

Florence Reizenstein 57

March 26, 1901—June 5, 1970

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

Florence Reizenstein, may her memory be as a blessing.

Her tragic death leaves a wound in the Jewish community, and in the larger community, that will not soon heal. Nor, not soon will such another star rise in the social firmament which combines, in such full measure, such concern for human relations, love of Israel, and devotion to community. Mrs. Louis J. Reizenstein will ever be known as a woman who spoke her conscience, no matter the cost. She was not only the keeper of the community conscience; she was the community conscience. And, in Prophetic terms, Florence was the "still, small voice" of conscience.

In all of the storied ethic of the Jewish people, known as the "Wisdom Literature", there is drawn no more nearly perfect picture of such a one as Florence Reizenstein as has been drawn in the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs.

*"A woman of valor who can find?
"Far above rubies are her worth."*

A valorous woman, she, in questing every highway and by-way to plan the march toward civil rights and human rights for all, without regard for race, color, or creed.

*"Her lamp goeth not out by night.
"She girds herself with strength."*

Tireless she was in her efforts. She worked with vigor on behalf of the weak, the poor, the discriminated, the disadvantaged, the persecuted of her people and of her fellow peoples. She was a vigorous defender; a formidable opponent, felling an adversary with a smile and a quiet word.

*"She opens her hand to the poor,
"And extends her hands to the needy."*

Near and far, her gentle hand touched the fevered brow of the tempest-tossed at home, overseas, and in Israel.

*"Strength and honor are her garb,
"She smiles confidently at the future."*

Florence was a Lady in the purest, noblest, Jewish sense of the word. She

Proverbs 31

wore dignity as though born to that robe.

And her smile, sometimes sad and gently tolerant for those who would have to learn another day, was ever-ready, humorous, and most often sunny. She knew justice must triumph. And she went about helping it, because she understood there was much work to be done against that day when the Messiah will come.

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

Distinguished daughter of Israel, Florence excelled in the thing we all lack most: love for the face of each human being, rather than for faceless humanity.

"Give her of the fruit of her hands,

"And let her own works praise her in the gates."

The fruit of her hands are on the branches of the Jewish tree of life.

And, her own works praise her from the gates of this city to the Gates of Eternity.

Thus, the thirty-first chapter of Proverbs pays glowing tribute to dearly beloved Florence Reizenstein — and closes the book!