

nationally, strengthened. Therefore let us hope that the prophet Hosea's third day is about to dawn for a new Poland. May Skarga's prophecy be fulfilled and a future Poland become a jewel of West-European culture and civilization. May this future Poland recognize most completely its debt to its Savonarola and, by everywhere forming strong personalities and true spiritual values, produce and increase true life. If this takes place, then Skarga has not lived in vain, and his lofty spirit will be in future the warning voice, the teacher and guardian of his people, which he loved so dearly and for which he would have been so willing a sacrifice. A figure like that of Skarga, Father Peter Semenenko C. R. (1813 to 1886), one of the greatest Polish minds and thinkers, calls to his countrymen, "O Polish People, you have a message from God, God tells you it himself! Do not fear, you do live! . . . Be but true to God and you shall live. Do not believe your own fears when it shall appear that you are dying,—no, you are living, you shall live, yes, you must live! You are immortal since you have a message from God. Just be true, and the truer you are the more quickly will that come to pass which has been told to you." (Page 99 of his Polish work on *God's Ideal in Polish History*, Cracow, 1892.) To which we shall add in conclusion his words from page 32: "For the Lord hath graced Poland with a wreath and aureole of sacrifice and martyrdom—and thus consecrated and chosen her as his servant."

## HEBREW EDUCATION IN SCHOOL AND SOCIETY.

BY FLETCHER H. SWIFT.

### II. WOMAN AND THE EDUCATION OF GIRLS.

"House and riches are an inheritance from fathers:  
But a prudent wife is from Jehovah."—Proverbs xix, 14.

"A worthy woman who can find?  
For her price is far above rubies."—Proverbs xxxi. 10.

THAT woman held a relatively higher status in earlier than in later times seems evident from the custom, then in vogue, of tracing the descent through the mother<sup>85</sup> and from the part played in public affairs by such women as Deborah,<sup>86</sup> Jael,<sup>87</sup> by the "wise woman"

<sup>85</sup> The descent of Esau's children is traced through their mothers, Gen. xxxvi. Abraham married Sarah the daughter of his father, but not of his mother.

<sup>86</sup> Judges iv and v.

<sup>87</sup> Judges iv. 18-24.

of Tekoa<sup>88</sup> and by the wise woman of Abel.<sup>89</sup> But even in the period of nomadism woman was distinctly a chattel and a servant, first of her father and then of her husband who bought her from her father. Progress in civilization which brought an ever enlarging intellectual sphere to man confined woman more and more to narrow fields of religious and domestic duties, and in each of these fields placed upon her restrictions which stamped her as man's religious, intellectual and social inferior.

It is impossible to say when these restrictions began. Some of them probably date back to tribal days and customs. Among the most conspicuous restrictions of later times were those debarring women from wearing the phylacteries, from reciting the shema, from entering the main space of the synagogue.<sup>90</sup> Any consideration of the religious restrictions and privileges of women must take into account the principle which finds later development in the Talmud that women are excused from fulfilling all positive commandments the fulfilment of which depends on a fixed time or season. The reason for the exemption is obvious. Woman, on account of domestic and physical conditions, would at certain times, be incapacitated for performing rites the observance of which is dependent upon a particular time.

Peritz maintains that these restrictions were distinctly a later development. He writes: "The Hebrews. . . in the earlier periods of their history, exhibit no tendency to discriminate between man and woman so far as regards participation in religious practices, but woman participates in all the essentials of the cult, both as worshiper and official; only in later time, with the progress in the development of the cult itself, a tendency appears, not so much, however, to exclude woman from the cult, as rather to make man prominent in it."<sup>91</sup>

Even if Peritz's view be accepted, the fact remains that in the home as well as in the synagogue the position of woman was a subordinate one. The father was given the chief place in religious services and rites. The training and instruction of the sons from their earliest years were in his hands. The mother might assist in the education of the sons but only as a subordinate; her primary

<sup>88</sup> 2 Samuel xiv. 1-23.

<sup>89</sup> 2 Samuel xx. 16-22.

<sup>90</sup> Carl H. Cornill, *The Culture of Ancient Israel*, p. 99.

<sup>91</sup> I. J. Peritz, "Woman in the Ancient Hebrew Cult," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, XVII, 114d. Peritz opposes the commonly accepted views of Stade, Benziger, Nowack and others. It is doubtful whether the evidence he presents will be considered convincing at all points.

duties were the education of the members of the inferior sex, her daughters, and the care of her household.

Daughters were less esteemed and less welcome than sons: "In the Talmud we find three times the saying: 'Well to him whose children are boys, woe to him whose children are girls.' In the Old Testament there is nothing like this directly expressed, but without doubt this is what the Israelite of old thought."<sup>92</sup>

It must not be supposed, however, that love and respect were lacking. Many passages reveal the love and tenderness in which wife and mother were held. A loving wife is declared to be a gift from Yahweh,<sup>93</sup> and a worthy woman is more precious than rubies.<sup>94</sup> To express the highest degree of sadness the poet writes, "I bowed down mourning, as one that bewaileth his mother."<sup>95</sup>

The following extract from Proverbs xxxi contains the most complete formulation of the ancient Hebrew ideal of womanhood.<sup>96</sup>

"A worthy woman who can find?  
For her price is far above rubies.

"The heart of her husband trusteth in her,  
And he shall have no lack of gain.

"She doeth him good and not evil  
All the days of her life.

"She seeketh wool and flax  
And worketh willingly with her hands.

"She is like the merchant-ships;  
She bringeth her food from afar.

"She riseth also while it is yet night,  
And giveth food to her household,  
And their task to her maidens.

"She considereth a field, and buyeth it:  
With the fruit of her hands she planteth a vineyard.

"She girdeth her loins with strength,  
And maketh strong her arms.

"She perceiveth that her merchandise is profitable;  
Her lamp goeth not out by night.

"She layeth her hands to the distaff,  
And her hands hold the spindle.

<sup>92</sup> C. H. Cornill, *The Culture of Ancient Israel*, p. 97a.

<sup>93</sup> Proverbs xix. 14.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, xxxi. 10.

<sup>95</sup> Psalms xxxv. 14; C. H. Cornill, *The Culture of Ancient Israel*, p. 93.

<sup>96</sup> Proverbs xxxi. 10-31.

"She spreadeth out her hand to the poor;  
Yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

"She is not afraid of the snow for her household;  
For all her household are clothed with scarlet.

"She maketh for herself carpets of tapestry;  
Her clothing is fine linen and purple.

"Her husband is known in the gates,  
When he sitteth among the elders of the land.

"She maketh linen garments and selleth them;  
And delivereth girdles unto the merchant.

"Strength and dignity are her clothing;  
And she laugheth at the time to come.

"She openeth her mouth with wisdom;  
And the law of kindness is on her tongue.

"She looketh well to the ways of her household,  
And eateth not the bread of idleness.

"Her children rise up, and call her blessed;  
Her husband *also*, and he praiseth her, *saying*:

"Many daughters have done worthily,  
But thou excellest them all.

"Grace is deceitful, and beauty is vain:  
*But* a woman that feareth Jehovah, she shall be praised.

"Give her of the fruit of her hands;  
And let her works praise her in the gates."

In the above passage, the home is represented as woman's highest sphere. There is not the slightest hint of the recognition of any need for higher intellectual development. This is all the more significant as the passage belongs to the Greek period. The most extolled virtues of the woman here described are piety, mercy, industry, foresight, thrift, sound practical judgment and devotion to her husband's interests. She spins and weaves wool, linen, silk and tapestry. She carries on commercial enterprises such as buying a field and selling linen garments. She superintends her household and is devout in the performance of her religious duties.

The home was *par excellence* the institution where girls received their education. The schools, elementary and higher, were open to boys and men only. In some instances girls may have received advanced instruction through private lessons given in the home, but if such cases occurred at all they were undoubtedly rare. Festivals,

the temple and the synagogue were the chief institutions which exerted an educative influence upon girls and women outside the home. Although women were not counted as members of the synagogue and were not permitted to lead in any of its services, nevertheless they were zealous attendants at its services. Many recorded incidents bear witness to the familiarity of the Jewish women with the Scriptures. The term *mater synagogae* appear as a title of honor beside the term *pater synagogae* among inscriptions found in southern Italy.<sup>97</sup>

Woman's chief functions were to honor God, care for her home, train her children, serve and please her husband. The aim of girls' education was to produce efficient and industrious homemakers, obedient, virtuous, godfearing wives and daughters. The details of girls' education varied from generation to generation with changes in habitat, modes of living, social and religious institutions and laws, but the principles determining its scope and limits were to a large extent unchanging. From earliest times it included domestic duties, music, dancing, industrial occupations, religion, manners, and morals. The importance of many of these activities and the nature and method of the instruction and training has been sufficiently set forth in preceding paragraphs to make any further presentation here unnecessary. The sex division of labor and the exclusion of women from many religious duties and responsibilities resulted in many differences in the education of boys and girls. The domestic and industrial occupations of girls and women included cooking, spinning, weaving, dyeing, caring for flocks, guarding vineyards, gathering harvests, grinding grain, caring for children and managing slaves.

Later times added in some cases at least reading, writing and enough knowledge of reckoning, weights, measures and money to enable the prospective wife to carry on the business of her household. It is impossible to state how early and to what extent a knowledge of the three R's became prevalent. The fact that Queen Jezebel is stated to have written letters in Ahab's name to the elders of Naboth's village<sup>98</sup> might seem an argument for a knowledge of these arts by the women of the monarchical period. But as has already been pointed out, Jezebel may have employed a scribe, and the facts that she was a queen and that she was a foreigner, a Phoenician, forbid any general inferences.

<sup>97</sup> W. Bacher, "Synagogue," *Hasting's Bible Dictionary*, IV, 640b.

<sup>98</sup> 1 Kings xxi. 8.