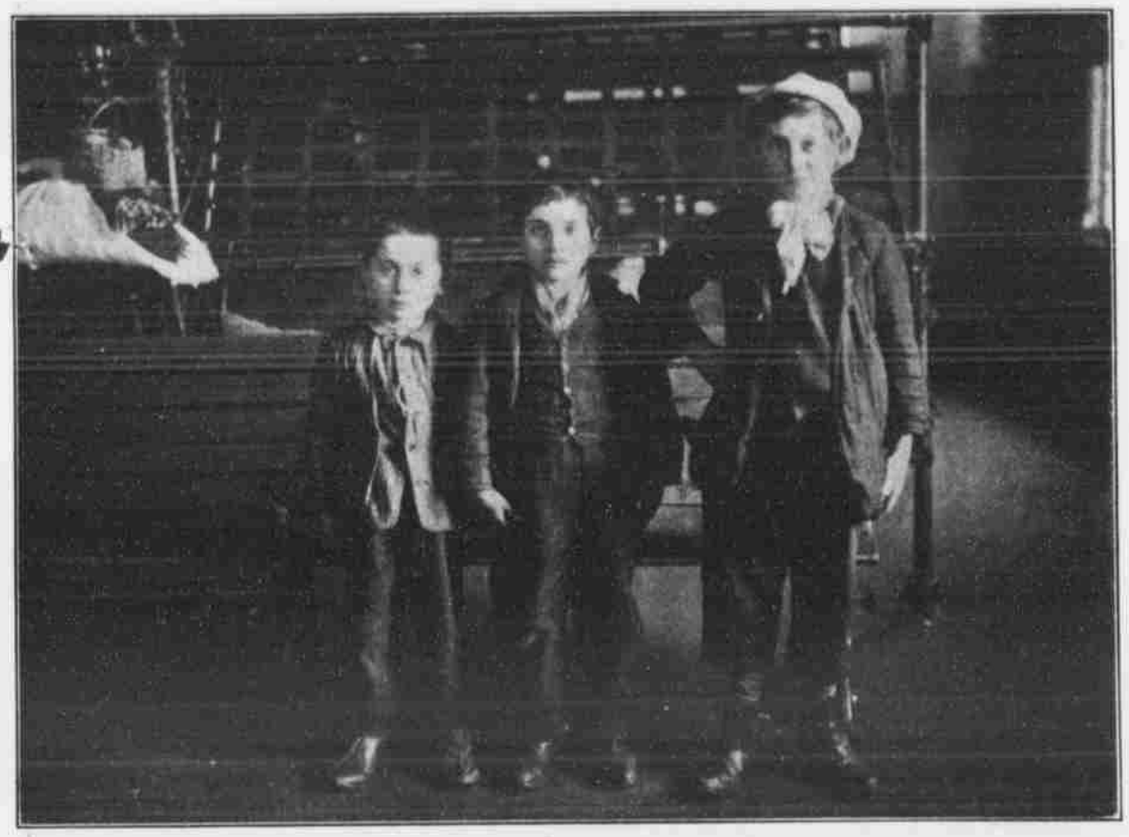
Children Who Are Adopted by Uncle Sam



THE HERO OF THE STORY AND TWO OF HIS SMALL CHUMS, JEWISH BROTHERS FROM RUSSIA.

THREE GIRLS FROM THE OLD WORLD—ON THE RIGHT AN ARAB, IN THE CENTER A POLE AND ON THE LEFT AN ITALIAN.

(Copyright, 1903, by Thomas G. Visk.)

"CHEESE it, Araby, Polack, Russky, Italy!" cried the gold-capped keeper of the women and children's detention room in the Ellis Island immigrant receiving station. He accompanied his words by an energetic wave of the hands, and a dozen laughing boys and girls fell reluctantly away from his coat tails and legs.

Then the man turned to the visitor.

"Lively brats, ain't they—these adopted kids of Uncle Sam?" he queried.

"Yes," agreed the other, "they're as full of mischief as the native born."

"Umph!" grunted the keeper, "they're a sight worse, and all the hundreds who pass through the island every day in the year are just like 'em. They keep this bit of land filled with trouble."

He looked around the great room, lighted by a dozen windows, until, in a far corner, and high over the heads of the 200 occupants of long, low benches and gaudily clad groups, standing patiently alongside bandana-covered baggage, he beheld a boy swinging by his heels from one of the wire cots suspended from the wall.

"Look at that youngster," he said. "He's been here three months—he and his mother—waiting for his sister to get out of the hospital across the island, where she's been having all the ills that American boys and girls are heirs to. She started in with measles the day she landed and since then she's had scarlet fever, mumps, chickenpox and what not one after the other. In the meantime that boy and his ma have been kept here, though they've been passed for landing, for it's a rule to detain healthy members of the family until the sick ones are ready to go ashore with them. Nearly all of the youngsters you see sprawling all around are here for the same reason. That's why I say Uncle Sam is their foster father, because eventually they'll get safely ashore.

"Well, that kid—he's from Naples, his daddy, in the detention room for men across the hall, says—has been making more trouble for me than a half dozen Yankee boys could think of all together. He started in the second day he was here to carve up that little black-eyed Araby girl over there, because she wouldn't let him kiss her, and I not only had to take away his pocketknife, but I had to separate the two mothers, who were pounding each other over the heads with their fists for all they were worth. Next day the boy tried to whip all the other boys at one and the same time, with the result that I was compelled to pull him out from under a pile of small bodies representing every country in Europe and a few in Asia. I thought that would settle him, because he received such a good licking, but it didn't. Fact is, he's a born fighter and he's like the proverbial flea—you can't get your finger on him until it's too late. Why, he's all around the place at his own sweet will, and how he manages it, I don't know. Just when I think he's safely locked in this room I'll discover that he's missing and, on searching for him, find him over with his father entertaining the men with his Italian songs, or in the dining room stealing hunks of rye bread, or over at the hospital trying to get in to see his sister. He's the ringleader in all sorts of mischief, and, I tell you, he keeps me earning my money."

The keeper grinned as he saw the boy, in an effort to scramble down from the bunk, miss his footing and sprawl ignominiously on the slate floor. Then, as the lad picked himself up and, despite the evident hard tumble, walked away with a swagger, meant to show that he wasn't hurt, the man spoke admiringly:

"He's a plucy lad and a bright one. During the time he's been here he's managed to pick up a good deal of English and he can make out pretty well what I say to him. One day not long ago I told him about our president and he seemed much interested. The next day he came up to me and, half in Italian and half in English, made me understand that he's been thinking very hard about what I'd said about the president, and he believed he'd like to be president some day. When I told him that he couldn't because he'd been born in Italy, his face fell and he seemed much disappointed.

"In order to make him feel better—I've taken quite a fancy to him—I tried to explain that, although he couldn't be president, he could be many other things, and I ended up by saying that the best thing he could be was a good citizen. He asked me to explain what that meant, and I did as best as I could. In the middle of the talk I was called away by something and forgot about the boy until I found him tugging at my arm an hour or so later.

"What do you want, Italy?" I said.

"'Please, sir,' he answered—all these children are very polite, although you wouldn't expect it—'I'm going to be—'"

Shrieks and shouts from the center of the room hurriedly drew the keeper thither, where he was instantly surrounded by two tearful women and their dozen offspring, equally divided. For full five minutes he listened to their chattering, then he led one of the gaudily clad mothers and her children to another section of the room and seated them on a bench. After he had helped bring up the family's bundles, he returned and took up the interrupted talk.

"That boy said, 'I'm going to be a good citizen.' And he was so much in earnest that I'm willing to wager that he'll make good his words. Why, he's actually begun punching the other boys because they won't take off their caps to and salute the little American flag that he got for a Christmas present."

The guide paused to reflect.

"Maybe the missionaries didn't mean it to have that effect, but the tree that they had here Christmas has stirred up a lot of trouble for me. That tree was indirectly responsible for the squabble I've just settled. Near as I could make out, it began over an attempt of one of the daughters of one family to steal a doll from the daughter of the other woman. Every girl here got a doll from the tree, but many of them have since tried to become mothers of larger families, with the results that their days and their mothers' days and my days especially have been full of trouble.

"But that tree has showed me one thing—how quickly and easily the children of all nations—even the roaming Arabians—take up with American ways. Until Christmas day the boys had never played with marbles—had never seen 'em, so far as I can find out—but an hour after they had received their bags of marbles, along with other gifts of apples, oranges and candies, they were playing with them just like a native born would. And the girls—well, the dear little things seemed to understand what the dolls were for the minute they saw them on the tree, and when they were handed around the first thing they did was to clasp the china babies to their breasts and croon childish lullabies to them in fifty different tongues. They also stood the dolls on their heads and critically examined the clothes, just as my little daughter does. And whenever one of the girls has happened to break her doll, it has almost broken her heart, just as with my little girl. Why, that mite from Poland cried all day yesterday and wouldn't be comforted until sleep overtook her because her doll, in falling, lost the bigger part of its face. Poor little girl, it was a great loss to her, because it was her first doll. Since then she and her older sister have been sharing the latter's doll between them and lavishing all the love on it that any two little American girls possibly could.

"The only plaything that the boys seem to have in common with our youngsters when they land is the pocketknife, and this is exhibited in all states of imperfection. The girls don't bring over a toy of any sort—not even a miserable rag doll. Fact is, I've gathered from my talks with their mothers that their daughters never knew about dolls in the old country.

"But there's one game that all the children seem to know—ring-around-a-rosy. No one has to teach them that, no matter where they hail from. Let a shipload of boys and girls come into this room and, before they've been here half an hour, they will be dancing around in circles and singing in their native tongues the same song that your babies and mine sing when they and their playmates gather in the sitting room or the yard and play that good old game of 'ring-around-a-rosy.'"

The keeper looked at his watch.

"Time to let in some of the fathers to see their families," he said. "We let 'em in in batches for ten or fifteen minutes once a day."

He left the room, returning in a few minutes with a half dozen stolid looking men behind him.

"Araby, Russky, Polack, Italy," he shouted, "pop—dad—fadder!"

On the instant a hundred children tore towards the men, and those whose fathers were in the group shouted and laughed as they scrambled around their parents' legs and held on to their hands as they moved towards their wives. But the others, openly showing their disappointment, sought the keeper—their refuge and adviser in all sort of trouble—and reproached him in childish jabber. The keeper waved his hand.

"Next," he said, kindly; "next—in a minute," and immediately the little faces brightened and little legs scampered away to tell mothers of the good news.

"They all show wonderful love for their fathers," said the keeper. "Look how the men are letting the kids crawl all over them and pull their hair and whiskers."

Beware of Wireless Kiss

"George, dear, how could I send a kiss across the ocean by the wireless telegraph?"

"A kiss, my love? That's something of a puzzle. No doubt it could be launched all right, but would it get there and get there intact? Of course if it flew too high the four winds of heaven would be apt to snatch it up and whirl it anywhere save in the right direction. And then again, if it dipped low it would catch a briny flavor from the ocean that would ruin it for all commercial purposes. I'm afraid, my dear, that science can't grapple with this problem just yet. Of course it wouldn't do to give your kiss to Sig. Marconi and ask him to forward it. The young lady who is about to entrust her happiness in his keeping might object to this. You must either wait, my love, or send your kisses by mail prepaid, with a stamp inclosed for return."

"Thank you, dear. I was sure you would know all about it.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Council Bluffs Library

(Continued from Third Page.)

rick Smyth, Mrs. M. L. Everett, C. R. Tyler, Dr. J. H. Cleaver, J. J. Stewart and Victor E Bender. Mr. Bender was appointed by Mayor Morgan to fill the unexpired term of Congressman Walter I. Smith, who resigned. The trustees were formerly elected by the city council, but the law subsequently provided for their appointment by the mayor. Trustee W. S. Baird was mainly instrumental in securing the handsome donation of $70,000 from Mr. Carnegie for a library building.

The present librarian is Mrs. M. E. Dailey, a prominent club woman of the city and widow of the late Colonel D. B. Dailey, one of the pioneers in the movement for the establishment of a free public library in Council Bluffs. The library is at present located in commodious rooms in the Merriam block and contains nearly 20,000 volumes in its circulating department. It has also an excellent reference library and several thousand books in the government department.

Carpenter's Letter

(Continued from Sixth Page.)

into it to buy a lead pencil. He offered me one made in New York, and when I asked him if he handled other American goods, took me through rooms filled with unit bookcases, desks and office furniture, and showed me cases of American inks, pencils and pens. As I looked at them he said:

"I can sell American goods, but I don't care especially to do so, for your people do not watch my interests nor try to save money for me. Only last month I had a customer who wanted a certain brand of American pen. I wrote a New York exporter to send me three boxes by mail, and supposed that the charges would be about 20 cents. The exporter sent the pens by express, so that they cost me, in commissions and freights, $3.20, and the result was that I lost on the transaction. This is a little thing, but it is only one of many in which the carelessness of you Americans causes us to lose money."

FRANK G. CARPENTER.