



## A BABY COMMUNITY.

*By N. O. Nelson.*

**D**ONA ANA, New Mexico, is the station and post-office address of a remarkable community made up of children and their guardians, teachers and caretakers. Dona Ana is not a metropolis; it consists of a flag station on the Santa Fé railroad surrounded by sand and mosquito bushes.

A mile away there is a small Mexican hamlet, five miles to the south is the considerable American settlement of Las Cruces, and a mile in another direction is the baby community, to which its founder gave the Biblical name of Shaalam. The Rio Grande flows between Shaalam and the mountains, and its waters are the fruitful source of rich grain crops and fruits. Wherever the sands and sun and water are united in arid America, there abundance smiles upon the husbandman.

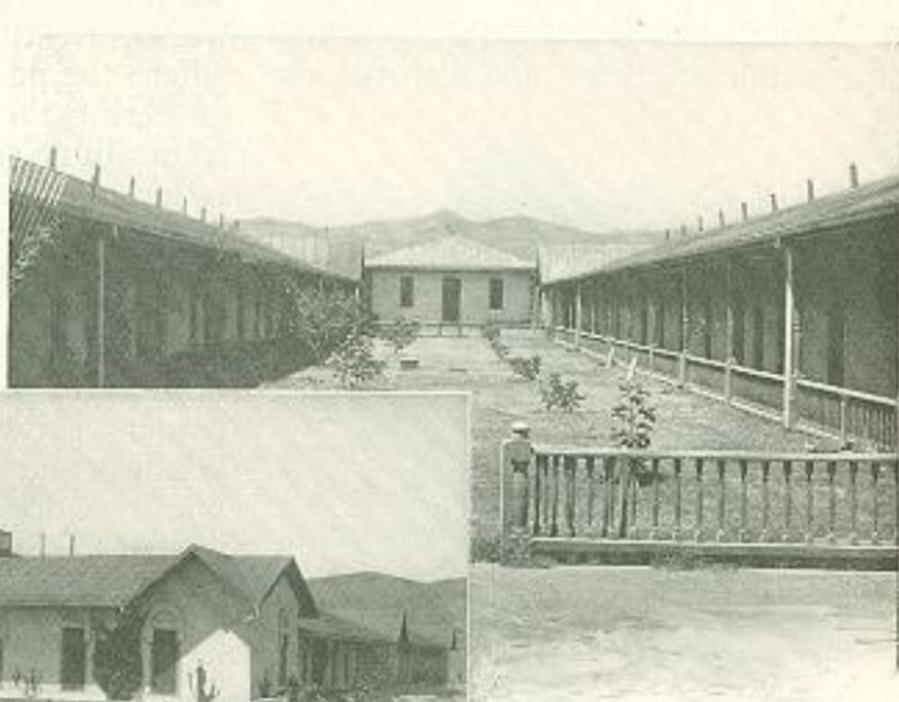
Baby is king in Shaalam, and A. M. Howland is his prophet and his servant. Mr. Howland waits on baby at

his table, helps him to bed, sees to his bath, romps with him,— and pays the bills. At the particular time of my visit there were sixteen of the babies, ranging in age from the crooner of nine months to the wrestler and jumper of nine years,—Caucasian, Afro-American and Heathen Chinese, loose dresses the universal style. There is a Mrs. Howland as well as a Mr. Howland,— man and wife equally robust, good-natured and devoted to the sixteen babies, united, hard-worked and happy.

A. M. Howland was a well-to-do Boston merchant before he fell in with Dr. Newborough's scheme of regeneration. He was glad to quit the money-making grind and begin laying up capital for that world where gold and silver are both demonetized.

When I stepped off my "International" train, speeding from the City of Mexico toward St. Louis, a doctor's phaeton stood back of the little shed station, and in the vehicle sat a ruddy

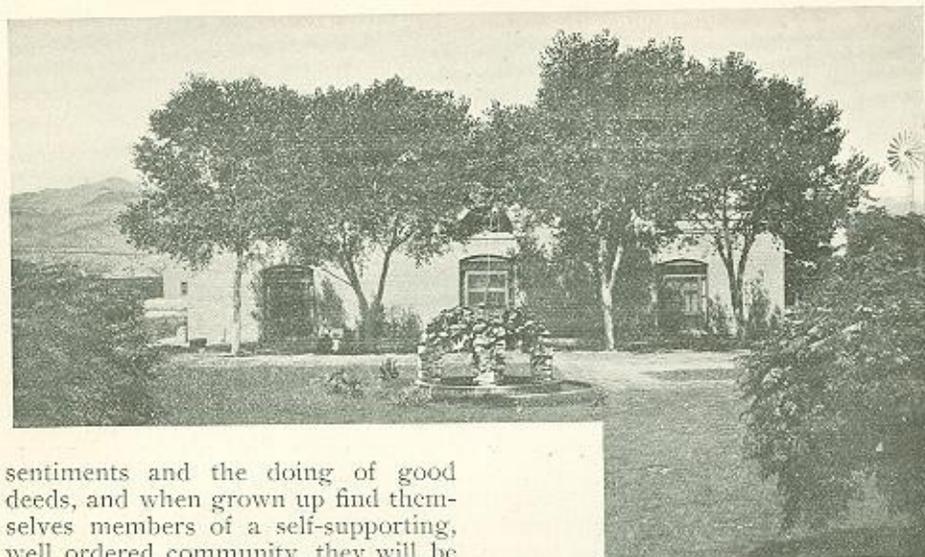
and coffee. No blood is ever shed in Shaalam, no living creature is sacrificed for its tables,—it is as rigidly vegetarian as we are anti-cannibal. The children have their



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vices in their true light, accustomed to fraternal service, the cultivation of noble



THE CHILDREN'S BUILDING.

sentiments and the doing of good deeds, and when grown up find themselves members of a self-supporting, well ordered community, they will be unlikely to rush into the mad whirl of fashionable dressing and high living.

The artistic is well to the front in Shaalam, judged by the Ruskin art standard of harmonious adaptation. The fields are systematically apportioned, orchards flank the front view, a circular plaza, with fountains in its centre, holds guard at the entrance to the homes, there is stained glass in the gable windows, there are pictures on

mountains rise not far away in front and rear, birds nest and sing in the shady trees and in the woods along the river bank.

It was early in the spring that I was at "Children's Land." Another instalment of ten waifs was to arrive with warm weather from Kansas City, where the police matron has charge of gathering them. Five years is the extreme limit of age, but the preference is for one and two years. The children are to have no impressions or recollections of the selfish, the harsh, the ugly or deranged homes and environment. There is room for a round hundred in the community, and as the first comers grow up they will lead the younger and gradually assume the productive work of the farm and home industries. "The Community must become self-sustaining," said Mr. Howland, "or it will be useless." His own part is to plant and cultivate; the fruitage must be self-sustaining men and women, with so much of fraternal disinterestedness as it is possible to secure by force of environment and education. Mr. Howland believes that little can be accomplished with adults in communal reform, his own experience having



the walls, the family sitting-room is well furnished and cosy, books and periodicals are at hand, picturesque