

**MARY
HAZELTON
BLANCHARD
WADE**

A young girl with dark hair tied in a bun, wearing a red floral shirt, is reaching up and smiling. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with greenery and a blue fence.

**OUR
LITTLE
JEWISH
COUSIN**

Mary Hazelton Blanchard Wade

Our Little Jewish Cousin

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Contact: DigiCat@okpublishing.info



TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Preface](#)

[CHAPTER I.](#)

[CHAPTER II.](#)

[CHAPTER III.](#)

[CHAPTER IV.](#)

[CHAPTER V.](#)

[CHAPTER VI.](#)

[CHAPTER VII.](#)

[CHAPTER VIII.](#)

Preface

[Table of Contents](#)

IN whatever direction you may travel,—north, south, east, or west,—you will doubtless meet some of your little black-eyed Jewish cousins. They live among us here in America. They also dwell in the countries far away across the wide ocean.

Why are they so scattered, you may ask. Is there no country which is really theirs, and which is ruled over by some one they have chosen? Is there not some place where they can gather together happily whenever they please? The answer is always no.

They cannot say of this land or of that, "It is ours," for they are homeless. Palestine, which was once theirs, is now in the hands of the Turks. Jerusalem, the city they love best in the whole world, is in the power of those who look with scorn upon the Jewish people.

For many centuries they have been scattered far and wide. Their children learn to speak the language of the country where they happen to be born. They play the games and dress in the fashion of that country.

What is it that keeps them Jews? It is their religion, and their religion alone. It binds them as closely together now as it did in the days when they worshipped in the great temple at Jerusalem, two thousand years ago.

These Jewish cousins would say to us, "Our people have suffered greatly. Yet they do not lose courage. Our parents tell us stories of the glorious past, over and over again. They will not let us forget it, and they teach us to hope for the

time when Jerusalem will again be ours, and a new temple, in which we shall be free to worship, will stand upon the spot where the old one was destroyed."



CHAPTER I.

Table of Contents

THE PLACE OF WAILING

"COME, Esther! Come, Solomon! I am waiting for you," cried a woman's voice.

The two children were in the courtyard, but, when they heard their mother calling, they ran into the house at once.

They knew why they were called, for it was Friday afternoon. Every week at this time they went to the "Place of Wailing" with their parents to weep over the troubles of their people and to think of the old days of Jerusalem, before the Romans conquered the city.

"Esther, your hair needs brushing. Solomon, make your hands and face as clean as possible," said their mother, as she looked at the children.

She loved them very dearly. She was proud of them, too. Solomon was a bright, clever boy, quick in his studies, while Esther was really beautiful. Her glossy black hair hung in long curls down her back. Her black eyes were soft and loving. Her skin was of a pale olive tint, and her cheeks were often flushed a delicate pink.

Her mother looked tenderly at her as she brushed the little girl's hair.

"Mamma, grandma says I look ever so much as you did when you were my age," said Esther, as she trudged by her mother's side down the narrow street.

"Yes, yes, my child, I have heard her say so. But never mind your looks or mine now. Think of where we are going."

It was a hot walk. The sun was shining brightly. The street, the stone houses, everything around shone dusty gray in colour. There were no sidewalks. When a camel drew near with his load, or a horseman passed by, Esther had to walk close to the walls of the houses for fear the animals would rub against her.

She was born in this old city of Jerusalem. She had never been far away from it, and knew little of the wide streets and broad sidewalks found in many other cities.

She had sometimes heard her father and mother talk of their life in Spain. They came from that country before Esther and her brother were born. It was a long journey, but they had said, "We cannot be happy anywhere except in Jerusalem. That alone is the home of our people."

Esther's father might have grown rich in Spain. He was a trader. He understood his business well. But in Jerusalem it was harder for him to get money.

What a strange name for the place where the family were going this afternoon! But it well deserved to be called "The Place of Wailing." It was a dark, dreary court with stone walls on three sides of it. Many Jews were already there when Esther and her people arrived.