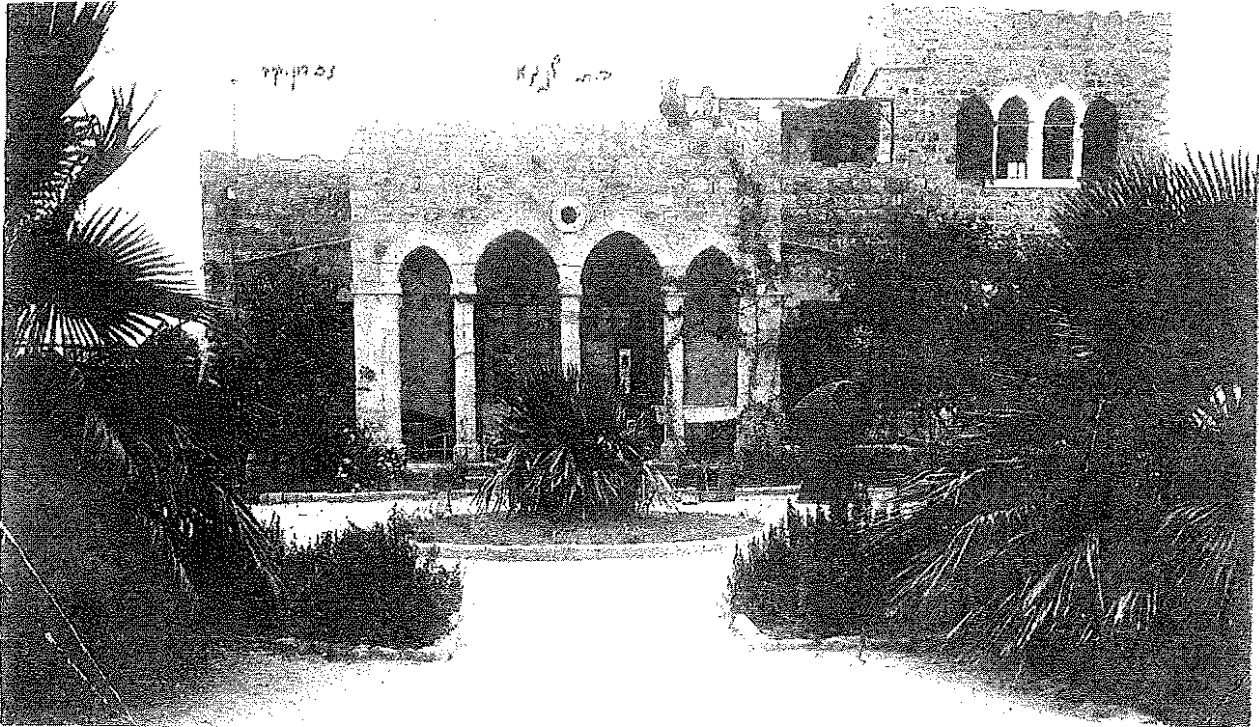


Epilogue

Saltatha said "My father, you have spoken well; you have told me that Heaven is very beautiful; tell me now one thing more. Is it more beautiful than the country of the musk-ox in summer, when sometimes the mist blows over the lakes, and sometimes the water is blue, and the loons cry very often?"

Warburton Pike, The Barren Ground of Northern Canada.



The Lange House 1922

What is real ? "This stone," said Dr. Johnson , as he kicked it.

In Johnson's terms the Lange estate is a plot of land on a hill near the town of Zikhron Ya'akov. But when my mother spoke of "Zikhron Ya'akov," more familiarly "Zikhron," she conjured up a castle inhabited by the spirit of her sister Nita , where Friedlanders, Yellins and Bentwiches gathered to consecrate weddings, or celebrate Seders. "Zikhron" could also be a bone of contention. When letters came telling of dubious decisions or quarrels, Carmel would cry out "How foolish!" "How selfish! " " Not at all what Nita and Michael intended! "

In the early spring of 1970, Phil and I went up to "Zikhron" with our younger sons to spend Shabat with my aunts Margery and Budge, then in their eighties. We found, to my

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astonishment, that Zikhron Ya'akov is a normal Israeli town, with grocery stores and souvenir shops, where people go about their business, buying and selling.

Still, the Lange estate, half a mile from the main street, cast a spell.

An avenue of jacaranda trees led in from the entrance. In the main building where we had our meals, S. J. Solomon's portrait of his sister Susannah Bentwich as a young woman presided over the dining room. Bound volumes of Punch in the bookcases evoked turn of the century England. Margery's minimal hut included the faded elegance of an Edwardian chest of drawers .

The trees, the building, the portrait and even the furniture, were familiar to me from photographs and from my mother's stories. The little white cyclamens sprouting everywhere, among the rocks, and along the paths, were more surprising. They seemed to embody the dreams of a young woman sixty years earlier. Greek myths in which people metamorphosed into flowers and trees, suddenly made a kind of sense.