I hear the banjo calling,
Night and day, night and day.
I am never sad or weary,
No day to me is dreary,
For the banjo sounds Hurray!

AMBITION

It is the noblest of all sentiments to be ambitious. The world is ever in motion. If I do not rise, I fall. Why shall I be still? Everywhere we see growth. No tree remains a sapling. Why must I be a dwarf? All depends upon our aim and our energy. In every schoolboy is the stuff to be a general or a private, a statesman or a street-vender, a philanthropist or a miser. If we begin small, we need not end small. Need we? Kittens become cats, and boys should not become puppies but men! In our school life our ambition should be to please our parents and teachers, and we please them most when we do each day's duty well. Let that be our aim. "Sink or swim, survive or perish," as a good American has said, that must be our ambition. It will ever endure and shall never pass from memory.

PAGE II

Answers to Correspondents

Phil. Yes. No. Perhaps. Without doubt. It depends. We cannot say. Next time.

Harry. It is no crime to carry a pocket-comb and a small mirror, but that will not hasten the growth of your mustache.

Frank. Respectfully declined. To write a poem one need not be a poet, but he must not be a mule.

Plunk. Next time make your verse longer.

Friend. Thanks for advice. The Circle is not for sale. Its price is above rubies. Just wait for the next number. Just wait.

Some Bits of Greek Humor

A person, hearing that crows live 200 years, bought one to determine the fact by experiment.

A man wishing to cross a ferry entered the boat on horseback. "Why do you mount a horse?" he was asked. "So as to make haste," he replied.

One who in his first attempt to swim was nearly drowned took a solemn oath that he would never touch water again until he was a good swimmer.

A very small child having died, a large crowd attended the funeral. "Pardon me, my friends," said the sorrowing parent, "but I am really ashamed to bury my little one before so large a company."

A man walking in the fields wished to quench his thirst from a well. Inquiring if it were good, the peasants assured him that their fathers had drunk out of it for ages. "Bless me," he cried, "what very long necks they must have had to reach water at such a depth."

BIRTH

On the 17th day of March 18—, 56—, to the inexpressible joy of its young parents and the unfeigned delight of a host of friends and well-wishers, the first number of the Circle.

With the announcement, which was greeted by cheers and laughter, Bernard resumed his seat. The evening's excitement was over. The Circle was launched at last and grew from month to month. But no number created such nervous tension as the first. Later issues, however, were better in many ways and amply fulfilled the expectations of Mr. Jacobs.

IX

IN THE SHADOW

It was some weeks before the excitement caused by the reading of the first number of the Circle died away. Now the contents of that miscellany were not so striking—it was the novelty of the affair and the fact that the boys were the chief contributors which gave it an importance of its own. Subsequent issues had undeniably better articles and a more varied list of writers, but they never surpassed the thrill of that earliest Circle. It was then

"The joy of young Ideas painted on the mind,
In the warm glowing colors Fancy spreads
On objects not yet known, when all is new,
And all is lovely."

It became an excellent bond of union between the pupils old and new, and in time, when it assumed a more ambitious shape, it found much favor with their parents, particularly those who lived out of town. While the older boys worked hard to enable the paper to exist creditably, it must be confessed that Mr. Jacobs gave much time and thought to the new enterprise. He furnished regularly the monthly story from the rabbis, always apt and helpful, he saw to it that several articles should be of a Jewish character, throwing light on periods in Jewish history and literature, and he introduced the

happy feature of prize essays on Jewish subjects, so as to increase in every way the general interest in such things. It was also due to his wise counsel that the paper was not allowed to expand needlessly and lose its special character.

"No, Harry," Mr. Jacobs replied with a smile, "You might give now and then a summary of our school games and the score made in the more important contests. Yes, indeed, such items would be appreciated by all of us; but you must bear in mind that the Circle is not a regular sporting paper." Harry, always so bland and cheerful, withdrew into a corner by himself and refused to talk about his approaching bar mizvah for fully two hours.

It was noticed with surprise that although at first enthusiastic in his devotion to the paper Plunk began to lose his eager interest, spoke very little about it, and gradually appeared almost indifferent. He grew less and less animated. A certain moody silence replaced his usual demonstrativeness. It is true he neglected none of his daily tasks, but showed little of that warmth which was so admired by his teachers. It was observed, too, that he kept much to himself and rarely played in the open with his comrades, while his ever tuneful banjo, which all the school enjoyed, was heard less frequently at recess or after school hours. He never admitted that he was ill, but his changed appearance and the loss of color and animation indicated the gradual approach of some serious trouble. It was not long before Mr. Jacobs

acknowledged what his wife had already realized—that Edward Lazarus was far from well. There were anxious consultations—at first the physician made light of the illness. It was nothing—just a little out of condition. More rest and careful diet would soon restore him, it was thought, to his usual health. So he was withdrawn from school duties for a time and given all the rest possible. Yet his symptoms showed no signs of lessening—they grew in fact more and more serious.

Mr. Jacobs was a man of quick decision. He saw that no more time was to be lost. The boy was speedily removed to the school hospital—a spacious front room on the top floor which was reserved for such cases but happily had never been occupied. Mrs. Jacobs installed herself promptly as nurse and with daily visits from the physician the illness was kept well in hand and showed a certain degree of improvement after the transfer, which was very encouraging.

"What is the trouble, doctor?" Mr. Jacobs asked. "Is a fever developing?"

"It is hard to tell, Mr. Jacobs," was the reply. "The boy is evidently run down, and lacks all energy. So far there are no symptoms of fever."

"Shall we telegraph to his parents?" was Mrs. Jacobs' question with an expressive glance.

"It might be advisable to write that he is ill. Why distress them by further announcements? Besides it may

have already run its course and improvement may occur at any moment. Perhaps, Mrs. Jacobs, you may be the best judge after all whether it is better to telegraph or to write."

Mrs. Jacobs decided to write, giving a full story of Edward's illness, and taking a very hopeful view, as he was already on the mend. She was glad she had written so cheerfully, for the boy really did improve. He lost some of his languor, his face had a more natural color, he took more interest in his surroundings, began to ask about the school and the boys, and had his banjo placed once more near the bed, but rarely tried to play it. Through the half-open door one night Mrs. Jacobs noticed how he held it close to his lips and then placed it by his side on the bed.

Yes, he showed much improvement, to the undisguised joy of Mr. and Mrs. Jacobs, who felt keenly their responsibility. The news spread rapidly through the school and all were elated. A few visitors were admitted, when he was strong enough to walk up and down the room and note how many were the tokens of affection which he had received. Flowers and books and fruit were there, with pictures, a box of writing paper, a stamp album, and a banjo made of candy—enough to fill a good-sized shelf. He examined them all with much interest and told Mrs. Jacobs how grateful he was for the many gifts.

"Nonsense, Edward," she replied, "those are but trifles. Would you not do the same if any of us were

taken ill? Were you not always ready to oblige us when you were asked to play on the banjo?"

"But that is different," he said. "It was a great pleasure for me to play."

"Quite true, and it is a greater pleasure for your friends to send you those little tokens."

It was a pleasant afternoon when Phil was finally allowed to visit him, after many persistent requests which Mrs. Jacobs had been obliged to disregard, although she disliked to see Spanier's disappointment.

"What, Mrs. Jacobs! Is Plunk really so ill?" he exclaimed one day after he had again been refused admission, with such sorrow in his voice that the good lady was distressed.

"In a day or two, Philip, I think we can let you see him. You can peep in at him now, if you make no noise. See, he is sleeping." Phil gazed at the boy, looking so dreadfully white as he slept, that he was greatly alarmed.

"So you think I can talk to him in a day or two, Mrs. Jacobs. Perhaps he might like to see my new squirrel or my trained pigeon. He might play with them. Can I send them to him?" he pleaded, but without avail. However, the day came when he could have a chat with Plunk.

"For half an hour only, you understand," Mrs. Jacobs whispered, as he entered the room, "and don't excite him."

"Hello, old chap!" he cried as he clasped Plunk's hand. "Say, you look fine. As plump, as plump as my pet rabbit, I declare."

Edward smiled at this comparison.

"I am not jesting. Do you know? I think—now don't you say a word. I'll do all the talking."

"I guess you can, dear old Phil," the boy rejoined with such a roguish look that Phil felt immensely happier.

"I think," he continued, "you look well enough to go to the minstrels. Just you wait a bit and we'll manage the business. They have some new stunts—'Which is Witch?' is one of them. Funny enough to make a cat laugh."

"Oh, tell me, Phil, about 'Which is Witch?' Can't he, Mrs. Jacobs?" he implored. Mrs. Jacobs smiled assent and Philip lost no time in telling it, with sundry additions of his own. How Edward laughed at the recital!

"I had to cut it short, my boy. You would never enjoy it at the show if you were told all of it now. Next time, an olio for you. But now what do you say to this?" And suiting the action to the word he took out of his pocket two cunning little pigeons who began to jump down a long narrow piece of wood that Phil had concealed in his coat. After which, they flew to Phil's head and then jumped upon his outstretched hand to be put away once more into his pocket. Plunk was in raptures. It was almost as good as the show.

"Enough, Plunk, more next time. The fellows send their love and want you ever so much. So hurry up.

Good bye. Ring down the curtain." And Philip quickly left the room. He told Mrs. Jacobs afterwards that he was ready to arrange a short performance in the sick room any afternoon at an hour's notice.

"It would do him a world of good," he added emphatically. To his dismay his offer was declined.

"Why, my dear Mrs. Jacobs, just think of it! An olio would put him on his feet again. It would be better than all the medicine." His eloquence was without the effect desired. Again a rejection of his generous offer.

Buoyed up by the change in the boy's condition, they sent a cheering letter to the parents in Louisiana, and he added a few lines to assure them of his recovery, telling them not to forget to come in the Spring before they left on their annual trip abroad.

How quickly hope spread in the household! A heavy load seemed lifted from all hearts. It would not be many days—so all thought—before he would be again in the school room. Perhaps his parents would take him with them on the trip to Europe. What jolly stories he would tell them on his return from foreign travel! Mountain, lake, river, valleys, and hills, cities and everything—he would have seen them all. He would be no more the old Plunk, that was certain, after his experiences of days in Amsterdam, London, Paris, Venice, and the rest. How strange to find him grown up and no more the merry little banjo player that had won their hearts from the

beginning! Of course he would have learned lots of new songs.

It is said of the famous sculptor Michael Angelo that when busy at a task he used to wear a lighted candle fastened to his cap, over his forehead, so that no shadow of himself might fall on his work. How beautiful such a custom which told a more striking lesson than perhaps he knew. But Angelo had wisdom enough, to judge only from his writings. For the shadows on our work and our lives—how often do they fall from ourselves. In other words we make our own unhappiness.

It is said also of a well known painter that he had the lights so arranged in his studio, with its colored glass windows, that it seemed always summer and bright skies, even when the snow was falling and the wintry winds were storming. If we make our shadows, it is no less true that we make our happiness. It is the imagination that is the mightiest ruler, and for the time how real seemed the hopes and dreams of that affectionate household.

Then in the early morning—the stars had not all faded from the sky—came a sudden alarm. There was a rushing of feet, an opening of doors, loud cries of grief, as the doctor was sent for. But before he came with rapid steps, the dear lad had passed away cradled in Mrs. Jacobs' motherly arms.

On all sides were the gifts from his friends, which he could no longer enjoy. A book which he had read a few hours before, lay open on a chair. Some toys had fallen

on the floor. His treasured banjo resting on the bed could no more respond to his loving touch. His little comrades in the hall below or crowded on the staircase, so suddenly aroused from sleep, could not understand the change and gazed with anxious glances at each other. The servants in tears were mechanically going about their tasks. But Mr. Jacobs thought most of the parents' grief, as he strove to repress his own sorrow, when they came to learn of their little son who had passed so swiftly from life to death and from death to life everlasting.

X

HARRY'S BAR MIZVAH

The important day arrived at last. The great event, which had been anticipated for a full year and duly heralded up and down the entire neighborhood, including various shops, policemen, and firemen, was now to be celebrated. In his fresh enthusiasm, Harry had neglected nobody—every one from Sam the butcher boy to Mary the cook, from the suave proprietor of the candy stand, where he bought luscious red and white balls of popcorn, to the proud mistress of the corner cake store, whose alluring stock of roundhearts, jumbles, cinnamon buns and cream cakes had to be replenished daily owing to the steady purchases of Harry and his friends; the carpenter, the carriage man, the painter, the plumber, all had been carefully informed, if not cordially invited. There was not the least danger that anybody within a fair distance would be ignorant of what was to take place. The bar mizvah day was there. Nothing had happened to prevent or delay its appearance at the proper moment. It had been a wonderfully starry night—the moon, reported to be changeful and inconstant, was on its best behavior, and the fateful morning dawned at last to the eminent satisfaction of Henry Goldsmith.

It was indeed a strenuous anniversary for the youth.

How he managed to array himself unassisted in his snug new suit, without the loss of a single button, or to put on his new gaiters—a pretty close fit—without a spot on their glittering patent leather—all this was and remains a mystery. But no happier boy, after a very substantial breakfast, ever went to synagogue on his bar mizvah morning, no face shone with greater rapture when called to the Law to recite the blessing and read his portion from the section of the week. Out of regard for the learning of his grandfather and great-grandfather, who were famous rabbis in their time, a special favor had been granted him. He was privileged to give a speech, which his school friends heard with pardonable pride and the congregation in general with the requisite feeling of resignation. Patrick Henry had no reason to tremble for his laurels, but it was none the less a fairly creditable effort, considering the young orator's excitement and self-satisfaction.

All together it was a day of triumph for Harry. Nothing seemed to disturb his happiness, except the safety of his new gold watch, which he took out of his vest pocket ten dozen times more or less during the morning, in his evident anxiety to see if it was there and was keeping time. What would have happened if a tiny bit of dust had interfered with the watch's movement one cannot begin to imagine. Of course the bar mizvah would have taken place anyhow, not even a tornado or an eclipse of the sun could have stopped that. An injury to his beloved watch,

however, would have thrown him into a terrible panic and made him lose all zest and appetite for the occasion.

On returning to the school he received again many congratulations and after a few minutes they all sat down to the midday meal. The dining room had been gaily decorated with flowers and hanging plants, and the repast was enjoyed. At its conclusion Harry recited the entire *benschen* to the wonderment of the little fellows who were beginning Hebrew. He had a fresh clear voice, sang the appropriate portions and, as he was well versed in Hebrew, it was an intelligent and enjoyable rendering. Mr. Jacobs taught the language so well and inspired the boys with such genuine interest in its study that the bar mizvah duties were never an empty performance, rushed through and forgotten the next week.

In the late afternoon, when some of the older lads had returned from a walk, all were summoned by Mr. Jacobs to his study and, seated before the open fireplace, Harry and the rest had a little party of their own. There was real ice cream—not the rice and milk substitute—layer cake, with a full assortment of macaroons from the stately pyramid which had been ordered for the dining table. To the boys it was a tower of sweetness long drawn out, but it did not last many minutes after the first attack on its outer walls of cake and candy. A tiny American flag floated from the topmost turret, which Harry wore jauntily in his coat for many a day thereafter—a kind of perpetual memorial of the feast.

"Harry," Mr. Jacobs exclaimed after he saw that the boys had finished their afternoon luncheon, "you did very well today. I can say this without any flattery. I knew you would. You were not at all nervous, and I only wish your parents could have been present. We all feel proud of you."

"How about that watch?" Leonard Abrahams asked, while most of the boys laughed as they recalled Harry's repeated attempts to find out if the watch kept good time.

"Now, Leonard, you have a bad memory. You were almost as worried about your watch when you were bar mizvah. That is the way with most boys. Perhaps I am the same, although nobody gave me a gold watch. I received a little silver one, of which I was exceedingly proud. But let us turn to a different subject. Harry, do you remember from what section you read this morning in the Sefer Torah?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Jacobs. It was from Deuteronomy,—the section, 'When thou goest forth to war against thy enemies.' "

"The passage was fully explained to you," Mr. Jacobs went on to say. "It was war time in those days, a period of constant struggle against neighboring foes, and one had to be prepared for any emergency. The enemies of Israel were not the meekest of their kind and half-way measures would not answer. Cakes and marmalade were not specifics against weapons of stone and iron. It had to be life against life, and the strongest won. I wish our

ancestors could have managed without everlasting fighting and killing, but it appears to have been impossible to act otherwise without being overwhelmed themselves. However, those words which begin the chapter have a double meaning—they can be made to refer to you, Harry, and all boys of your age."

"How is that possible, Mr. Jacobs?" Henry inquired.

" 'When thou goest forth against thy enemies.' Do you ever think of your enemies, not the old-time foes of Israel, who attacked them on the way to their home, but your enemies to-day, the enemies from *within*? Each boy has a host of enemies, did you ever think of that? Such fierce enemies, too,—anger, envy, hatred, laziness, disloyalty, speaking falsely, are some of them. Such enemies you must fight with all your strength or they at last will conquer you. You, my son, you are leaving your quiet childhood and entering upon your manhood according to our old traditions and you are now responsible for what you do and leave undone. So fight your enemies, my son. Learn the magic of self-control, self-conquest. Are the thoughts too serious for you, Henry?"

"You gave me practically the same ideas, Mr. Jacobs," Bernard said quietly, "when I was bar mizvah. That is your custom, I know, with all such boys. Now it's Harry's turn."

"Yes, it is Harry's turn. Let us go a step further. You are now, my son, a full-fledged son of Israel, privileged to act as one of the congregation of Jacob, one of the

minyan or legal quorum for public worship. In other words you have become a soldier who can be drafted for service. Think of that privilege, a soldier for service! Being bar mizvah, then, is more than receiving presents, making a little speech, and having a pretty good time. It is being a soldier in God's service, ready for each day's duty. Do you understand?"

"But, Mr. Jacobs," Bernard interrupted, "in this country of ours, we Jews need not be special soldiers of our own. Have we not civil and religious freedom? Our country surely will protect us. What special service is required?"

"That is true, Bernard—all that you have said is true. But another view is possible, which must be considered as well. Let me read to you a few lines from the last number of Mr. Leeser's *Occident*, which touch upon this very matter. You all remember Mr. Leeser—he visited the school a few months ago. Suppose, Bernard, you read the paragraph." And he read:

"In the freest country, where we are equal to or above other inhabitants even, we cannot forego a single principle of all that has come down to us from our forefathers. Those hopes which have been inspired by our prophets, are truths which we cannot yield up or abandon. They are Jewish, a part of our faith, and as such we must maintain them and they will do more to keep up the unity of Israel than all the dreams of philosophers and the attempts of all the sages of modern days to level down

the barriers which separate us Jews from the nations, by which means harmony might perhaps be produced but only at the expense of our separate existence which God in His mercy forfend!"

"That was clearly read, Bernard. I hope the idea is clear to all of you, although my friend did not write the words for you boys. You understand them, surely."

"But, Mr. Jacobs," interposed Philip, "cannot many of us carry separateness too far so that we become disliked? If we cannot be neighborly, we arouse prejudice or enmity. It gives others the idea that we are stuck up, and too proud to associate with people not of our faith. I don't think that is right. Do you, Sir?"

"It is a large subject you have opened, Philip. Just now there is no time to discuss it properly. But this much can be told you frankly. We need not be less neighborly because we are Jews. Do you not recall the verse—'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself'? Take up any of our ethical writers and they are rich in forethought and consideration for all mankind. Perhaps some day one of you may compose a work which shall collect such golden views and prove for all time the beauty and breadth of the sayings of our Jewish sages from the earliest centuries. The great trouble is that too many of us, owing largely to narrow surroundings, have a mistaken view of Israel's superiority. It does not mean that we are better than others and that we must be proud and conceited, treating others arrogantly."

"Is not conceit in an individual as bad as in a race?" Bernard asked.

"Without any doubt," Mr. Jacobs replied. "Now we are not taught or expected to be conceited. Far from it. It is our Jewish belief that all races and creeds are under God's mercy and care. All religions have good elements and purposes, but ours is best for ourselves. In the long march and deep sorrow of the centuries, we have taught our neighbors in every land, quietly and without boasting, many virtues which to-day are not regarded as Jewish. The choicest pearls from our law and prophets, our sages and poets, our dreamers and workers, shine in the treasure chests of others who would resent the suggestion that they are originally Jewish. It is the caricature, not the character, that our critics like to dwell upon. But what matters the world's appreciation or condemnation? The chief thing is simply this—that we ourselves lead Jewish lives and show the good influence of our religion in our conduct and character. For the rest we must have patience and courage. Do you remember those lines from Tennyson:

'And all is well, tho' faith and form
Be sunder'd in the night of fear;
Well roars the storm to those who hear
A deeper voice across the storm.'

Courage and patience will win the day, never doubt that."

"Mr. Jacobs," Bernard remarked after a short silence, "why could not the bar mizvah ceremony be a kind of knighthood? I was reading yesterday how in the early middle ages the youth's shoulders would be lightly touched with the point of a sword, and this made him a knight. It must have been an inspiring ceremony."

"It is a pretty idea, Bernard, which you suggest. In those ages customs varied as to the initiation of knights. But why should we adopt the rites of chivalry, however picturesque? We have no need of such an incentive. It fell far short of its ideals, although helpful to a certain degree. From the modern point of view it was bombastic. It offered excellent reason for Cervantes' caricature in his 'Don Quixote.' Why, indeed, let me repeat, need we Israelites have recourse to the methods of chivalry? Surely with our hands holding fast to the Book of the Law, our lips repeating its hallowed words, our brain and heart registering loyalty to our faith and imploring divine guidance, what could be more beautiful and inspiring than our bar mizvah ceremony? But, my sons, I am giving you a little sermon, I fear. Perhaps I have gone over your heads."

"No, no, Mr. Jacobs," Harry exclaimed, "it was fine."

"Well, to make ample amends, I am authorized by Harry's father to take the entire school this evening to the minstrels in honor of the day. So be ready on time."

It was a merry group that left the study and spread the welcome news among their comrades, Harry happiest

of all. All were ready on the minute, and when they took their seats at the theater, in the most jubilant humor, and waited for the curtain to rise on the dignified group of burnt-cork performers, sedately arranged for the "opening chorus by the company," it may be stated without fear of contradiction that no crowd of boys in the world could have felt in better mood or had their hearts filled with more love and esteem for their teacher.

XI

YOUNG ROMANCE

The quietest among all the schoolboys was Adolph Blooker—of that no doubt existed. He was a fourteen year old youth, a native of Groningen, Holland. If all Dutch boys are as quiet, Holland must be a kind of paradise for the men and women who fret and fume when boys shout and play in a noisy fashion or raise their voices at their street games. Adolph was so calm, so docile, so credulous, believing everything told him and, on the other hand he was so little fond of study that Mr. Jacobs was in doubt for a time whether it was best for the school or for Adolph to accept him as a pupil. His parents were old friends of Mr. Jacobs, and when they settled in Cincinnati, they thought the Hebrew Home School would be the best place for their son until they could have him, after his school work had ended, once more in their household.

The first impression Adolph made was not favorable. He was slow in speech and movement, rather heavy in appearance, and not inclined to any activity. When Mr. Jacobs, who could read boys like a book, saw him for the first time, he said to Mr. Blooker:

"My dear friend, I would like to oblige you and take your boy, but he may not feel at home among us. Our

lads are strong, alert, active fellows. Just look at them out there in the playground. Why, Adolph seems to be afraid of them, as if they were going to bite him. Notice how he keeps to himself."

"Now, Mr. Jacobs," Mr. Blooker replied, "just give him a chance—that is all I ask. Let him have a week or two on trial. He has a warm heart, he is honest and obliging, and while he will never make a scholar, he will do his duty to the extent of his ability and be a credit to you and your school. I am sure of that, Sir. Only try him for a few weeks. So much you can oblige me for old friendship's sake."

Mr. Jacobs assented, for he had not the heart to disappoint the father. He was to have a trial term of a few weeks—this awkward, sluggish, timid boy—and Mr. Jacobs felt no doubt as to the result. Adolph would not remain and the father must accept the situation. For once his judgment was at fault. To the general surprise, the boy proved acceptable and continued if not a brilliant at least a well-intentioned and hopeful pupil. With all his unlovely traits, he had two fine qualities: a dogged perseverance and a loving heart. These gave him character and standing and were likely to make him a successful man in after years. And he had another admirable trait—he was quick to help others, ready to run on errands and put aside all of his plans to oblige the boys. Hence it did not take long before the strong prejudice against him gradually disappeared. When he

realized that he was making friends, he lost much of his awkwardness and began to assume a different bearing. It is a suggestive fact in life that most of us do our best when we feel we are gaining the good opinion of others. That spurs us on. This was the case with Adolph.

"I am glad to tell you, Mr. Blooker," wrote Mr. Jacobs, after the few weeks' trial had ended, "that your boy will stay with us, as you anticipated, and he can remain as long as you like. It needed the few weeks, as you correctly stated, to make us recognize his fine qualities. We teachers can make mistakes, and I confess I was not hopeful of his meeting the test. Some boys grow slowly, others are mentally active and alert from the start. Adolph wants to grow and that means half the battle is already won. Contact with his comrades will help amazingly. Rest assured, we shall try to be patient with him, for we know he is at heart a fine fellow, of whom you may be proud."

It must be confessed that the boys were hardly as patient with Adolph as were Mr. Jacobs and the other teachers. In boyish fashion they thought him good sport. His weaknesses at first, instead of arousing their sympathy, evoked their merriment. Secretly if not openly he became the butt of the school. Before the tide turned and the boys began to understand him better, he was "teased" in many ways and his feelings were imposed upon as a matter of course. He was a new boy and a dull

boy, and never used his fists to fight for his rights if the joke went too far.

It was fortunate for the peace of all concerned that as a general rule Adolph was not very sensitive, and if any word or act of his raised a laugh, he laughed with the rest. It took time, too, to make friends, particularly in the case of a boy of fourteen with his foreign ways and faulty English. His strange aloofness added to his troubles and caused him to be more misunderstood. However, he had one good comrade almost from the beginning—Philip Spanier, who was attracted to him by reason of his apparent helplessness.

"Say, Blooker," he said one morning, linking arms, "we are cousins."

"Cousins?" Adolph rejoined. "What do you mean, Pheelip?"

"Why, my great-grandmother was born at Leeuwarden and that town is only an hour or two distant from Groningen. So we are cousins at least. Let's shake hands."

Adolph's eyes glistened. It was like a bit of home, the mere mention of those Dutch towns. In return he made haste to tell Philip all about Holland, where there were long, narrow, winding canals instead of paved streets, and where people wore comfortable wooden shoes, which they hung on hooks outside of the house when they called on their neighbors, and where big windmills, which ground the corn for rich and poor, could be seen in all directions. The chat did Adolph much good—he began to

mingle more with the boys and became more and more like them, while his English rapidly improved. He kept closer to Philip than any of the rest because he believed that Philip's great-grandmother was born in Holland.

During one of their afternoon strolls, as they were watching the birds flying about the maple trees, Adolph, in a sudden burst of confidence and without any prompting from Philip, began to describe his home and companions. The house was long but had only two floors, with little square windows, like keyholes. The lower floor had an opening or trap in the ceiling through which his mother used to peep to see if the little brothers were safe when they were left alone and she was up-stairs. No country in the world had such fine cookies as Holland, or such fat children. They are so fat, he added, that they fall asleep immediately after eating and never wake until it is time for the next meal. They have plenty of games and songs. In the winter, the boys and girls skate on the long canals. When a death occurs, a man dressed in black robes, a wig and a cocked hat stands before the house and announces the fact. When a baby is born, a small placard of red silk and lace is affixed to the door. People live so long that grandparents and great-grandparents are everywhere.

"O crickety," Philip exclaimed, "I wish I had a grandmother. Mothers are all right but it takes a grandmother to know just what a fellow wants. Don't you think so?"

"Pheelip, my grandmother is living in Groningen and

I have a coosin there for whom I used to catch just such a fat sparrow as that one there on that branch. See him? See him?"

"Coosin, cousin?" Philip repeated. "You mean your cousin—that is the way to pronounce the word. It rhymes with dozen. Let me hear you say it now."

Adolph repeated it a number of times, each time with a more tender expression, and then whispered to Philip that she was his sweetheart. She was very clever and already eleven. She could read and write almost as well as Mr. Milner, and she wore long blue ribbons and a red dress and a white hood.

"Red, white, and blue—why she is a regular fourth of July cousin. Hurray for her!" and Philip gave a shout. But tears stood in Adolph's eyes.

"Cheer up, old fellow, cheer up. I'll go with you to Holland one of these days and will set up an olio show in Groningen. Our fortune's made, boy. Our fortune's made. Come, it is time to go home."

On other occasions Adolph made Philip his confidant, and the tie between them became closer without arousing the notice of the other lads. But Philip's love of fun almost wrecked this friendship and gave unsuspecting Adolph a blow from which he did not recover so easily. Of course, Philip neither desired nor intended to cause any pain—he was a good hearted fellow and would have suffered any personal discomfort to oblige a friend. But

like too many other good fellows, when there was a practical joke to be carried out he forgot his better nature.

It was on one of the "Circle" evenings. That sprightly magazine which had grown nicely from month to month was to be read before the school and its friends by its editor Bernard Gomez who, although a University student, still stayed at the H. H. S. and was regarded as its dignified graduate representative on all occasions. No one else was held to be worthy of the editor's post. He started to read the various contributions in prose and verse and had reached almost the end amid the usual laughter and applause, when he announced a paper entitled: "A Happy Land," and proceeded to read it in his grave manner. It was as follows:

"There is a happy land three thousand to four thousand miles away. The water is everywhere. The whole country swims in it and the boys and girls in winter skate upon it boldly. The people speak a language of their own and live in small houses, with cradles in every room, which are tied to the doors so that they may not be swept away in a heavy storm. This land is brave old Holland, bless her! Big and little, the people are so happy that they grow very fat and die only of old age, and not from customary fevers and other ailments.

"Even without a telescope I can show you Holland and point out to you its many beauties. Canals are in all directions and the land is very low, protected by dykes from the advancing waters. Willow trees line the canals

in long rows, and they are as stiff and straight as soldiers on the march. Do you see those windmills with waving arms? They grind corn to make loaves of bread and thousands of rolls. Do you see the sparrows flying merrily in and out of the maple trees? See that fat one, which two children are closely watching, as it hops about on the lowest branch. What fine children! One is a boy with big rosy cheeks and soft sleepy eyes. But the girl, oh, is she not lovely? She wears a white hood, a red dress, and long blue ribbons, and—"

"Lottie, my Lottie!" exclaimed a muffled voice from the center of the room, as Adolph rose rapidly from his chair, gazed wildly around, and then after a few moments fell back with loud sobs, which he tried hard to repress, as Philip, utterly ashamed of himself, sprang forward and strove to quiet the friend whom he had so thoughtlessly wounded.

There was no more interest in the "Circle" that night—all were too excited to listen to the rest of the program. The snatches of talk and inquiry were too many to be easily silenced, and comments not at all complimentary to the would-be jocular author of the Holland essay were heard. Most of the boys knew it was Philip's work but they could not understand how he, who was Adolph's close friend, could be so cruel. Some of them were sure that he would be severely punished, perhaps dismissed. He deserved some penalty and should not escape scot-free. That would be a pretty poor example for the school.

When the excitement had somewhat subsided, Philip frankly admitted his fault and asked Mr. Jacobs to forgive him. He never thought, he said, that Adolph would take the matter so seriously. He was too fond of Blooker to wish to do him any injury.

"This is a lesson for you, Philip," Mr. Jacobs replied slowly, "which you are not likely to forget. If it were a violation of school discipline, you would receive the merited penalty. The case is an exceptional one and the punishment will be left to your own conscience—you are not a child and realize the wrong you have done. I know you did not mean to be unkind, but that is no excuse for holding up Adolph, your friend, to ridicule. He never thought that you would violate his confidence so glaringly and publicly. You have given him a rude shock indeed. I need say no more."

Philip was more moved by Mr. Jacobs' words and manner than if he had received the severest punishment in the records of the school. No reprimand could have been more salutary to a boy of his temperament. He did not lose his sportive humor, but tried to hold it in check, and rarely, if ever, was he guilty of a similar act.

As for Adolph, he recovered from the shock in a few days, and his friendship for Philip was not at all weakened. In fact he clung to him so much the more, as he saw how grieved he was. The boys on their part felt now doubly attracted to Adolph by reason of his young

romance, but they never referred to the matter. As Arthur Davis rather wisely said:

"Adolph may be a bit soft, but he is a good chap all the same, and we fellows are going to stick by him."

And they did, with such good results that in a very few months the timid, awkward boy became one of the most alert and helpful in the school. How his parents rejoiced when they heard of the transformation!

XII

A DAY OF TRIAL

"Are you ready for the contest?" Leonard Abrahams asked Max Canter one Thursday.

"Hope so. Are you?"

"Well, old man, if I am careful and take my time, I shall be all right," was the confident reply. "It is pretty hard for most of us."

What was this contest which was the topic of conversation?

Twice a month, on Friday afternoons, a double competition took place—a doubly hard test for the boys.

It was Principal Milner's theory that nothing was more essential to the American boy than to speak and write correctly. To ensure accuracy in these branches must be one of the aims of the school. How can this be accomplished in the most entertaining way? Both Mr. Jacobs and the principal were greatly concerned with the subject and gave it much serious consideration. They considered it vital in any system of education as one evidence of a cultivated person. Finally the decision was made to conduct a double campaign. One was to promote correct reading and declamation; the other to prevent faulty spelling. They resolved to combine both of these points by holding a trial day at fixed intervals. The boys were

to recite original or published poems and addresses, and then a spelling match was to be held. This was in addition, of course, to the usual reading exercises in the classes and regular work in English rhetoric and composition.

In many schools the system in that day was to force the boys to do their work until their lessons became tasks which were burdens to many who had no natural taste or aptitude for most of their studies. Some pupils are naturally good speakers or debaters, clear, logical, persuasive, eloquent, just as some are exact at figures or spelling by reason of excellent memories and eyesight. Others are slow and cannot be hurried. Their minds are less developed and their growth is less rapid. In such cases, a compulsory schedule is of no advantage; it can be injurious to some, who require more adroit handling.

Mr. Milner's experience as a teacher taught him the wiser way. He had no use for the formal and mechanical in education, when character and disposition were at stake as well as the pupil's future success. He adopted the more helpful plan. On the last working day of the week, when the energies of the boys were likely to be less active and all were impatient for the Saturday and Sunday pause, he arranged the speaking contest as a kind of entertainment. The honor boys of the preceding month took charge, made out the order of exercises and acted as critics, noting down errors of pronunciation and other faults or blunders. In the spelling match, Mr. Milner himself conducted the program. The boys were arranged

in two divisions, on the left and on the right. As he uttered the words distinctly, the boys wrote them down, attaching their names to the papers, which were then exchanged between the two divisions, that is the left exchanged lists with the right. The next step was for Mr. Milner to write every word clearly on the large blackboard, and the boys marked the papers according to the number of errors. When the entire list had been duly corrected, the papers were returned to the original writers. Each boy announced the result in order and received his due standing. Few methods could have been happier for arousing and retaining the pupils' interest. Yet to many of them the trial day was indeed a day of trial, even if it was relieved by an atmosphere of good nature and considerable amusement at each other's mistakes.

Friday morning arrived. It is curious how at school things happen on schedule time, and neither frost nor heat disturbs the course of events, even though the boys would not shed tears if the examinations, for example, were deferred for another year. At the Hebrew Home School matters went with clock-like regularity and when Arthur Davis, the honor boy in charge, mounted the platform and announced the order of exercises in the speaking contest, his comrades were all ready, every seat was occupied, and all eyes were fastened on the youthful chairman.

Max Canter was the first speaker, whose subject was

"The Kingdom of Music," an original essay. It did not give much scope for fireworks in its delivery, but was gracefully written and distinctly spoken. He began with a description of a walk in the woods whose silence is broken by many sounds. The waters in the trout brooks have a song of their own, as they whisper and murmur. Then there is the sound among the branches and leaves, the rustling as the birds flit from tree to tree, and the shrill, sweet voices of the songsters in their flight or at rest—each different, unintelligible to us, but understood by the birds themselves who never go to a school of music. Then comes the sound of the human voice. How varied the emotions which it expresses and how great the delight which the cultivated singer gives us all! Next Max referred to instrumental music, how the rudest or simplest contrivances have developed into the richest and most melodious, each with its special power and province. In conclusion he said: "Music is a universal kingdom. Let us pay it grateful homage. It crowns life with beauty." The essay appeared later in The Circle and was warmly praised. Max was so fond of music that he expected later to go abroad and study for a professorship. It was not impossible that a college of music would one day be established in Hometown.

" 'Before School' will now be recited by Daniel Hart," was the chairman's next announcement, and Daniel stepped nimbly to the front. He enjoyed the honor of being the smallest boy in the school, and in a high shrill

voice which was under fair control he spoke this popular selection:

"Quarter of nine? Boys and girls, do you hear?"
"One more buckwheat, then; be quick, mother dear."
"Where is my luncheon-box?" "Under the shelf,
Just in the place where you left it yourself."
"I can't say my table!" "Oh, find me my cap!"
"One kiss for mamma, and sweet sis in her lap."
"Be good, dear." "I'll try." "Nine times nine's eighty-one."
"Take your mittens!" "All right." "Hurry up, Bill; let's run."
With a slam of the door they are off, girls and boys,
And the mother draws breath in the lull of the noise.

Its companion piece: "After School," was the next number, spoken very gently by Ben Simpson, who was never excited, except when he lost his pencil or his knife. Then he would rush about everywhere until he found them. Where, do you suppose? Why, in his own pocket. It was a curiously long pocket and always full of things—bits of candy, pieces of rubber, a whistle, part of a breakfast roll, a shoe string, a key, a large copper penny, some glass beads, an old handkerchief, and similar delicacies. Without hesitation but with an occasional grin that was not very impressive, Ben spoke these lines:

"Don't wake up the baby! Come gently, my dear."
"Oh, mother! I've torn my new dress; just look here!"
"I'm sorry; I only was climbing the wall."
"Oh, mother! my map was the nicest of all!"
"And Nelly in spelling went up to the head!"
"Oh, say! can I go on the hill with my sled?"
"I've got such a toothache!" "The teacher's unfair!"
"Is dinner most ready? I'm just like a bear!"

Be patient, worn mother, they're growing up fast;
These nursery whirlwinds, not long do they last;
A still, lonely house would be far worse than noise—
Rejoice and be glad in your brave girls and boys.

"Byron's 'Apostrophe to the Ocean' by Philip Spanier," and Phil came forward cheerily as usual. Striking an attitude as if addressing the waves of the ocean and not the crowd of boys before him, he began with spirit:

"Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean, roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain;"

completing with marked emphasis four verses, which were sufficient for the occasion. He grew more stern with each verse, as if he had grim work to do, rolling his head and hands in unison with the billows. At one point when he said, thou "dashest him again to earth," his gestures were so violent that he almost lost his balance and would have suddenly slipped from the platform had not Mr. Milner firmly held him by the shoulder and prevented the fall. Phil was not at all abashed at the incident but went on to the last verse with redoubled fervor. He was in earnest. The school was a stage to him and he was in his element. Yet he was a little exhausted when he returned to his seat, with an expression on his face as if to say: "There! what do you think of that?" Other selections followed, among which was Sam Frank's rendering of Campbell's "The Soldier's Dream." When he came to the lines in the last verse: "My little ones kissed me a thousand times o'er," the boys could hardly restrain

themselves from laughing; for Sam, suiting the action to the word, pursed up his lips as if about to kiss those invisible children. It took a few minutes before the audience recovered its judicial calm, much to Sam's relief, who was about to leave the platform in his embarrassment. A number of Scriptural selections came next—a short psalm, an extract from Isaiah, a cluster of verses from Micah. After a brief dialogue on "The Seasons," four boys representing Spring, Summer, Autumn, and Winter and saying a good word for each, the program ended.

Now the critics had the floor, but had nothing very definite to report. Mr. Milner, too, made only a few remarks, praising the boys for the general excellence. He suggested that it would be more graceful and becoming if fewer gestures were indulged in and if the speakers would remain quietly in the front center of the platform instead of roaming "up and down and over." This was an evident hit at Phil, who looked rather uncomfortable, particularly when the boys laughed. It is curious how healthy, good-hearted boys like to laugh—often at the slightest provocation. Can you blame them?

A recess next ensued for five minutes, after which the spelling match took place. It was clear from the attitude of the boys that this was regarded as the more serious event of the day. Others besides Leonard Abrahams strove to be as cool and careful as possible. The difficulty was less in the words than in the failure to concentrate

the mind. Usually the mistakes were due to carelessness. Hence boys who were less flurried and nervous, although not so clever as scholars, proved the better spellers.

No time was lost in arranging the sides—left and right—and as the boys sat with pencils raised ready to write, Mr. Milner gave out the following twenty-five words. None of them had been used within the year in the school contests:

Apennines	Gossamer	Maintenance	Trisyllable
Biassed	Huguenot	Nuisance	Unembarrassed
Carcass	Isinglass	Opaque	Vacillate
Deficit	Judicious	Privilege	Witticism
Ecstasy	Knowledge	Quiescent	Yacht
Fissure	Latitude	Relevant	Zephyr

Seamstress

The clear tones of Mr. Milner's voice rang out that afternoon with all the solemnity of fate. As each word was slowly and distinctly uttered, the boys listened with an intentness which would do credit to a prisoner about to receive the sentence of doom. All were alert, there was no mistaking the earnestness, and their faces were set as if to do or to die. Now was the time, now the hour. Then, as the contest continued and they grew more accustomed to the strain, how quickly they would write down the easier words and how they would hesitate over the more difficult ones!

So the hour passed, the list was finished, the papers exchanged, and left and right both waited eagerly for Mr. Milner's handwriting on the blackboard. When it

appeared, how ardently did they go to work to correct the papers, and when the end came—all trials come to an end—and the papers duly revised were returned to their original owners, left and right hoped to be the winner, and a cheer rang out from the left when it was announced that they had won gloriously. The right had seven misspelled words more than the left. Would the sun ever shine again for the luckless losers? But they were stout hearts and not dismayed. In two weeks' time they would have their revenge!

In summing up the results, Mr. Milner was just if not severe. A little playfulness tempered his criticism. He said he felt grieved that Philip Spanier should be more familiar with eisinglass than isinglass, but there is no accounting for taste. In all dictionaries, too, the word is spelled nuisance, and not neusance, according to Philip. Sam Frank, he continued, shows little respect for knowledge by spelling it knowlege, for which he has no authority. Leonard Abrahams merited special credit for having had only two mistakes. He had evidently taken more care this time. Trisyllable had floored the entire school—not one boy had given the correct spelling. Max Canter was reminded that yacht is not yat in any dictionary or on any river in the world. Even in an ambitious boy like Adolph wittycism was not to be accepted for witticism. If Henry had studied his last month's history lesson more carefully he would not have written Hugenote for Huguenot. Daniel Hart was trying manfully to get to the

head of the school, but he would never reach there if he thought a deafisit was the same as a deficit, and when he was big enough to travel abroad he could visit the Apennines and not the Appenines.

In this manner Mr. Milner relieved the tension of the boys and at the same time impressed the proper spelling of many words upon their minds so happily that such mistakes were not likely to be repeated. The humor took away the sharp edge of disappointment, for the boys wanted to be perfect. They felt pride in their progress and tried, as a rule, to do their best. More one cannot expect from any boy under the sun.

After dismissal that Friday afternoon, they needed no second invitation to rush out into the playground, where they discussed for a while the experiences of the day of trial.

"Well, Max," Leonard cried, tapping his friend on the shoulder, "didn't I tell you that I would be careful?"

"Good for you, old boy; but I'll never see a yacht race any more without thinking of—"

"What?"

"Yat!"

XIII

THE HELPING HAND

One Friday night after supper, as Bernard Gomez was reading the evening paper—it was not one of the Circle nights—he came across an item about Sir Moses Montefiore. The article was taken evidently from an English source and claimed to be an extract from his diary for 1820, when he was about thirty-six years old.

"Mr. Jacobs," he remarked, "did you see this statement about Sir Moses Montefiore in the Commercial?" And he showed it to him.

"That is extremely interesting, Bernard," Mr. Jacobs observed, as he read the item hurriedly. "The entire diary must be well worth publishing. Let the boys hear it." And Bernard read the following:

"With God's blessing rise, say prayers at 7 o'clock. Breakfast at 9. Attend the Stock Exchange, if in London, 10. Dinner, 5. Read, write, and learn, if possible, Hebrew and French, 6. Read Bible and say prayers, 10. Then retire. Monday and Thursday mornings attend the Synagogue. Tuesday and Thursday evenings for visiting."

"What a remarkable plan of life for a young man of thirty-six, is it not?" was Mrs. Jacobs' comment. "I wonder how many men of that age with his wealth acted similarly," and she could not help smiling at the idea.

The boys were no less interested. Max asked if there were any other extracts from the diary.

"Yes, indeed," Bernard replied; "here is a further item: 'I attended many meetings at the City of London Tavern, also several charitable meetings at Bevis Marks in connection with the Spanish and Portuguese Synagogue; sometimes passing the whole day there from ten in the morning until half past eleven at night (Jan. 25, 1820), excepting two hours for dinner in the committee-room; answered in the evening 350 petitions from poor women, and also made frequent visits at the Villa Real School.' That is certainly a record."

"Just think of it," Max exclaimed with heightened color, "to receive 350 petitions from poor women. Why, the man was an entire relief society by himself."

"Did you ever see him, Mr. Jacobs?" Arthur Davis inquired, with a true reporter's instinct for information.

"I met him frequently, Arthur, in my early days," was the answer. "As a boy I remember very well what a tall handsome man he was, looking every inch a soldier, walking erect and yet affable in manner. When I first was introduced to him, he was probably fifty. He had just been knighted by Queen Victoria. Even then he was becoming widely known for his benevolence and his journeys to Palestine and elsewhere in behalf of our downtrodden brethren. A couple of years later he returned from his fifth trip, accompanied by his secretary and physician, Dr. Loewe, who is quite an accomplished

scholar in Oriental languages. I hope some of you may visit England one of these days and journey to East Cliff Lodge, Ramsgate, his charming residence."

"Max said a few minutes ago," Mr. Jacobs continued after a slight pause, "that Montefiore was an entire relief society. He is more than that—he represents the whole Jewish community, and when he travels and works in aid of persecuted Israel his voice is the voice of universal Jewry, English and all. He is almost our only champion and always succeeds. His one solitary failure was the case of Edgar Mortara. You know he went to Rome in 1858 to have the boy restored to his parents but without avail. The power of the Papacy was too great."

"Mr. Jacobs," Bernard asked, "could you not tell us something about the situation of the Jews in the world—I mean in the countries where the great majority live?"

"That is a pretty large subject for a quiet family circle, Bernard, and it is hard to condense it within the limits of a short talk. However, as you have suggested it, I shall try to tell it as briefly as possible. Perhaps later on we can take it up in connection with our Jewish history courses. If you consider how few countries at this moment are actually free, having an educated and liberal minded people—you can count them on the fingers of one hand and have a finger or two to spare—it is not surprising that where great masses of Jews reside they should feel the lash of unjust laws and hateful prejudice. The world moves, it is true, but very slowly. The feeling against

them is strengthened because, excluded from the higher arts and trades, they must follow for the most part lowly occupations for a livelihood, and that, in conjunction with the bigotry that is so widespread in certain lands, arouses an aversion. In the Barbary States, where the Jews suffer from mediaeval conditions, a system of piracy was pursued until a few years ago. In Persia, Turkey, and the border lands, in the vast realms of Russia, how can we expect the Jew to have freedom and equality before the law, when there is no law there as we understand it in the United States or in England?

"Now you can realize, Bernard, why the Jews are persecuted as the weaker people, why accusations rose against them in Damascus twenty years ago, and more recently in Italy. If all the nations were on the same level of culture and religion, the Jew would not and could not be proscribed as a criminal. He is powerless—his only remedy is to bribe his persecutors if he has money enough or to leave the country and try to reach other lands, where conditions may be more favorable. But you must not forget that where Church and State are combined, those who do not belong to the dominant religion suffer more or less, although not so severely as does the Jew."

"How can we stop the evil, Mr. Jacobs?" Arthur Davis asked, much interested.

"A beginning is to be made very soon—perhaps the movement has already been started in Paris. M. Adolph Cremieux, the noted French statesman, with some

eminent French Israelites, have organized the Alliance Israélite Universelle, to champion the cause of the persecuted Jew, organize schools in the Orient, where Jewish children can be taught, not only Hebrew and their religious traditions, but also the elements of modern trades and industries. An agricultural school is to be erected in Jaffa, weaving and other handicrafts are to be spread in the Orient, and a great revival is predicted. Schools for teachers will be founded in Paris and elsewhere. A new life and activity will thus dawn upon our brethren."

"But will those countries allow the Jewish children to be educated in the modern spirit?" Bernard inquired.

"So long as they incur no expense, there will be no objection. France whose power is increasing in the East will pave the way by wise diplomacy. England and the United States will give their assistance. No political power is being asked—merely a modern education. In extending a helpful hand to our unfortunate brethren, we are aiding them to become respected and self-respecting. It is peculiarly fitting that Palestine should become a pioneer in modern training at school, in the shop, and on the farm. I anticipate a wonderful improvement throughout the entire East in the status of the Jew."

"There is another view to be considered," Mr. Jacobs continued. "The map of Europe is always changing and likely to change even more. The absolute monarchies cannot endure, as the people gain in knowledge and power

and recognize the faults and crimes in their masters. Within recent decades, the revolutionary movement has begun in Prussia, Austria, and the German states in general. This unrest will continue as the nations struggle to be free. We may have our problem, too. I do not refer to slavery—that is outside our present discussion—but to another matter. If Russia and other countries will not permit civil and religious liberty, hundreds, nay thousands will emigrate to America. We must be careful lest instead of being educated and raised to the highest American standard they may come in such masses that they may dangerously affect American ideals."

"Why, Mr. Jacobs, you are not so hopeful as I thought you were," Bernard interrupted.

"I try to be, my son; yet one cannot help feeling anxious at the present outlook. But the American people will rise to the crisis and provide effective measures. We shall educate the new-comers so that in time native and foreigner will be one to resist danger as a united nation. The American Jews, too, have a special duty—to give a helping hand to our needy and helpless brethren who may enter the gates of the New World to seek freedom and guidance on our shores. Freedom without guidance, —patient, helpful guidance—would be fatal to the great mass who are children to be taught from the beginning. We must give them a helping hand, money at first for their material wants and then practical education, the new education to train eye, hand and brain. Their hearts

are sound—the Jewish heart in the most wretched emigrant is full of warmth. He only needs to feel that he is among friends to gain courage and strength. But I fear that I am wearying you all. The subject is really too serious for a home gathering."

"Not at all, not at all, Mr. Jacobs," Bernard exclaimed warmly. "I think our young men should learn such facts as you have presented, so that we may take an intelligent part in the struggle and help the older men and women who are doing their share."

"Brave, strong words, Bernard. You young men cannot be taught too soon the problem of being a Jew and the difficulty of its solution. It was never easy, perhaps it was never meant that it should be easy to be a Jew; that is why we have such a variety and number of laws and statutes. In former ages, however, the problem concerned our laws and traditions which would maintain us in the face of the ruling creed—Pagan, Mohammedan, Catholic, Protestant. Since the era of the Reformation and the rise of so many sects, it has been much easier to get along. If any would persecute, we have friends among the rest who would help us. But to-day the danger is less in the character of Judaism than—to speak frankly—in the character of the Jew himself. He must be perfect, without a flaw. One bad peach will spoil a basketful, so if one Jew commits a crime, all the rest of us are included in the reproach and held guilty. It is false logic and is never applied to any other class than ourselves. Hence

the problem. How to solve it? The helping hand is the chief weapon. That will raise the ignorant and make them useful citizens. You boys must play your part in this great task.

"Bernard thought I was a prophet of gloom. Just the reverse. I can see brighter, happier days for Israel, as the world swings into wider channels and the old cruel ages of the serfdom of the many and the lordship of the few are passing away forever. The ancient lands of the earth will be restored and rebuilt. Cities long desolate will stir with new activities. One by one former famous empires will come under the protection of the stronger modern nations—like India, now under English rule—to begin a new life which their founders would never have dreamed possible. Palestine, too, will be aroused like its neighbors, and Jerusalem, step by step with Cairo, Damascus, and others, will put away its mourning and rise to new dignities and importance. It will not be a military camp for border warfare, but a center of power in trade, science, education, with our Jewish race continuing its mission as a teacher of humanity. Who knows what may not happen with a helping hand and an arm outstretched to save? Well, it is almost ten. I wonder you are not asleep after the long discussion."

"Asleep?" Bernard rejoined, "No, wide awake, Mr. Jacobs, wide awake all of us. You have taught us what we could never learn from text-books."

"Very sensibly spoken, Bernard, and as some reward

for keeping awake, I'll tell you a tale of the old time, after which to bed, all of you. Let me call it

The Rabbi and the Bird

Many, many years ago before houses were built of steel, or railroads rushed from sea to sea or newspapers read, but not before the woods were filled with singing birds and flowers blossomed on all sides, there lived a quiet, old-fashioned rabbi. Why do we call him old-fashioned? Well, he had old-fashioned ideas. First, he believed that all he had—his life, his family, his friends, his sorrows as well as joys, all, all came from the Almighty. He believed further, so old-fashioned a man he was, that nothing happened without God's will. Still more, and perhaps with even firmer faith he believed that the laws and statutes, the customs and ideals which had so far preserved Israel should be preserved not in a museum of antiquities for the sightseer and antiquary, but in the daily lives and conduct of the people. So old-fashioned he was.

Well, one day, as things happen in our wonderful world, a man called on the rabbi and after the customary remarks about the weather and the harvest said to him bluntly: "Rabbi, do you believe in God?" to which the rabbi rejoined: "I do."

"Do you pray to God?" he asked further.

Again the brief rejoinder: "I do."

Then the questions came more rapidly and with more sharpness: "What? Do you think the Almighty hears your prayer, answers your prayer, knows who you are among the billions of human beings?"

"Yes, yes, yes, He does," was the quiet reply.

"Nonsense, nonsense. Once upon a time when the world was in its babyhood, all that might have been possible. Those were ages of illusion and wonderment and ignorance. It was a fairy earth, full of fairy tales of demons and spirits and strange happenings. Mountain, valley, forest, river—each was the abode of superior and inferior deities. The imagination, the simplicity, the fears of the people gave them life and name. Foolish rabbi! In our age of enlightenment to cherish such infantile fancies! I thought you were wiser. You are like the rest." The man left the rabbi's home, shook his hand warningly as he looked back and then disappeared.

Now the rabbi with all of his faith was greatly moved. A slight word, a stray thought, a sudden doubt will often have a strange effect. A certain tiny worm can penetrate a ship's side—a strong, massive man-of-war, and gradually cause its destruction. In the same way sometimes little doubts may enter the sturdiest mind and a mere suggestion of evil may penetrate the stoutest heart, if once we allow it entrance. The man's chance words were trying to overcome the rabbi's faith—they were already making him disturbed and anxious. He felt himself stumbling, adrift, cut off from his moorings.

Happily the habits of years could not be broken in a few hours or days. It was his custom to pray or rather speak to the Almighty at certain moments when all seemed dark and doubtful, and now at the present crisis he left home and town and, gaining the fragrant woods—a favorite spot for his meditations—he stood erect, then bowing as if in adoration, he addressed the Almighty:

"Father in Heaven, Lord of the Universe, Thou who hast framed our heart and mind, and given laws and statutes to Israel, who didst reveal Thyself in manifold ways in the history of Thy people and the history of the sons of men, give me a sign that Thou still hearest prayer, revealest Thy will to all Thy creation, and art near, very near to all who come to Thee in truth and love and reverence. A sign, Almighty, of Thy presence!"

The rabbi ceased. No answer came to his petition. No awful voice broke upon the silence. The skies above the towering trees were radiantly blue but gave no response. Then suddenly from one of the lower boughs burst forth the song of a bird. Low, very low at first, then gaining in strength it rose to a strain of wondrous melody, as the bird soared upward and was soon lost to view.

"I thank Thee, my Creator," the rabbi exclaimed, "I thank Thee. Thou still speakest to Thy children. Now I know the precious meaning in the words: 'Thou renewest every day in Thy goodness continually the work of creation!' "

XIV

IN WAR TIMES

"Mr. Jacobs," said Mr. Milner one afternoon in October. "I fear we shall have war soon. No compromise seems probable, to judge from the fiery remarks on both sides."

"Well, Mr. Milner," came the answer, "war is dreadful to contemplate, but there is something worse than war. If conditions cannot be endured and no concessions are likely, war is the quickest remedy, if we fight with all our strength."

"But it is a cruel, barbarous thing in these progressive times."

"Admitting that our era is progressive, war is not necessarily cruel or barbarous. Surely Washington, Franklin, and their associates were neither cruel nor barbarous," Mr. Jacobs responded smilingly. "Believe me, Mr. Milner, if the war comes, it will be a terrible experience but it will cure the evil and lead to a happy, united country which will forget in a few years the horror and the hatred. After the storm-cloud, the shining sunset."

"I heard a fine speaker the other evening at the Institute," Mr. Milner remarked. "He was on his way to Washington and spent a few hours in Hometown. It was Abraham Lincoln, who is likely to be a candidate for

President. A tall, strong, rugged man, whose voice and manner inspire confidence. His speech was of moderate length, but it was a clever intellectual effort, with a consummate grasp of the situation, and an inspiring appeal to the people to rally in defence of the Republic. No politics appeared in the address, but plenty of statesmanship. Don't you think, Mr. Jacobs, that the older boys might well listen to orators of his quality? It would benefit them in many ways." Then the talk drifted to other topics.

The suggestion bore fruit and from time to time as more or less famous men addressed Hometown audiences, Bernard, Adolph, Philip and a few others would attend and tell of their experiences. It was a great lesson for them and increased their interest in current events, even if they failed to understand all the points involved. The vast audience, the enthusiasm, the loud cheering, the excited faces, and above all the speaker himself, with his ringing voice, forceful words, emphatic gestures,—this formed a stirring scene not so soon to be forgotten, and gave the lads a good idea of the situation.

No politics reigned at the school and angry discussions were not tolerated, although occasional debates took place which were conducted without heat or rancor. On the whole the boys were much of one opinion, with some differences on minor points. A couple of Southern lads, kindly, generous, full of surprising energy, were withdrawn when South Carolina seceded and war seemed

inevitable. A Georgia youth, with Union proclivities, stayed on and used to delight the boys by his quaint and truthful account of negro life and his clever imitations of negro character. He told the boys that there were many slaves on his father's plantation, the majority having been born there, and that they were treated as kindly as average servants in the North. Some lived to a good old age and were strong and active. No cruelties were permitted. Why should a man injure his own property? A slave was valuable, and if it was necessary he could be sold at a high price if he was healthy and capable.

"I tell you, boys," he said one day, and they listened open-mouthed. "You should visit the quarters down home some evenings and see how happy the negro can be. He is a born musician, you know, and plays and sings to his heart's content. The children romp about as merrily as grasshoppers and are taught the elements of reading, writing, spelling and ciphering. In case of illness, the negro is treated like one of the family. My mother has often gone with medicine to his quarters or he has come up to the house for advice. One reason why the negro, as a rule, is happy, is because he lives for the day only and does not worry about the morrow. He has no rent to pay and his wants are provided for. His being a slave is only a phrase and nothing more, which the abolitionist harps upon from morning to night to arouse agitation."

"Your experience is exceptional," Max interposed. "You know that generally speaking the negro is treated

harshly and not as a human being. Slaves are out of date in the nineteenth century."

"I shall not argue, Max. I admit there are cruel overseers and harsh masters, but with due respect to Harriet Beecher Stowe," said Ferdinand Wise, the Georgian, "there is too much exaggeration. But the country is outgrowing slavery more and more. That I must confess. Come, Max, let's have a little chess." And the boys were soon engaged in a close contest, the issue of which was long doubtful.

As the days and weeks passed and war became a certainty, the enterprising newsboys, each with his "Extra!" in big bundles at all hours made it an exciting and not wholly unwelcome time for schools. Lessons would be interrupted and some lad would be sent out to buy a copy of the paper. Then the startling news was read aloud and always evoked rapturous applause, whether the information was old or new, vital or trivial. It would take some time for the usual quiet to be restored and the work resumed. The boys, even at the Hebrew Home School, enjoyed these almost daily interruptions, but not the teachers. Yet occasionally when a great and glorious victory was announced, the school would receive a half holiday or be dismissed an hour earlier, amid tremendous cheers, as much for the half holiday as for the victory, if the truth were confessed.

The youth of the land were very patriotic in those days with some of the boys going to the war under sixteen; a

million and more under eighteen. In the South the boys enlisted no less eagerly and, comparatively, in as large numbers. In common with other cities Hometown formed many independent companies of very young boy warriors, dressed tastefully in Zouave uniform, who with fife and drum paraded up and down the chief streets and thought they were bold soldiers indeed, deserving well of their country. Even little fellows of six followed suit and with wooden guns or broomsticks strutted along to the sound of the soul-stirring drum. The girls were merely girls and were not ambitious of war honors, but they helped all the same and did plenty of war work of a kind. A great national society was formed, the "United States Sanitary Commission," which forwarded medicine, bandages, food and goodies to the camps and the battlefields for our troops. Lint was needed for surgical dressing, and the girls, big and little, used to scrape the lint from linen goods, forwarding it promptly and in large quantities to headquarters. In every city and town branches of the Sanitary Commission were formed. So the girls did their share in preparing bandages and providing useful articles for the soldiers who, brave as they were, relished jellies, cakes, chocolate, cocoa, and candies. A soldier may have not only strong muscles but a sweet tooth as well.

The chief streets of Hometown were fairly alive with soldiers, some on their way to the battlefield and others returning home. There was no prolonged training in special camps. On their march through the city in long

winding files of men, crowds would gather around them and many a "God bless you!" was heard, while flowers were thrown at them. A squad of noisy little boys would encircle the pompous drum major as he whirled carelessly his staff into the air and deftly caught it as it descended while the band played martial music, the sidewalk joining in the refrain; such was the people's enthusiasm.

It did not take long for popular feeling to show itself. On December 20th, 1860, South Carolina seceded. When the news reached New Orleans, one hundred guns were fired in congratulation. How the boys as well as the girls were thrilled when early in '61 John A. Dix, Secretary of the Treasury, sent his spirited telegram which became historic, "If any one attempts to haul down the American flag, shoot him on the spot!" The fate of Fort Sumter aroused much sympathy, with indignation at the apparent apathy of the government. One of the comic papers of the day expressed the general sentiment in the verses which went from mouth to mouth:

"Sing a song of Sumter,
A fort in Charleston Bay.
Eight and sixty brave men
Watched there night and day.

"Those brave men to succor
Still no aid is sent.
Isn't James Buchanan
A pretty President?"

As the war progressed, the boys at school and out of school rapidly became familiar with the names of the battles and the leading military heroes, in fact with every detail of the conflict. Bull Run was hailed as a greater encounter than Waterloo, and Major Anderson who commanded at Sumter was held to be a mightier warrior than Julius Cæsar. Elmer Ellsworth who organized the fire-laddies into a regiment and early met a sudden end was practically idolized for a time, after receiving an imposing funeral. Patriotic melodies were played steadily by the hand-organs and strolling bands, and caught eagerly by the boys in the street. "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean" was sung more often than "The Star Spangled Banner." "Rally Round the Flag, Boys," "The Flag of the Free," "We are coming, Father Abraham," "When Johnny Comes Marching Home Again," were stirring songs and given with a will from dawn to midnight.

The boys liked most of all to visit the troops, at their temporary camps, which were arranged in some of the parks. In one night a tented city arose and a thousand men were seen at drill or at meals. Odd friendships were made when the soldiers were off duty and curious confidences exchanged, with gifts of pencils, pocket knives, combs, packages of nuts and candies. How the boys thrilled as they reverently touched the weapons of war or carefully opened the knapsacks or felt the polished belts. How they longed to be grown men, so as to be

summoned to battle! What spirit-stirring dreams would be theirs when they returned home! No warriors could be braver than they when fast asleep, no exploits bolder than theirs in the isle of dreams under the soft white coverlet. Ah, if all battles could be as bloodless, what a happy world for the mothers and fathers of our sturdy little fellows who make up so much of the music of life and fill our hearts with joyful pride asleep or awake! That is, of course, provided they are just average boys, never angels who would be regarded with suspicion, but kind hearted, clean-minded, good-tempered boys, ready for fun and quick to obey.

A funeral in the early days of the war appealed deeply to the boys of the Hebrew Home School. Mr. Jacobs had added to the library a small volume by a young American author of whom much was expected—Theodore Winthrop. He was the idol of a large circle, in fine health and spirits, and golden were the visions painted of his future. The list of authors of his class was then very limited. He had made a brilliant college career and at his country's call was among the first to march to battle. A few weeks after he had set out full of ardor his body was brought home and, borne upon a howitzer, was taken to its last resting place with a number of his grief-stricken comrades as escort.

As the boys witnessed the procession, slowly filing along to far different strains of music than when he left for the battle-field, they felt more keenly, young as they

were, the sorrows of the vast struggle that was arraying as deadly enemies the brethren of the same nation—happily only for a few years, the memories of which were later to render still more binding the bonds of brotherhood.

Another pathetic episode was seeing Bernard's brother off to the war in one of the crack engineer companies. He promised to write regularly to the boys, and he kept his word. It was a gala day when a letter came and an event in the school's history, as it was eagerly read and commented upon. The younger lads with the wild fancy of early youth thought he might become in time the Napoleon of America, and they would rush daily to the newspaper in their confidence that his honored name would be mentioned either at the head of some glorious charge advancing boldly with a drawn sword in his hand, or desperately holding the bridge, a vital strategic point, against ten thousand ruthless foes, with the fatal bullet whistling in all directions. He did indeed attain a captain's rank but failed to become anything other than a Napoleon of finance and one of the trustees of his synagogue—ample honor for most of us struggling mortals.

For the boys and girls it was a time of excitement, largely of an enjoyable kind, with its novelties and amusements. They shared none of its anxieties or privations. Nor did the very young people feel any of that agony which their elders experienced when among the dead and wounded were those they knew and loved. They might recover from business losses—they could endure discom-

forts inseparable from war; but the vacant chair remained empty and the dear one would never return. For the children a large funeral was a fine treat—the pomp, the music, the crowd were a delight to them. They could follow it with their eyes and talk of it afterwards. Their parents, however, who had known sorrow, saw no cause for happiness in the long drawn out *cortege*, and would kiss their boys only the more tenderly when they came to say good-night.

XV

"ON, BROTHERS, ON!"

The boys of the Hebrew Home School were as eager to help the country, as the war continued, as the pupils in other private and public academies. The city was full of bazaars and performances in aid of the Sanitary Commission or for some of the many needs of the government. Not a week passed without its urgent call on the patriotic and the benevolent for funds or supplies. Collections of books, garments, and other articles were the order of the day. Nobody begrudged the expense and labor involved. When life, the supremest sacrifice, was freely offered, to give time and money was secondary and aroused no comment.

"What can we do, fellows?" Arthur Davis asked excitedly one day on the playground, pencil in hand, ready to write down any suggestions. "Let us have something original. The people are tiring of the old stunts."

For once Phil was silent. He was growing older and more serious, and did not suggest an olio, to the great surprise of his companions.

"Let us have an Oriental shop and we can dress up as Chinese, Japanese, Egyptians, and so on," cried Sam Frank, looking around for applause.

"I say a street in Jerusalem," Leonard Abrahams exclaimed. "No plan could be more appropriate. We can arrange a small narrow street full of fancy shops. I'll be the fortune teller. One or two of the fellows can assist me. What do you think of the scheme? Isn't it fine?" There was an ominous silence, which proved that the Street in Jerusalem had nobody in its favor. Leonard could not understand it.

"Let's have a minstrel entertainment," said George Wise. "We'll blacken our faces and have lots of fun."

"George, my son," Max rejoined, "it might be fun for us, but surely would be misery for the audience. Come, Phil, why so silent? What have you up your sleeve?"

"His arm, stupid!" said Harry Goldsmith, ready to raise a laugh at Phil's expense.

"Well," Phil answered, "I think the best plan is to have a high class entertainment—singing, recitations, music, all to end with a short dramatic selection. This will interest practically the whole school."

"Not so bad, boys," Bernard added as he joined the group. "But everything depends on the performers. For a public affair they must be more than good. Have we talent enough? That is the chief point."

"Enough and to spare," Philip replied. "We can ask outsiders and Mr. Jacobs will help as he always does. Let's try the suggestion and call it: Literary, Musical and Dramatic Entertainment by the Pupils of the H. H. S.

in aid of the U. S. Sanitary Commission. Why, it sounds fine, boys. Don't you agree with me?"

"I am satisfied," said Arthur Davis. "Let's talk to Mr. Jacobs on the matter at once. Other schools are having their affairs, why must we delay?"

That very evening some of the older lads spoke to Mr. Jacobs and wished to learn his views. Would he favor the idea? If so, what suggestions had he to offer?

"That is a good idea, a fine idea," he replied. "Suppose you appoint a program committee, submit it to me, we shall go over it carefully together and arrange it in the best possible way. I wish I could take it up now, but this is my whist evening, and I am a little late as it is. Come to me tomorrow night, and in the meantime arrange your program as best you can. Good evening!"

This was Mr. Jacobs' one pastime—the semi-monthly game of whist, in which his family physician, Dr. Gilman, Father Doyle, a kindly priest, who was a neighbor, and Mr. Holcombe, a lawyer who lived close by participated. They met at each other's homes in due rotation. The doctor was a tall well-built man large in body and large in mind, a little cynical at times, with an apparently gruff manner but the kindest heart in the world. He would go out of his way to serve the poorest of his patients and keep the rich waiting on his humor. The good priest was an occasional visitor to the synagogue and had many a thoughtful talk with Mr. Jacobs. Both men, seemingly opposites, had traits in common which

made them close friends. Both were men of the world as well as clergymen and had the power and sense to appreciate each other's point of view. Mr. Holcombe was jovial and full of anecdotes that enlivened the whist evenings. It is always a good plan for busy men to seek relaxation, and these gatherings were a source of much healthful enjoyment.

The program committee spent anxious hours at their task, which they did not find so simple. There was no lack of volunteers—the entire school was ready. But as they wished to realize a large sum, they resolved to have as select and varied a program as possible. Hence the services of many comrades had to be declined kindly but firmly. Considerable dissatisfaction was caused at first by this ruling, but after a while the decision was held to be wise; the rejected young gentlemen, having been placed on the ticket and floor committees and permitted to wear large rosettes and badges of office, smiled again and all was well. The credit of the school was at stake, and when other schools were giving the finest concerts and the like, with celebrities among the attractions, could they do less? Finally after three exciting sessions the program was arranged to consist of music, singing, recitation, dialogue, and an olio, to the great delight of Philip who at first opposed it as being undignified in war time; but they all laughed at his attitude, and he consented to manage that portion of the entertainment. Arthur Davis, as secretary of the committee, wrote off

neatly a copy of the program, which was submitted to Mr. Jacobs for his consideration.

"Quite an ambitious program," said he, as he put on his spectacles and very deliberately read each line—so slowly that the committee found it hard to restrain their impatience. "Ah!" he murmured, "Songs, music, readings, an olio. Capital, capital, as far as they go. Now I have an idea that we shall have a large audience. The cause is the best, and our talent—" with a gentle wave of his hand to the boys—"fine without exception. We shall expect to realize a handsome amount. Now perhaps this can be improved upon. Just wait a few moments." So without a word further he sat down at his desk, and while the boys waited more impatiently than before, he drew up a revised program which read as follows:

HEBREW HOME SCHOOL
CONCERT AND ENTERTAINMENT
IN AID OF THE
U. S. SANITARY COMMISSION
AT
MASONIC HALL, THURSDAY, MARCH 23, 1862

Programme

1. Opening Chorus . . . . . The School
2. Piano Selection . . . . . Max Canter
3. Song . . . . . Miss Holcombe
4. Spartacus to the Gladiators . . . . . Philip Spanier
5. Violin Solo . . . . . Fred Gilman
6. Quarrel of Brutus and Cassius . . Arthur Davis and George Wise
7. Memories of Holland . . . . . Adolph Blooker

Intermission

8. Piano Selection. . . . . Max Canter
9. Calisthenics . . . . . .School
10. On, Brothers, On!. . . . . Daniel Hart
11. Olio: A Moonlight Night at Home town . . .School Minstrels
12. Closing Address . . . . . .Father Doyle

"Now, my sons," Mr. Jacobs spoke as he handed the program to the boys, "I think it will take a little over two hours and is sufficiently varied. I told my friends last night about the proposed affair and secured, as you see, their co-operation, and also managed to rent Masonic Hall for the occasion without cost. Adolph has so improved that I am confident he will give a fine speech on his favorite topic. As regards the olio, you will be careful, Phil, to avoid all boisterousness. What is amusing and proper in a school hall, may not always be fitting in a large assembly. So be discreet. Of course, you may change here and there, if it is necessary. You have a full month for your rehearsals. Get to work at once. Appoint your committees promptly and have every boy interested. Good night!" And he bowed the boys out of the room.

When the committee left the study, they were too dazed with delight to speak to one another for a while. The swift realization of their plans seemed hardly possible. Such a program. Why, it was the best ever. It could not be beaten. And the outside talent—it was the strongest feature. And Father Doyle—that was a grand idea! The concert would be a hummer and at least $500

would be netted for the good cause. After a few minutes they grew cooler and began to study the program more critically. How well Mr. Jacobs knew what the boys liked! Phil at Spartacus was at his best—a real gladiator. Daniel Hart, the smallest boy in the school, would make a sensation in his piece. The calisthenics number would enable all to appear, and the olio—that was glorious fun. Trust Phil and his crowd for that! Then Bernard surely would help. But would there be time for rehearsals? Could they defer the date? No, no, that would be impossible.

"Don't worry, fellows," Sam Frank exclaimed, "we have lots of time."

"Yes, and lots of grit," added Max; "everything will be all right."

"But to make things all right," continued Bernard who had been summoned for counsel, "you must have many rehearsals. Every selection must be perfect. No hitches can be permitted."

The boys worked with energy. Mr. Milner helped with the recitation and dialogue. Phil arranged the olio in his cleverest manner, adding a fancy dance. How ancient the jokes were nobody could imagine. "What is the good of a joke anyway," Phil said, "unless like a criminal it has served its time." Meanwhile the ticket committee were selling the tickets as fast as snowflakes fall in January. No complimentaries and no half rates to children.

"It is for our country," asserted Daniel Hart. "We must make as big a sum as we can. Fellows, let the performers pay too." The motion was carried without a murmur, but with one sigh. To be historically correct, Arthur Davis was short that month, and had to borrow the admission fee from Max Canter. The sigh came from Arthur.

The evening arrived. It was a clear, starry night. The hall was crowded to the top gallery. Mr. Jacobs' entire congregation was there, with a host of friends from all quarters. An enthusiastic audience indeed from start to finish, and so good natured that they laughed at every jest. The opening chorus was the "The Star Spangled Banner," and all stood during the singing. Then Max played skilfully the overture to Mendelssohn's "Midsummer Night's Dream." Miss Holcombe followed with a battle-song that thrilled the audience. Next Phil gave the Spartacus speech, and no gladiator could have shown more vim. In fact it was done so well that when he came to the sentence, "Hark! hear ye yon lion roaring in his den?", a little fellow in a back row began to cry in his alarm, as if it was the lion, not Phil, who was roaring. Fred Gilman played a pathetic melody on his violin. Arthur and George were effective as Romans, speaking their lines distinctly, as they stormed up and down the stage. Adolph was really capital in his five minute talk about Holland. There was no reference to Lottie in his story of Dutch child-life.

After the intermission, which was a rest for the performers as well as the audience, Max played a selection of national airs with bagpipe effects that raised the house. Then about twenty boys filed on the stage and went through an exercise drill, Max playing an accompaniment. It was effectively done, and as they filed off again each boy felt he had deserved well of his country. And now a small boy walks slowly forward and bows to the audience as, with a voice that had wondrously grown, he recites a patriotic poem of the day. Two verses will give an idea of its fervor.

ON, BROTHERS, ON!

On, Brothers, On! for the flag that is peerless,
Striped from the rainbow, and starred from the sky.
On with a sturdy heart, dauntless and fearless,
On to unfurl it in triumph or die!
Honored in all lands,
Now shall unholy hands
Trail it defiled and despised in the dust?
Up with the starry flag!
God for the just! . . . .

On with a prayer, there is peril before us.
On in the face of death, fearless and proud.
Life and the flag that our fathers waved o'er us!
Death, and its bloodstained folds for a shroud!

Now for our fatherland,
Strike with true heart and hand!
Loyal our venture and heavenward our trust.
Up with the starry flag!
God for the just!

At the close of the first verse, the people applauded vigorously and with each verse the clapping was redoubled, but at the end they sprang up in their enthusiasm and waved their handkerchiefs, at which the boy was visibly moved but did not lose his head, walking slowly off the stage. Before he disappeared a number of bouquets were thrown at him which he left to the committee men to pick up. It was a triumph for Daniel due as much to the words of the poem as to any special ability of his own.

Now the audience sat back in their seats, to enjoy the olio, whose title aroused their curiosity. It had nothing to do with the moonlight, but was used merely for the effect. The boys had been well trained. Phil and Harry as end-men could not have been better. Leonard Abrahams gave a fancy dance which amazed the audience by its agility. The act closed with a "walk around" scene that gave rise to steady applause which encouraged the young actors to walk around still more—so ready they were to oblige—until luckily a warning bell rang down the curtain.

The closing address by Father Doyle was well received,

to judge from the continued applause. He was glad to say a few words, he said, although the sentiments of a man of middle age were as silver compared to the golden utterances and aspirations of the schoolboys. He envied the happy visions of youth, which admitted of no cloud to dim their brightness. He was proud of Mr. Jacobs' friendship and his school's record. He recalled how a few months before Mr. Jacobs had been interested in a poor Catholic family and had secured a position for one of the sons. He had a heart of gold and a mind of gold, and the speaker prayed to the good God who is Father of all mankind to grant him long life and continued health and activity. He might say a great deal more, but at that late hour he could only repeat with a full and grateful heart the words of the small lad with a big voice—"On, Brothers, On!"

XVI

THE PARTING HOUR

During the first year of the Civil War, the school was not seriously affected. As the conflict continued, however, bringing in its train such important changes in the social and business world, the pupils gradually decreased in number. The loss was felt in particular among the boarders—a group of boys in whom Mr. Jacobs took special pride, for they came in closer contact with him, and their training was less mechanical than must almost necessarily occur in the case of day pupils bound to a fixed schedule of studies and formal exercises. They shared a certain companionship which was of marked influence on them, and the Jewish background in the home atmosphere was helpful and inspiring, and in no way repressive.

From year to year, too, the school had grown dearer to its founder, who had no desire to secure pecuniary benefit from the enterprise, being amply satisfied if there was no annual deficit. As he had no children, the boys received the full measure of his own and his wife's sympathy and affection.

"Ruth," said he to her one day, "those boys keep you young. Don't you think so?"

"I think they keep *you* young, David," was her laughing reply.

"That is the great secret of life, of a happy life, to keep in contact with the young," he observed. "This does not prevent age but delays its approach. When it comes, and it must come, we are more contented as we think of the young folks who have twined around our hearts. Just now I confess I do feel a bit anxious." And he gave a prolonged sigh, very unusual for him.

"Why, David, *you* anxious! What has happened?" she inquired, much disturbed.

"Well, I cannot disguise the fact that the school income is decreasing steadily and the expenses are as steadily mounting up. Few new pupils apply; more and more are being withdrawn, and we cannot be surprised, considering the condition of affairs. Sam Frank and Leonard Abrahams leave in June. I doubt whether Max Canter and two or three others will return after the summer vacation. It is war-time and we must expect private schools to feel the effect. That is undeniable."

"Yes, that is so; but if you lose some pupils, you can secure others, can you not?" she asked. "The war impoverishes some but it enriches others."

"No doubt of it—thousands swim in plenty, but I do not care to take pupils of all types. Thank the Lord, I am not obliged to do so. Only this week I refused those Blank boys from Chicago, simply because I learned

indirectly that they had undeveloped brains. This school is no home or hospital for chronic invalids. Old Blank would have paid double rates for their admission, but that was no inducement. There certainly should be more desirable boys for our purposes, but they do not come and they cannot be humored into coming. The outlook, I confess, is not very hopeful. I shall have an early chat with Milner on the subject. Perhaps he may have a good suggestion."

The school kept up its usual vigor despite the widening gaps in its ranks. A few boys entered, it is true, and Mr. Jacobs began to feel more hopeful. Then in June there was almost a stampede. Prices had increased enormously, and parents, however unwilling, were obliged to economize, and they began at the very point where the majority should have ended. Hence the first effect of such a crisis is always borne by the school and college.

Bewildered by the loss of so many boys without warning, Mr. Jacobs had a serious talk with Mr. Milner, disclosing his anxiety and his fears. Could Mr. Milner see a way out of the difficulty? Was the situation really so serious? What practical suggestion could he offer?

"My dear Mr. Jacobs," Mr. Milner said, "I am glad you are taking up this matter with me. It is a pretty serious situation and you are right to discuss it frankly. Unless you wish to sink your capital recklessly, you should halt at once."

"What!" Mr. Jacobs exclaimed, greatly moved. "You

advise me to give up the school—the pride of my heart, the joy of my life? How can you suggest such a sacrifice?"

"Be sensible, my friend. Come down to solid earth. Why suffer heavy financial losses for a mere sentiment? You are only one of thousands who must submit to the inevitable in our days."

"There is something in what you say, Mr. Milner, I must admit on second thought. I have other duties and obligations. It is not right to endure a burden which is likely to prove still heavier."

"Now you have regained your usual good judgment," Mr. Milner hastened to say. "You will be as ready to heed my suggestion, which is simply this. Why continue your day school in the face of the present conditions? Retain if you like a few of your boarding pupils—a few only. For them you have ample room. Then arrange with one of the near-by private academies to receive all your day scholars and such of your boarders as wish to attend and are not quite ready for college or business. No school will object to an accession of fifteen to twenty students. It will be no additional expense to the parents. What do you think of the plan? Does it meet with your approval?"

"The idea is excellent—so simple and yet so satisfactory," was the hearty response. "It removes a huge burden from me. But, Milner, you lose your job. That is too bad. How selfish in me not to think of that before! Are you prepared for the loss?"

"I have long thought there was no other alternative."

"And what will you do then?" Mr. Jacobs inquired anxiously.

"Oh, I shall go home to a dear little town in the Berkshires, not far from Stockbridge, and resume my law work. Perhaps I may do a little writing. That is the schoolmaster's privilege, you know. I am still in the prime of life and shall not starve, although I shall miss you greatly, Mr. Jacobs. You and your wife will have to visit me and the tall maples that surround the old homestead and keep it fresh and sweet. Indeed you must."

"You can count upon us, good friend. Now I shall tell Mrs. Jacobs about your plan, and if it win her approval, it will be promptly adopted."

Mrs. Jacobs interposed no objection. In fact she was rather glad that her husband was to be relieved of the load, for she noticed it was beginning to cause him worriment. Although she felt that he was a born teacher, she realized that the times were not favorable for private schools. As he could no longer stand the financial loss, and had no desire to secure support from some friends who would have gladly helped, it was best to close. She knew, too, what grief it was to him to abandon the school, but no other course was possible.

Arrangements were duly made for the change. With the beginning of the Fall term of 1863 the boys found themselves the students of the Franklin Classical Institute, a large and well equipped academy of three hundred

pupils. All had grades and seats assigned them on the first day. As the school was about to be dismissed that afternoon and the boys were impatient for the street and home, Dr. Whippem, the principal, spoke briefly about the work of the new term and hoped all were satisfied with the tasks assigned. Suddenly a boy raised his hand and stood up. It was Daniel Hart, who was still rather small for a lad close to twelve.

"Well, my boy, what is the matter?" Dr. Whippem asked, amid the general excitement at the interruption.

"You said, Sir, you hoped all were satisfied," Daniel spoke in his very clear emphatic tones which seemed doubly loud from so small a lad. "Well, I am not satisfied."

"Not satisfied, Hart? What is the trouble?" and the Doctor smiled at the little fellow.

"This is the trouble, Sir. I have been graded in the primary and given a lesson in McGuffey's Second Reader and a review of the multiplication table. Why, I have studied the first book of Cæsar and am already in Algebra. That's the trouble, Sir." And he sat down.

How the boys roared at these words! The first day of a term is generally marked by amusing episodes, but this was an extraordinary happening. The peals of laughter could not be restrained for several moments.

"Hart," Dr. Whippem announced, "you will come tomorrow morning at nine to my office and receive your grade and studies. The school is dismissed."

It was endless relief for Mr. Jacobs when the day school was transferred, but he was silent on the subject. The six boarders who remained occupied one of the upper floors of the house and were no trouble. They continued their Hebrew studies on Sundays and on Wednesday evenings. This arrangement seemed of benefit to the boys as well. They mingled in a larger school life without losing their Jewish sympathies. In the broader world that dawned as the war ended, and the fresher interests of vital importance that arose on every side, the Hebrew Home School naturally lost its identity. Its founder devoted himself almost wholly to his synagogue—his work was over as a schoolmaster.

Many, many years after the school had closed its doors and the generation that had known of its work passed away, long after its name had been forgotten and its surviving pupils scattered from state to state, two men of middle age but apparently in excellent health entered the gates of the cemetery and after ascending a rather steep path that skirted the roadway stopped before a simple granite shaft. For some moments they stood in silence as they read once more the words which were inscribed thereon.

"How strange, Phil," one of the men exclaimed. "How strange that it should read 'Sacred to the memory of David and Ruth Jacobs!' Is that all which is sacred to the memory of those dear ones? A mere senseless granite

block! No, no, much more is sacred to David Jacobs." And his voice deepened with the emotions he strove to control.

"It is the universal custom, Bernard," Mr. Spanier replied. "It is the custom, which cannot be ridiculed or criticised. Of course we know, our memories of him and of her are sacred, too. As we meet here, not for the first time, it would almost seem that our school days are renewed and we are standing humble penitents at the open fireplace in his study. Do you remember, Bernard? You were older and perhaps did not need it. But how much we all owed to those fireside talks, confessions, resolves, encouragements! He was an extraordinary man. Why is his place still unfilled, why is his work forgotten?"

"Phil, you are wrong. He was not extraordinary. He was not a great scholar, not a world-renowned orator, not an accomplished educator in the present meaning. But he was a good man, who loved his boys and his work and did his duty faithfully as God showed him his duty. How comes it that in this world there are so many more brilliant, more learned, more eloquent men whose work is a sham while his was true? It is to make us more satisfied with the good men and women who are safe and firm and true—like a rock in sorrow and trial, like a torch in the darkness and gloom. I knew him better, Phil, than any of the boys, and I knew the big heart of the man!" And Mr. Gomez could not check the sob that broke the silence of that calm afternoon.

"Bernard, you have hit it exactly. It was his big heart that made him big—his heart combined with his mind ceaselessly active for the vital interests not the pettinesses in life. He made our religion real and not an antique toy to be admired on special gala days and neglected the rest of the year! How he strove to make its meaning and purpose clear and forceful to us boys! Do you recall his talk on Harry's bar mizvah? It was like consecrating a mediaeval knight, so holy, so impressive were his utterances. But the great world does not care." And Mr. Spanier impatiently walked up and down a few steps in his agitation.

"Again you are wrong, Phil. How hasty your opinion! How superficially you judge! The great world is nothing —the great outside world—when we are standing by this grave. It is the inner world of feeling and emotion that is everything now—greater, vaster, and nobler than the lordly universe without, with all its pomp and power and shallowness. Of our inner world, Phil, he was the center and mainspring. That is enough, is it not? Of how many can that be truthfully said? Human life today is so taken up with littlenesses that it is all circumference and no center."

Before Mr. Spanier could answer, Mr. Gomez took out of his pocket a neatly bound and printed little volume.

"Phil," he said, opening the book, "here is Mr. Jacobs' true epitaph. Let me read a few lines from a fine poem, 'The Ideal Minister,' based upon the Talmud, as rendered

by Nina Davis in her 'Songs of Exile,' which was issued by our Publication Society." And he read the words:

"Behold him humble and with naught of wealth,
Save for the righteousness within his soul
And knowledge stored abundantly therein,
More precious than the riches of the earth. . .
His fame is perfect and his name unstained. . .
His coming is a gladness; for he lures
The heart of them with wondrous sympathy
Embracing all their sorrows and their joy. . .
He stands
Before the Ark, and in his hands he holds
A thousand prayers, to rise as one, and bear
A people's anguish to the throne of God.
This is God's chosen Minister."