

SECOND-BEST PLACE IN THE WORLD

The Polish Children Are Settling Down in Pahiatua

IT was a windy day, overcast with rain, when we arrived at Pahiatua Polish Children's Camp, and in this treeless stretch of ground the buildings stood open to every wind. Every wind seemed to be blowing. In fact, it was a bare, dreary place. Then we turned a corner and the dreariness fled. The place burst into life and for the rest of the visit the camp seemed to blossom.

The Poles were crowded into a hall, the Kindergarten children in front, the oldest children at the back, children and adults squashed in everywhere. Outside at the back of the hall more children and adults were crowding. It was a medley of lively, smiling faces and chattering soft excited voices. Something special was happening here, something very special, for this was a rehearsal of the first stage performance ever presented

back of the stage the players were crowding round to show us their dresses. The costumes were so good that we were amazed to hear they had all been made at the camp out of odd scraps and pieces. There were traditional dresses of Polish peasants and saints, travel-worn clothes of refugees, angels with wings, and soldiers and nurses. The children were not intense now. They were laughing and chattering, as bright and vivacious as any group of children could be. These were very different children from the thin, sad-eyed refugees who came off the ship a few months ago. They had found their haven and with the adaptability of children they had blossomed forth again. As we went off to our cottage to sleep we could see the children standing round their teachers in the dormitories listening to the latest news. Then from all the dormitories came the sound of music. They were singing their closing hymn.

and girls also help the army cooks in the kitchen.

"And how do you manage with the teaching? Is it hard to make yourselves understood?"

"We use all sorts of ways to put across what we want. The other day I had to crawl on the floor to illustrate one point. The children find English easier to learn than the adults, but still it is quite hard for them. All their other lessons are in Polish. The camp has a complete staff of Polish teachers, also their own dentist and doctor."

The other girl joined in: "Look here is some dictation that has just been sent in. Those are the words we gave them and this is the interpretation of one child:

The paper	do pejper
The table	do tejbo
Around	laun
Yellow	egolen

But it was time for breakfast. Outside the children were hurrying along to the communal dining rooms.

"Dzien dobry, dzien dobry," they called, smiling and curtsying.

"Hullo, good morning," we called back.

"Dzien dobry."

"When visitors come we sometimes pretend we're Polish ourselves," the teachers said. "We say dzien dobry to everyone we meet."

Over in the hospital the New Zealand nurses and matron had the same story.

"We've gone the whole round of the hospital in silence sometimes with people who thought we were Polish. When we do talk, they look surprised and say, 'You speak a little English?'"

"And do the Poles make good patients?"

No Sores Now

"Very good," said the matron, "even though we can't always understand what they want. Of course the Polish nurses are a great help. We had a very difficult time when the children first arrived, clearing up their sores and general ill-health, but they have picked up wonderfully. Now there are no sores left."

In the shining sunny wards the children were playing with jigsaw puzzles. They stared curiously at us. Some were shy, most of them smiled.

In one of the class-rooms an art exhibition had been arranged. Round the walls were hung the best drawings of the past two months, and there were many of them.

Then the choir arrived to sing to us. Their voices were strong and melodious, they swing into rhythm with shining eyes. Soon they were singing a haunting tune in harmony, their faces solemn, their eyes remote. Too soon the treat was over.

Before we left we spoke with many of the children. To three of the questions we asked them, we received the same answer in each case.

"Do you like being here?"

"Oh, yes, very much."

"You wouldn't like to be back in Persia, at Isfahan?"

"Oh, no, no."

"Would you like to be anywhere else?"

"More than anything, back in Cracow."

—V.C.



Their Swings Needed Repairs After a Fortnight.

by this group of Polish children and their choice was ambitious, a Nativity play in four parts, written by one of the Polish teachers in the camp, with traditional carols and songs interspersed, for the Poles love music. Through the maze of small bodies we made our way and were shown our seats. The lights went out, the curtains went up and the play was on.

The audience was silent. It leant forward expectantly and the intensity on the face of the audience was only equalled by the intensity on the faces of the players. It was a deeply moving performance for these people, and for us too for that matter, for it was the story of exiles drawn together in adversity by the common bond of faith.

At the end of the performance the children rose obediently. The play had been long and the hour was late, but they were well behaved and orderly. The orphans filed out and across to their dormitories under the guidance of the adults. The children with mothers went off to their cottages. That was one of the saddest moments for me, to see the few who were able to leave holding tightly to their mothers' hands and the many who had to leave empty-handed.

But there was no gloom among the children. These emotional people switch quickly from sadness to joy. At the

I slept that night with the two English teachers, young New Zealand women who are teaching both the adults and children the English language. They love their work.

They Seldom Cry.

"When we first came," they told me, "we thought we'd find the children full of complexes, but as soon as we arrived at the gate we heard screams of laughter. They are just like other children and very happy. You saw the swings in their play area? Well, after the first fortnight they all had to be mended, the children had worn them right out. The first child we heard crying had fallen off the swings and we wondered at the sound. They cry so seldom. The adults are not so fortunate. They find it much harder to adapt themselves. There are really three classes of them—those with husbands overseas, those whose husbands are dead but whose children are with them, and those who have neither husbands nor children.

The Polish women work very hard here. They have very little life apart from the children, the Kindergarten teachers especially, for they even sleep in the same dormitories as the children and they are responsible for the cleaning and tidying of the dormitories as well as for the welfare of the children, their mending and washing. The women

Recipe to Darken Grey Hair

A Sydney Hairdresser Tells How To Darken Grey Hair.

Mr. Len Jeffrey, of Waverley, N.S.W., who has been a hairdresser for more than fifteen years, recently made the following statement:—"Anyone can prepare a simple mixture at home that will darken grey hair and make it soft and glossy. To a half-pint of water add one ounce of Bay Rum, a box of Orlex Compound, and 1 ounce of Glycerine. These ingredients can be bought at any chemist's at very little cost. Apply to the hair twice a week until the desired shade is obtained. This should make a grey-haired person appear 10 to 20 years younger. It does not discolour the scalp, is not sticky or greasy, and does not rub off."

CLINTON-WILLIAMS PTY. LTD.,
38 Shortland St., Auckland. 0.48



Mentmore

FOUNTAIN PENS

For writing ease and long service at low cost, choose one of the three distinguished Mentmore models with the Osmi Iridium pointed 14 carat gold nib. Available in a choice of colours.

Prices:

Mentmore Supreme
14 ct. Gold Nib - 15/3
Mentmore Diploma
14 ct. Gold Nib - 17/6
Mentmore Auto-Flow
14 ct. Gold Nib - 24/6

MENTMORE

Made in England.