

was very creditably rendered by Miss Helene Fischer, after which an essay was read by Mr. Jacob Neuman, entitled "Intellectuality of the Future Generation," which was well received.

Rev. E. N. Calisch, of Richmond, delivered a lecture in our city on Tuesday last, under the auspices of the M. L. C., for the benefit of the poor, choosing for his subject, "Universality of Religion." The discourse was an able and exhaustive discussion of the subject, and was delivered in the speaker's usual forceful and impressive manner. It is hoped by his many appreciative hearers that they will have the pleasure of hearing him again at an early date in our midst.

A fashionable "Afternoon tea" was given Tuesday at the residence of Miss Senora Kadden in honor of her guest, Miss Florence Leopold, of Philadelphia.

Among the visitors who spent a most pleasant time in our city last week were Misses Sara Hutzler, Fannie Mitteldorfer, Daniella Stern, Tillie Krakauer and Mollie Hutzler, also Messrs. Gaston Kraker and Meno Mitteldorfer.

Misses Mary and Helen Rosenstock are visiting friends in Richmond.

Mr. Milton Kadden, of Baltimore is here visiting relatives.

Miss Helen Eigenbrun and Mr. Nathan Reiss who attended the Kaufman-Morris nuptials in Tarboro, N. C., returned home much pleased with their visit.

Miss Rosa Weipberg has left for Brunswick, Ga., to spend the remaining winter months.

Mr. Louis Weinberg, Misses Ida Weinberg, Mary L. Rosenstock, Helen Rosenstock and Frankie Reiss, of this city, attended the J. L. and S. C. hop in Richmond on Monday night.

VIRGINIA.

The Free-Pew System.

"To be free or not to be free?" that is the question. Whether it is possible for a church to abolish pew rental and still support itself is a topic of general discussion and superlative importance. The religious press is giving no little attention to the matter. With hardly an exception, those churches which have tried the free-pew system pronounce it not only practicable, but successful. "It levels all class distinctions," says the *Christian at Work* (Methodist), "and makes the church what it should be—a place where rich and poor, high and low meet together for the worship of God on one and the same footing." One of the last of metropolitan churches to try the experiment—the Madison Avenue Presbyterian, of New York—reports that the receipts for the year from voluntary subscriptions almost balanced the expenditures, and then the deficit was quickly made good.

JOSEF ISRAELS.

Life of the Man Who Painted "Alone" in the World's Fair Holland Exhibit.

Josef Israels was born on January 27, 1827, in the little commercial city of Groningen, in North Holland. As his name indicates, he came of a Jewish family, says the *Collector*. He hoped to become a rabbi, studied Hebrew, and buried himself in the Talmud, but when

he left school his father, who was a money changer and tender in a small way, set him to work in his shop. It was remarked of this period of his career that when he went on errands for his father to the neighboring office of the rich banker, Meesdag, the son of the latter, now known as the marine painter, H. W. Meesdag, could not have imagined in his wildest dreams that in time to come some of his costliest masterpieces would form part of the magnificent collection of this poor, shabby little Jewish boy running errands in all weathers with his father's meager money bag under his arm.

But in his small way Papa Israels prospered, and when the fire of art, which had been awakened in Josef's soul, manifested itself, the old man scraped his savings together and sent him to Amsterdam to become the pupil of the then fashionable painter, Jan Kruseman. He was provided with a home in a pious Jewish household in the Ghetto of Amsterdam, and the crooked street and dark pictureque shops of this quarter, crowded with the life of a people who still preserve some of the romantic character of their Oriental origin, soon became familiar to the little, shrill voiced student, who found in them the same charm which had been discovered by Rembrandt generations before.

Kruseman taught him to paint as he understood it. He was a diligent scholar, imitated his master with big historical compositions and Italian peasant pictures, painted by set rules. He remained a year with Kruseman, and in 1845 went to Paris, where he spent a little time in the studio of Picot, and then secured admission to the Ecole des Beaux Arts and the studio of Paul Delaroche. He was timid and nervous and made few friends. He was poor and shabby, and knew hunger while he was studying painting in the Louvre and threading the crowds at the public exhibitions with faltering feet. The revolution of 1848 sent him back to Holland, and in a cheap room in Amsterdam he settled to history, painting pictures which he sold for from fifteen to twenty gulden, about enough to pay for his materials and bread and cheese. In 1855 he exhibited an historical composition in Paris. But his next appearance there was to be in a transformed shape.

Hard work and poor living in Amsterdam wore him down, and he went to a little fishing village near Haarlem, Zantvoort, where he might live cheaply and build up his health. In this lost corner of the Dunes he existed solitary, in the cabin of a ship carpenter, eating and sleeping as the poor family did, and as Millet at about the same time commenced to do at Rabison. And as in Millet's case, whom of all painters he most resembles in feeling, his surroundings aroused within him the dormant inspirations which were to decide his future. Until now he had been studying art—a thing of artificial creation. Here was nature, the poetry of simple life, the beauty of simple things, as they actually existed not as men invented them. So he commenced to be a student again.

In the Salon of 1857 appeared two pictures by Josef Israels, "Children in the Sea" and "Evening on the Shore," two pictures whose fresh and simple charm caused Paris to open her eyes. Israels found himself out, and

really started on his career. For seven years after his return to Amsterdam from that momentous vacation at Zantvoort, he worked in his studio in the Rozengracht, making excursions into new fields of inspiration, and sending out pictures which made him friends of the great critics of Paris, and of the art lovers of Holland and of France. In 1862 he conquered the collectors of Great Britain. What this means for any artist may be inferred from the fact that one English collector alone, Mr. Forbes, owned over forty of his pictures. The collections of Scotland are rich in them. Scarcely a collection of any quality in the United States is without an example. Certainly none is complete without one.

In 1863 Israels married the daughter of an attorney of Groningen and after residing for a time at Scheveningen, settled at The Hague. His home and studio are the Koninginnegracht, one of the genuine, quiet Dutch streets which seem to have outlived centuries, a street of little, red roofed houses, traversed by a canal bordered with trees. Behind his house is a garden in which has been erected the glass studio in which the painter works. One portion of this studio, which is screened off and fitted up as a cottage interior, has furnished the background for many a famous picture. His house proper is rich in his collections. His mode of life is perfectly regular. At nine every morning he takes his walk abroad. At ten he is at the easel. The rest the world knows from his works.

Personally Josef Israels is a man of small stature, white bearded, with a wrinkled face and black eyes that flash behind his spectacles. He is a man of nerves and enthusiasm, talking with his hands as well as with his high pitched voice. Even when he is at work he breaks off to stride up and down with quick steps, his hands behind his back, meditating upon some idea which has suddenly suggested itself. His incessant activity of mind and body is in curious contrast to the peaceful simplicity and the profound repose which characterize his productions. It would seem as if his pictures absorbed all those qualities of nature which he observes and feels merely to transfer them to canvas. He is as great a painter in water colors as in oils. The difference between these materials in his hands is but one of comparative strength. The treatment and the feeling are identical. He has been called the greatest of modern Dutch painters, but this does him scanty justice. In his vein he is the greatest painter living, as Millet, with whom his compatriots are fond of comparing him, was in his day.

But his art is less somber and pessimistic than Millet's. To the latter the peasant was a hopeless helot, condemned to perpetual poverty and servitude, and to the ignorance which belongs to and is inevitable to such conditions. Of a certain class of French peasantry this is true. Israel's peasants are also poor; they are subject to grievous afflictions. His toilers of the sea are bravers of desperate perils for a bare livelihood. But they are not abandoned to despair. It is a question of temperament in the artist, and of environment. Millet was a pioneer. By the time Israels struck the right road, the ground was ready broken and comparatively ready for the sower.