POLITICAL SCIENCE AND HISTORY

OUTLINES OF JEWISH HISTORY FROM B.C. 586 TO C.E. 1885



LADY KATIE MAGNUS

NOVA

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Outlines of Jewish History

SOME PRESS NOTICES

OF

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OUTLINES

OF

JEWISH HISTORY

B.C. 586 TO C.E. 1885

NOTE.

The late Jacob Abraham Franklin bequeathed by Will to five Trustees the sum of Five Thousand Pounds for the promotion of certain objects in connexion with the Advancement of Judaism.

One of these objects was the publication of religious treatises and text-books.

The Trustees, believing the present work to be in accord with the views of the benevolent Testator, defray the cost of its publication.

OUTLINES

OF

JEWISH HISTORY

FROM B.C. 586 TO C.E. 1885

WITH THREE MAPS

BY THE AUTHOR OF

‘ABOUT THE JEWS SINCE BIBLE TIMES’

REVISED BY

M. FRIEDLÄNDER, Ph.D.

LONDON
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND
CO.
1886

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For ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord

TO THE DEAR MEMORY

OF

EDWARD JANVERIN
EMANUEL

PREFACE.

THESE Outlines of Jewish History are the result of a proposal which was made to me, some two years back, by the administrators of the Jacob Franklin Trust, to write a book which should tell the history of the Jews from Biblical times to the present day, in a form which should fit it for use in schools and homes. A right of reference to Dr. Friedländer, the learned Principal of Jews' College, was one of the privileges of my commission, and the bringing to him of all my doubts and difficulties for decision has proved not only an advantage to my book, but a pleasure to me.

The trouble I have had in endeavouring to keep the book simple enough for youthful readers, suggests the possible presence of a weak point, and tempts me to forestall criticism by urging that I have, at least, been mindful on this head, and have patiently done my best. But so complicated a history, and so advanced a civilisation as that of the Jews, is not quite susceptible of entirely simple treatment. 'They stained their bodies with a plant called woad' is a perfectly comprehensive if somewhat bald bit of history, 'adapted to the use of schools,' anent the ancient Britons. 'In their schools they laid the foundations for the Mishnah' would be a correct contemporaneous statement concerning the

ancient Jews, but one that hardly lends itself to such comfortable brevity and simplicity of style. I can only plead that I have told the whole sad, beautiful, 'heroic history' of my race with the keenest sympathy; and I can only hope that the moral and the meaning of it all, which are so very clear to me, may be found to shine out between the lines.

KATIE MAGNUS.

July 1886.

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Page 169, line 22, for 66 read 72.

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500 B.C. TO 70 A.C.

IN THE SHADOW OF THE SWORD.

אֲסִירֵי עֳנִי וּבַרְזֶל

PSALM cvii. 10.

'*Life fulfils itself in many ways.*'

CHAPTER I.

THE JEWS IN BABYLON.

1. Babylonian Exiles.—Nearly two thousand five hundred years ago Jerusalem fell under the siege of Nebuchadnezzar, and a great many Jews were led away captives into Babylon. Daniel was one of these captives, and Ezekiel was another; and most, even of the rank and file, were men of some character and some learning. Gradually, the exiles took up the position rather of colonists than of captives. Lands were allotted to them, they grew to love

and own the soil they cultivated, and their prophets kept alive in them the sense that, though Babylonians now instead of Palestinians, they were still Jews. The name of Jews instead of Israelites came into use from this period, as the greater number of the Babylonian exiles belonged to the kingdom of Judah. No records, in which much trust can be put, have come down to us of the fate of the ten tribes which made up the kingdom of Israel. Thousands of them, it is certain, were carried off into foreign captivity when Palestine was invaded by Shalmaneser about 130 years before the fall of Jerusalem. The ten tribes have thenceforward no separate history.

2. Persian Conquest of Babylon.—Forty-eight years after the destruction of Jerusalem the whole of the Babylonian kingdom passed into the power of Cyrus the Persian. Two years after his conquest he told the Jewish exiles in Babylon that any or all of them, if they liked, might return to the land of their fathers, and become his Syrian instead of his Babylonian subjects. He gave them permission also to rebuild their temple, and he restored to them the holy vessels which had been taken away by Nebuchadnezzar's troops when they sacked Jerusalem.

3. The Influences of the Exile.—Fifty years, we must remember, had come and gone since the fall of Jerusalem. Sorrows, that seem quite unbearable at first, grow

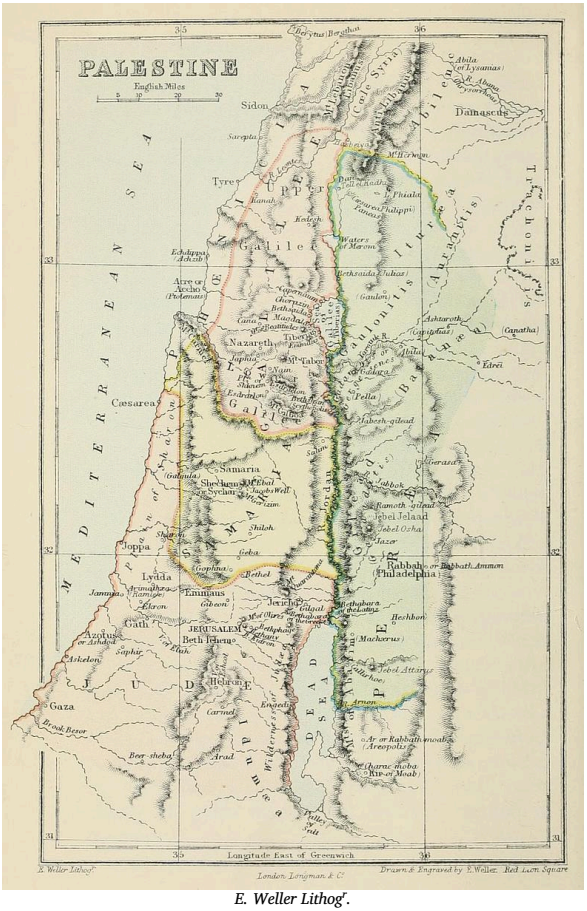
with time to be lightly borne. ‘By the waters of Babylon,’ the first exiles had sat down and wept, but on its banks by-and-by their children ran and laughed. They ‘hung their harps on the willow trees,’ and refused to sing the songs of Zion for a year or two, or may be ten. But by degrees the ‘strange land’ grew homelike, and the harps, we may be sure, were taken down, and strung, and tuned. After a while every one has to live in the present, however dear or sad the past may be. The Jews in Babylon learned to face their life in captivity, and to make the best of it. In many respects they were the better for it. They grew, indeed, to be truer patriots in exile than for generations they had been in possession. The loss of their country seemed to rouse them and to steady them. They became more patient and united, and less childish and discontented. The counsels of Ezekiel and Jeremiah, and of the other unnamed prophets of the exile, were listened to in Babylon as they never had been in Palestine. The law of Moses was read, and the Psalms of David were probably sung in mean little meeting-houses, but these poor places were crowded, and included more devout worshippers than had ever assembled in the marble courts of the temple. Many people think that it is to these earnest exiles in Babylon that we owe the small beginnings of our present synagogues. The word ‘synagogue’ comes from the Greek, and means an assembling together; and though the word itself does not come into use till long after the return

from the captivity, yet places of assembly for prayer and praise were quite common all throughout Judea long before historians talk of them by the name of synagogue.

4. How Cyrus's Permission was received.—To many of the Jewish settlers in Babylon, and especially to those who had been born there, Palestine must have come to sound like England does to her colonists —as a name, whenever and wherever heard, brimful of the tenderest loves and longings, but still more or less a name. To old folks the old land is a memory, to young people a hope, but to old and young alike the land where they live and work is home. And Jews are particularly homelike in their natures, soon fitting into, and growing fond of, and looking native to, any spot whereon they settle. For some time they had been fairly and even generously treated by the people who had led them captive; and thus when the Persian proclamation was published, there was no eager ungrateful rush to leave Babylon, and to return to their own land under the protection of the conquerors of their captors. Love for the old scenes was strong, but a sort of loyalty to the new weakened the love a little, and made duty a difficult choice.

5. The End of the Exile.—The liberty of return which Cyrus gave closes the Babylonian captivity. Those Jews who remained in Babylon remained as voluntary exiles. With some, and they were not few,

the sense that Babylon was the land of their children proved more potent than the remembrance that Palestine was the land of their fathers. Neither country was theirs. And in Babylon they were comfortable; and that condition, in making up one's mind, counts for much. The fair land of promise was certainly to all the land of their dreams, but it is not quite as certain that it was to all equally the land of their desires. Some 42,000, however, brave and faithful men and women, decided to make use of Cyrus's permission, and under the leadership of Zerubbabel crossed the Euphrates, and set out for the Holy Land; those who remained behind gave plenty of good wishes, and willingly forwarded supplies.



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PALESTINE

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CHAPTER II.

THE RETURN TO PALESTINE.

1. The Rebuilding of the Temple.—The first task of the exiles when they arrived at Jerusalem was to set about the rebuilding of the temple. The ruins were cleared away, and early in the second year of their return, amid great rejoicings, the foundation-stone of the second temple was laid. There were some very old people in the crowd, who had worshipped in the first beautiful temple, and to them the scene could not have been one of unmixed joy. The Bible says, 'The old men wept.' But men old enough to remember and to weep over their memories could not have been many, and hope and rejoicing were the chief feelings on the occasion.

2. The Samaritans.—Very soon the work, so gladly begun, was interrupted, and by home foes instead of foreign ones. Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, nearly two hundred years before, had conquered Hoshea, the last king of Israel, and had carried off many of Hoshea's subjects into captivity. Samaria had fallen after a three years' siege, and in place of those Israelites

who had been killed, and of those who had been made prisoners of war, the king of Assyria brought some of his own subjects from Babylon and Cuthea, into the desolated land of Israel. These new settlers were, of course, heathens, but they adopted, after a time, some of the rites of the Israelites among whom they lived. The old inhabitants who had been left in Samaria, and the new who had been brought thither, all came to be called Samaritans. Their religious belief was naturally a little mixed. There was much that was heathen and idolatrous, but a great deal, too, of what was distinctly Jewish in their thoughts and practice. When Jerusalem was again in the hands of Jews, and the temple about to be rebuilt, the Samaritans, at any rate, thought themselves quite Jewish enough to offer to help in the work. The exiles did not agree with them. The fifty years' captivity had made a great change in their way of looking at things. Their Judaism was of a stronger and a sterner sort than it used to be. They meant the service in their new temple to be purely Jewish, and it seemed to them that if they let the Samaritans help in the building of the temple, it would lead to the introduction of idolatrous rites into Divine worship. Perhaps they felt, in an illogical sort of way, that the building itself would be profaned if any part of the work was done by such half-and-half Jews as were the Samaritans. No one likes to be pronounced not good enough for any work he himself proposes to do, and the Samaritans were

extremely indignant at the rejection of their offer. They were mean enough to take revenge by speaking against the Jews at the Persian court. They were so far successful, that the work in which they were not allowed to share was presently put a stop to by order of Cyrus. But some fifteen years later his successor Darius, the Darius who was defeated at Marathon, gave permission and help too, and, in spite of the Samaritans, the temple was finished and dedicated, twenty years after the foundation-stone had been laid. The Samaritans, partly in imitation, partly in anger, and partly, it may be hoped, from religious feeling, later on built a little temple for themselves on Mount Gerizim.

3. The Feast of Purim.—The next great event comes with an interval of nearly fifty years. The meek Jewish maiden who, to serve her people, became a queen, and who, in her palace, 'did the commandment of Mordecai, like as when she was brought up with him,' is believed to have married king Xerxes, the Xerxes who, at Thermopylæ, desired the Spartans to give up their arms, and to whom Leonidas sent back the famous retort to 'come and take them,' All the romantic facts, which are told in the Book of Esther, and which led to the institution of Purim, history seems to show, took place during that monarch's reign.

4. Ezra the Scribe.—The influence of good Jews remained strong at the Persian

court and among the Persian people. The next king, Artaxerxes, had a Jew for his cup-bearer, and showed himself, throughout his reign, most kindly disposed towards his Jewish subjects. He let them appoint their own judges, and readily gave permission to Ezra to lead another colony from Babylon to join the settlement in Judea; and he made Nehemiah, who was his cup-bearer, governor of Palestine. Ezra—the Scribe, as he is called—was a fine character, strong-handed and strong-hearted too, a many-sided man. He seems to have got his name of scribe (סוֹפֵר) from his literary powers, which he chiefly used in transcribing the Pentateuch from old Hebrew characters to those in use at the present day. The name became by degrees applied to a whole class. The Sopherim, or scribes, were in turn skilful writers and careful expounders and patient students of the law. They were the 'men of the Book,'[1] the lawyers of the Pentateuch. Malachi, the last of the prophets, lived at this period, and the scribes to some extent grew, in time, to take the place of the prophets in the religious life of the Jewish nation. The נָבִיא, the servant of the Most High, had spoken His message—the סוֹפֵר, with patient enthusiasm, was at hand to transcribe it. Their love for the Law and their knowledge of the Law gave the scribes spiritual power, and by-and-by political power also. For as the Law became by degrees the only national possession left to the Jews, those most learned in it naturally came to the front. The wisest and

most skilled in interpreting the Law were called on to administer it, and to take part in the government of the dispossessed people. Ezra the Scribe was the first, chief and representative of the great body of students and teachers who, successively under the names of Sopherim, Tanaim, and Amoraim, became a power in Palestine.

5. The Work of Ezra and Nehemiah.—Both Ezra and Nehemiah were men of the best type of Jewish character. They loved the Lord 'with all their heart and soul and might,' which may be taken to mean using brain and heart and hands in the service. They willingly left the ease and comfort of court life for rough work of all kinds in Palestine. They desired to help their brethren in every possible way. They found plenty of preaching to be needed, and plenty, too, of work of a more practical sort. With equal energy they set about both. The walls of Jerusalem were in ruins. These, they wisely thought, ought to be repaired and rebuilt, for a people whose defences are weak are at the mercy of all. It was no light task; for the Samaritans, led by Sanballat, harassed and hindered the workers by every means in their power. They spoke against them and insulted them, and when they found evil words fail, they tried fighting. The Jewish leaders were equal to the occasion; they gave their men weapons as well as tools, and in the end courage and patience won. The walls were rebuilt and the governor's house was fortified, and

Nehemiah was able to go back for a while to his court duties. Meanwhile Ezra had been busy in another way. The defences of the religion as well as of the city had breaches and gaps in it. Many had married among the heathen, and were bringing up their children to a weak and most hurtful mixed belief. With a three days' notice Ezra called the congregation together. Then, without any roundabout talk, he said to them, 'You have sinned; put away your strange wives; do God's pleasure.' It was a hard bidding. God's pleasure and man's pleasure are often one and the same, but not always. To be good and to be happy is not uncommon, but occasionally if one wants to be good one has to be unhappy. There comes a conscious choosing between the doing of God's pleasure and of our own pleasure, as to these Jews of old. They made the higher and the harder choice. From love of God, and in obedience to His law, they gave up their 'strange,' sweet, unlawful loves. With people in such a mood the rest of Ezra's and Nehemiah's reforms were comparatively easy. It was grand material to work upon. There was some resistance on the part of the more well-off families, who liked to be left alone, but the efforts of Ezra and Nehemiah for the good of the nation were not relaxed nor weakened thereby. They insisted on the proper observance of the Sabbath, they resettled the rights of property, and they restored the law of Moses to its place as an inspired code for constant reading and reference. Ezra has

been called the second Moses, and the work he did was certainly of the same sort. Moses the lawgiver, with direct Divine help, made a tribe into a nation. Ezra the Scribe, with indirect Divine help, made of a dispossessed nation an undying people. The means employed was the same in both cases—God's Law.

CHAPTER III.

LIFE IN PALESTINE.

1. Condition of the People.—After the stress and strain of the religious revival under Ezra and Nehemiah, things settled down for a long while into a quiet, uneventful course. It was the seed-time of national character, the season when growth is active though it does not show. The Persian conquerors, busy with their Greek wars, did not much trouble their Jewish subjects in Syria. Every now and again another little band of exiles would join their friends in Judea, or would journey on to Egypt to form a new little Jewish

community there. Even the conquest of the Persian Empire by Alexander the Great made little difference to the Jews. Their personal government was in their own hands, and changes in political government made little outward sign in their lives. They were always law-abiding, and neither from Persian nor Greek did there come any startling or embarrassing demands on their loyalty. There is a story told of a dramatic meeting at the gates of Jerusalem between Alexander of Macedon and Jaddua the high priest, when the armed king, who came in anger, suddenly fell on his knees before the white-robed priest. But the anger, and the armour, and the robes, and the kiss of peace, and the meeting altogether, seem, with many another charming and somewhat shaky relic, to have been swept away by stiff new brooms into the lumber-room of history.

2. Literary Labours.—The quiet time was good for scholars. In the hundred years between the death of Nehemiah and the death of Alexander there was a good deal of literary activity in Palestine. To the Pentateuch which Ezra taught in schools, and read and expounded in synagogues, a second portion of Holy Scriptures[2]—the Prophets—was added; and a third portion, Holy Writings—followed. What is called the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures,[2] in the form and order of our Hebrew Bible, was definitely arranged yet a little later on. This work was almost all done in Hebrew, which

was still the language of the people. Then a great store of wisdom, which had been the growth of ages, began at this period to be collected and sifted, and put into shape. There were proverbs and parables and wise sayings of all sorts, and quantities of long arguments and discussions, and some supplementary, and perhaps not always very accurate, history. It all began to be looked into. Partly in Aramaic, and partly in Greek, a good deal of it got gradually written down. Some of the wisdom and a great part of the history grew, in this and the next century, into what are called the apocryphal books. These, though they have not the value of inspired writings, have considerable merit of their own. The best, too, of the talks and the texts and the legendary lore was gathered together, and made a foundation for the Midrash, which had for its chief object the exposition of the Bible, and especially of the Pentateuch. And besides all these tasks, the energy and earnestness of the people found yet another channel. They set about formulating a ritual, that is a regular arrangement of prayer and service.

3. Alexandrian Jews.—In the time of Alexander of Macedon, Alexander the Great, as he is called, the city of Alexandria, in Egypt, was founded in his honour. A great many Jews joined the Greek and Egyptian colonists, and were among the early settlers in the city. By degrees these Alexandrian Jews grew to be a little less Jewish than the

Judean Jews. They had exactly the same rights and privileges as the Macedonians. Greek culture, Greek habits of thought, were in the very air they breathed, and they breathed it in more lustily, perhaps, than those to whom it was native. They spoke Greek, and after a while they neglected their national tongue, and were unable even to understand the Scriptures when read in synagogue. But though they let the language of their fathers grow strange to them, and were somewhat lax and unobservant, yet they never ceased to be Jews. Whether they were regular worshippers we do not know, but they certainly had a large and magnificent synagogue of their own; and in Heliopolis, another city of Egypt, there was a temple somewhat similar to the temple in Jerusalem. And it is further related in the Apocrypha that some 300 of these Egyptian Jews were once staunch enough to their faith to choose to be trampled to death by wild elephants rather than become converts. The sequel sounds a little legendary, as the elephants, it is added on the same authority, could not be induced to make martyrs of the Jews. They wisely turned aside, and trampled on the spectators instead of on the intended victims.

4. The Septuagint.—The Jews in Egypt grew numerous, and many of them began to take important positions of trust in the State and in the army. The study of Hebrew became more and more neglected. These

Egyptian Jews must have grown denationalised, since they grudged the labour of becoming familiar with their national tongue. But, however willing to give up the language, they had no mind to give up the literature. They desired still to read the law and the prophets, if only it could be managed without too much trouble. They determined to get a translation made. About 250 B.C. an embassy was sent to Jerusalem by the Egyptian king, Ptolemy Philadelphus, begging the high priest for the loan and labour of seventy-two learned scribes. It is said that each of the seventy-two made a separate translation, and that every one of the seventy-two translations turned out to be exactly alike. It is rather a doubtful story. But whether the seventy-two translators agreed—which, as they worked separately, seems not impossible—or whether it was their translations which were unanimous, which seems less likely, certain it is that a Greek version of the Scriptures was made, which was called the Septuagint. Some of those writers, who always will differ from the others, say that the scribes had nothing to do with it at all, but that the Septuagint owes its origin to different authors, countries, and ages.

5. Under Egyptian Rule.—When Alexander died (323 years B.C.), all his great conquests were divided among his generals. Syria and Egypt became the rival powers in the East. Palestine, for over a century, was

like a battledore between two shuttlecocks. For a while the Egyptians had the best of the game, and under the first three Ptolemies the Jews were very mildly tossed. They had to pay tribute to Egypt, but their home government was left to their own high priests, and their religion was not interfered with.

6. Under Syrian Rule.—203 years B.C., Antiochus III. of Syria, called the Great, wrested Palestine from the fourth Ptolemy of Egypt. This change of masters in itself made no change in the position of the Jews. They continued to be mildly ruled, and their government was still left in their own hands. Seleucus, the son and successor of Antiochus, proved as peaceably inclined as his father. But trouble was brewing. The civilisation of the Syrians was Greek in its nature, and their habits of thought and their modes of worship were sure to jar terribly with the strict notions of Judean Jews. So long as the priests stood between the court and the people, and all actual contact was avoided, no collision occurred. When the priests were found wanting the crisis came.

7. Home Rule.—In the course of time the government of the people had come into the hands of the high priest. The high priesthood was an hereditary office. From father to son, or to nearest of kin, the office was handed down, and for the most part worthily exercised as a trust as well as a dignity. It was not altogether an easy office.

The Jews needed ruling, and their masters —Persian, Egyptian, Syrian, or Greek, as it might be—needed conciliating. The priests had to be firm in their faith and pleasant in their manners; a fault in either meant failure; disunion was to be dreaded, and weakness was altogether fatal. For a long while the difficulties were overcome. Jaddua and Onias, and Simon the Just, who was one of the last surviving members of the Great Synagogue which Ezra founded, were all towers of strength to the priesthood and to the people. But a certain incapable high priest, called Onias II. (230 B.C.) very nearly brought his nation into trouble with Egypt over the tribute-money, which he had let fall into arrears; and Onias III. (210 B.C.), though a good man, made the terrible mistake of calling in the Syrians to settle a family dispute. Antiochus took this opportunity to usurp the right of nominating to the high priesthood. A brother of Onias had long desired the office for himself. He offered a bribe to the Syrian treasury, and in further deference to the ruling state changed his Jewish name of Joshua to the Greek-sounding one of Jason. He gained his point, and he earned besides, it may be hoped, both the contempt of those he flattered and of those he forsook. Presently another candidate, named Menelaus, arose, and, to get means for the necessary bribery, he robbed the temple treasury. So far as the Syrians were concerned, the immediate moral to the Jews was the old one of the bundle of sticks. As

long as the Jews were self-respecting and self-governing, they and their government and their religion had been respected and left alone. As soon as their leaders began to riot and quarrel among themselves the fate of the bundle of sticks fell upon the people.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MACCABEAN WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

1. Antiochus Epiphanes.—Seleucus was succeeded on the Syrian throne by his brother Antiochus, surnamed by his flatterers Epiphanes the Illustrious, and by his more candid friends, Epimanes the Madman. By the date of his accession ancient Greece had lost her supremacy, and Rome was getting to be the great power in the world. All the little kings made their little wars, or planned their big projects, with a thought of Rome in the background. Antiochus was no exception. He had led an

expedition against Egypt, and had been defeated by Rome. He knew the Roman policy was to break up empires, and to attract the pieces, as it were, to itself. The geographical position of Judea would make her a valuable Roman ally. He determined to get rid of this possibility by getting rid of the Jews. And besides this, the disputes and riots in Jerusalem over the priesthood were making the Jews and their religion personally unpleasant to Antiochus. He entered the capital 169 B.C., plundered the Temple, offered swine's flesh on the altar, and put to death a great many of the inhabitants.

2. Antiochus's Tyranny.—That was only the beginning. He set up heathen idols in the Samaritan temple as well as in the Jerusalem one. The Jewish Scriptures were burned, and the reading of the law and the observance of the law forbidden on pain of death. Great rewards were offered to those who would renounce Judaism. A mother and her seven sons were separately and in succession tempted. 'I can better bear to see them all die than for one of them to live as a coward,' said the brave woman; and they took her at her word, and one after another the boys were led out to death. An old man, Eleazar by name, did his part, too, to prove that the calmness of age can be as steadfast as the impulse of youth. They tried bribes and they tried tortures on him; all to no avail. 'Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is One,' was the last utterance of his dying

lips.

3. Resistance of Mattathias.—Things had come to a bad pass. The martyrs who were steadfast in the covenant were more numerous by far than the weak-minded folks who yielded, but the persecutors outnumbered both. There was a passion of resentment felt by weak and strong alike, and the feeling needed only directing to find forcible expression. In the little town of Modin, near Jerusalem, there lived an Asmonean family, of whom an old priest, named Mattathias, was the head. An officer of Antiochus made a visit to this place, calling on the Jews to perform heathen sacrifice. Some waverer in the crowd tremblingly obeyed. Mattathias struck him down, and, aiming another blow at the altar, called on all those who were 'zealous for the law' to follow him. There was an immediate rally to his side. The enemy was worsted for the day, and Mattathias and his party left the town at once, and raised the standard of revolt throughout the country. That was the beginning of the terrible unequal struggle, which lasted twenty-seven years, and ended in well-deserved victory for the Jews.

4. Chasidim and Zaddikim.—In appealing to those who were 'zealous for the law' to gather round him, Mattathias secured at once a strong and enthusiastic following. For a large party had grown up among the Jews who were 'zealous for the

law' in a very complete sense. They loved it devotedly, if sometimes, perhaps, just a little ostentatiously. These men were called Chasidim, Saints; and occasionally, it may be, they took on themselves the pretensions as well as the qualities attaching to the name. Side by side with these, there were many who contented themselves with just conforming to the law and doing their duty, as it were, in outline. Such were called, in Biblical language, Zaddikim, or 'righteous.' These righteous ones, it is possible, found the saints a little difficult to live up to. In reaction, they, at any rate, became occasionally a little less than 'righteous,' even somewhat lax and Grecianised Jews, and were called Hellenists.

5. The Success of Judas Maccabeus.—Helped greatly by the Chasidim, Mattathias soon made head against the enemy. He had five strong, brave sons to work with him. To the second, Judas, he left the command when, soon after the campaign opened, he died. The little ragged following by that time had grown into a disciplined army. 'Who is like to Thee among the gods, O Lord?' (מִי־כָמֹכָה בָּאֵלִם יְיָ) was the motto on their flag, and the answer seemed to come in the beaten ranks of the Syrians. The initial letters of these courageous, humble words (מכבי) were taken to form a surname for this family of heroes, of whom Judas is the central figure. Victory did not come at once nor suddenly. It had to be worked for, and to be waited for at the sacrifice of much

that was dear. The Chasidim were called on to give up for the cause some very strong religious scruples, and they showed themselves true patriots, as ready to yield their opinions as their lives in the service of their country. It was the mean custom of Apollonius, the chief general of Antiochus, to attack the Jews on the Sabbath, believing that on that day the rigid observance of 'the law' would prevent the Jews from defending themselves. The exceptional circumstances, however, were recognised by the leaders of the people, permission was given, and the Jews, the Chasidim among the rest, when attacked on the Sabbath, fought for their land and their faith as bravely as on week days.

6. Institution of Hanucah.—Slowly and surely, step by step, this William Tell of Judaism wrested his country from the tight grip of the oppressor. The decisive battle of the campaign was fought out and won on the plains of Emmaus, some seventeen miles to the west of the capital. Judas Maccabeus marched unopposed with his triumphant troops into Jerusalem, and on the twenty-fifth of Kislev 3592 (B.C. 169) the נֵר חָמִיד was gladly and solemnly relighted in the now cleansed and reconsecrated temple. A joyful dedication service was held, and its anniversary was instituted as a religious and historical observance among the Jews.

7. Treaty with Rome.—Judea was won back for the Jews. But could the Jews hold

it? That was the question which, after a very short experience, presented itself to their brave commander. The little ‘kingdom of priests’ had transformed itself into a camp of soldiers; the nation of ‘witnesses’ had given evidence; but could the possession they had gained for themselves be kept by themselves? Judas Maccabeus knew enough of his countrymen to doubt it. He believed that without allies it would be impossible for the Jews to retain Judea. Syria had been a dangerous enemy, and seemed likely to prove a yet more dangerous friend. Not long after the re-dedication of the temple Antiochus Epiphanes had died, and after the taking of Jerusalem by the Jews a sort of truce had been arranged. For a short while the Syrian succession was disturbed by a usurper. When the rightful heir came to his own, he wished to include Judea in that category. But he proved a little too paternal in his ideas. He took it upon himself to nominate a high priest, perhaps reckoning that the party feeling between Chasidim and Zaddikim would induce a strong difference of opinion on the subject of the succession, and that the section of the people whom he pleased by his nomination would become his adherents. He was a little too clever. The Zaddikim, who were already the Hellenist party in the State, did seem a trifle flattered at this foreign interest displayed in their affairs, but Judas and the great body of the Jews rightly resented it. The Syrian overtures were gravely declined by Judas,

and Alkimos, the Syrian nominee, backed up though he was by a Syrian general, was deprived of his dignity. Syria fought for her candidate, and was defeated. His success, however, only made Judas the more certain of his difficulties. He took the bold step of proclaiming Judea an independent state, and sent an embassy to Rome to ask for an alliance. The embassy was kindly received, and the alliance accepted.

CHAPTER V.

PALESTINE UNDER NATIVE RULE.

1. Death of Judas Maccabeus.—In the early part of the campaign, Eleazar, one of the five brave Maccabean brothers, had been slain, and now, four years after the taking of Jerusalem, Judas fell fighting in its defence. ‘The greatest gift a hero leaves his race is to have been a hero.’ The fortune of war may lose, as the fortune of war may win, the substantial gifts which a hero brings his race; but his life, if it be truly

heroic, will remain a valuable possession to them ‘throughout all generations.’ Though he brought no offering to his country but Khartoum, Gordon belongs to Englishmen as a great gift for ever. And so it is with Judas Maccabeus, though no inch of the land which he won for them remains to his race. ‘My Jewish soldiers are veritable Maccabees,’ said the Czar Nicholas to Sir Moses Montefiore, when, in 1846, the English philanthropist went to plead for his poor downtrodden Russian brothers, who, except in the army, had so little chance of a fair field. The name of Maccabee was used by the Russian Emperor as a testimonial to character. Here was a legacy left to his race by a hero, and presented 2,000 years after date.

2. Jonathan the Maccabee.—Directly after Judas’s death, Jonathan, another of the devoted Maccabean brothers, took the command of affairs. He did the work of priest and soldier and statesman too. But a third brother was lost on the battle-field, and for a while courage and skill seemed to make no way against the superior force of the Syrians. Time, however, was on Jonathan’s side. He kept on ‘pegging away,’ and some ten years after the death of Judas, the enemy found out what stuff he was made of, and tried to come to terms. At that date a rival was opposing the reigning king of Syria. This new claimant, Alexander Balas, and the old opponent, Demetrius, both made overtures to Jonathan for his

alliance. Probably each thought how very useful so clever and warlike a general would be on his side, and how much pleasanter as an ally than as an enemy. So the king who was, and the king who wanted to be, bid against each other for the Jewish general's friendship. Jonathan declared on the same side as did Rome, for Alexander Balas. Then for eight years there was peace and quiet, and Jonathan put aside his sword, and wore the white robes of the priest, and things were well for the Jews. At the end of that time another revolution disturbed the Syrian succession. A usurper called Tryphon claimed the throne, got Jonathan by treachery into his power, and used it to have him put to death.

3. Simon, the First of the Priest-king Dynasty.—There was only one left now of the five brave sons of Mattathias. With all the brothers, patriotism was the strongest of the affections, and Simon gave himself no time to indulge in grief. He at once put himself at the head of affairs, and so successfully that the Syrian garrison had very soon to retire from Jerusalem. Simon renewed the alliance with Rome, and strengthening his position thereby, found the necessary leisure to look after peaceable duties, which for some time past had been rather neglected for the more urgent military ones. He made Joppa a harbour, which was good for commerce on the coasts, and he saw to agricultural interests, which encouraged labour in the interior of

the country. Simon was a practical man as well as a pious one. He so far impressed his people that they recognised his worth in his lifetime. In solemn assembly, held in the month of Elul 140 B.C., Simon was proclaimed hereditary high priest and prince.

4. The Sons of Simon.—Simon, no more than the other Maccabean brothers, was destined to die in his bed. Some four years after his assumption of the priest-king dignity Syria again changed rulers. The new monarch, Antiochus Sidetes, reverted to the old bad policy of endeavouring to make Judea a vassal province, instead of recognising her as an independent and allied state. Bribery, as usual, was in the first place employed, and a son-in-law of Simon's was found base enough to serve the Syrian purpose. With help of this treacherous Ptolemy, Simon and his elder son Joannan were betrayed and murdered. John Hyrcanus, the younger son of Simon, escaped, and presently buckled on his priestly armour.

5. Reign of John Hyrcanus.—He wore it for nine-and-twenty years (135–106) bravely and uncompromisingly. In the double and divided duties which devolved upon him, John Hyrcanus was perhaps more king than priest, more just than merciful. He made short work with his foes, whether native or foreign ones; and when he had fought and routed the Syrians, he

began to deal with the Samaritans. He would tolerate no mongrel Judaism. He explained to the Samaritans that in religious matters they must make up their minds to be one thing or the other, and to help them to come to a decision he destroyed the temple which they had built on Mount Gerizim. It was a high-handed measure. His own subjects greatly approved it, and after their capital was besieged and reduced to ashes the Samaritans had to acquiesce. The Samaritans henceforward cease to have any noteworthy history as a separate religious nationality.

6. His Last Years.—There is nothing so successful as success. The Romans supported John Hyrcanus, and his kingdom grew in extent almost to the limits of David's and Solomon's sovereignty. But a cloud was rising on the clear sky in the shape of political troubles, and towards the end of his reign the popular king found himself in opposition.

CHAPTER VI.

JUDEA DURING THE REMAINDER OF THE RULE OF THE ASMONEANS.

1. Rival Factions. Pharisees and Sadducees.—Two parties had grown up in the State. They were rival political factions rather than rival religious sects, although their differences had been in the first place, and were still mainly, of a religious sort. Misfortune does not affect all natures alike. In cases of shipwreck there are always some people who make a rush at the boats, and some who turn at once to the pumps. The simile may serve for the Jews at this period. The Babylonian conquest had threatened national shipwreck, and after the anchorage of the Exile, a long-sustained struggle for national existence had begun. More than once it looked as if the waves must close

over the people. There were Syrian storms and Roman winds to make way against, and Greek sunshine to resist; and the sunshine perhaps was the most paralysing of all. The different effects of trouble on different natures soon became manifest. Two distinct parties came to the front. One who at all costs stuck to the ship. Hot and grimy, and terribly in earnest, these worked away at the pumps. They kept to that one task, and, in dread of leaks, patched and cobbled, and by degrees laid down a new keel. The other set, in all good faith, took to the boats. They carried with them what they considered essentials for national existence, but what they had not room for, and thought superfluous, they threw overboard.

2. How they got their Names.—The people who stood by the ship, and who in effect saved it, came to be called Pharisees. There are two possible meanings to the root פרשfrom which the name is derived. It means to enlarge or to explain, and it also signifies to separate or divide. From either or from both these meanings the Pharisees probably gained their name. Their first object was to separate from everything that might pollute them externally or internally. The fear of injury to their beloved ship, the Law, made them put on it, as it were, an extra coat of defensive armour-plating. They added line upon line and precept upon precept to the original proportions. Pride in their patriotic patchwork induced them also, as we have seen, to accept the name

Chasidim, or Saints, which was given them by outsiders, and to gradually, and somewhat ostentatiously, separate themselves collectively as well as individually from the more easy-going part of the nation. The people who took to the boats, the Zaddikim, who relied on their own righteousness, grew to be known as Sadducees. Tradition tells of a certain Sadok, a famous scholar, from whom the Sadducees derived some of their ideas, and possibly their name.

3. Their Tenets and Position, Religions and Political.—The Pharisees were rigid upholders of the law. They believed it to be the guiding rule of life, not only for the individual, but for the State. They tightened and narrowed whilst they strengthened the obligations of the law. They insisted not only on a high standard of duty, but on the most minute observance of every precept, Mosaic and traditional. Many persons believed that the Pharisees overdid it a little, over-armour-plated the ship, and were in a degree responsible for some ugly barnacles that came in time to cling about and clog the keel. Those who thought thus formed the body of the Sadducees. The Sadducees took it all much more lightly. They were content to conform to the main rites of Judaism without troubling much about every detail. They looked on the things of this world and the things of the other world as quite distinct matters, and on the whole, perhaps, considered this world to

be the more interesting. The Sadducees did not much believe in the other world at all. They said that right should be done for right's sake, and without hope of reward. A pure and lofty doctrine in itself, yet hardly worth the cost, since it made them go a step further, and reject altogether the thought of future rewards and a future life. But the Sadducees were mostly well off, and heaven to them would have been only a luxury the more. The Pharisees were of the people, the less wealthy and cultivated classes. They were not all, however, of the same high type of character. There were as many as seven sorts of Pharisees, we are told, and these seven sorts varied from real saints to real shams in their 'zeal' for the law. As a power in the State the Pharisees had numbers and learning on their side, whilst the Sadducees on theirs had money, and what goes now by the name of culture. To use political words, the Sadducees called themselves liberal, and the Pharisees, in their aims, were certainly conservative. The Sadducee, in fact, rather prided himself on his liberal principles. He would have told you that he cordially admitted every man's right to his own opinions, and that he never meddled with other people's observance. And this was perhaps true. But then he stopped there. He never sought to see things from other people's point of view, he showed no sympathy in their researches, no respect for their acquirements. This unprogressive sort of mind in professed friends of progress was a fatal bar to

liberalism in any just sense of the word. And, in effect, the Pharisees were the true liberals; and the Sadducees, despite their wide views and their easy-going way, were the obstructionists. With all their rigid adherence to the law, the purpose and the practice of the Pharisees was to extend and to expound it, to make it elastic enough to fit everybody's needs. In their passionate desire to keep the ship afloat they armour-plated it, but equally they never hesitated, on occasion, to cut away for a while a mast or a spar. The Sadducees, when they took to the boats, took all they meant to keep with them. They would have no 'forms,' no 'traditional' burdens of any kind; they would obey the law, they declared, in its entirety and in its purity, nothing more and nothing less. It sounded promising. But a little effort of thinking will show that a policy of absolute standing still, of contentment with the present, ignoring of the past, and denial of the future, is not progress. Nor can the mood which lightly tosses tradition overboard, refusing to see that it is as likely to prove compass as cargo, be rightly called liberal. In intention probably the best of the Pharisees and the best of the Sadducees were both right. The Pharisee wanted to keep his religion intact, and wrapped it up in observance; the Sadducee, with perhaps the same object, would have stripped it bare of forms and ceremonies, and relied only on conduct (צְדָקָה). The Sadducees, it must be owned, considered the ceremonial law binding, but

only as prescribed in the law, and as applied according to their own interpretation. And, oddly enough, they who were so easy-going in their habits were much harder in their judgments than the strict Pharisees. Rejecting the notion of future rewards or punishments, the Sadducees considered it a man's duty to be as severe as possible in judging his neighbour's conduct. They aimed at being just (צְדָקָה) whilst the Pharisees were content to be merciful. Each had the defects of his qualities, but the defects of the Pharisee were, to superficial sight, of a more patent and troublesome sort than those of his rival. To be always dreadfully in earnest makes a man a distinctly uncomfortable companion. The 'zeal' of the Pharisees might make them pious and devout, might render them first-rate martyrs, and even very tolerable bigots, but hardly, under any circumstances, good courtiers. The Sadducees must always have been pleasanter people to live with. In the early fighting days, the 'zealous' Chasidim had been a very satisfactory court circle of soldiers for the warlike Maccabees, and the first two priest-kings were well content to find their mainstay in the Pharisaic faction. But as things grew more settled and peaceful the Pharisees grew exacting and somewhat irksome companions. The numerous restrictions which traditional law enforces on the will and desires of man made princes and courtiers look on the Pharisees as uncomfortable people, as obstacles. At court they grew to be more

and more disliked, and towards the end of the reign of John Hyrcanus there came about a decided estrangement.

4. State Quarrel with the Pharisees.—By the time of John Hyrcanus, the relation between the court and the people had become so strained that a very slight cause was in the end sufficient to bring about the actual rupture. At a big banquet which Hyrcanus gave one day, a person who happened to be a Pharisee, and to whom, possibly, the seat he liked had not been given, took occasion to speak loud scandal against the priest-king's mother, and to question the consequent right of Hyrcanus to the priesthood. He seems to have been more strict in his notions, this Pharisee, than correct in his facts. His impolite conduct would seem to have had not even the excuse of truth. Hyrcanus was excessively indignant at the ill-timed and ill-tempered attack; he mistook this meddlesome Pharisee for a type of his class, and, in his irritation, during the rest of his reign the king chose his friends and his officials from among the Sadducees.

5. The Essenes.—One other party among the people claims a little notice. Hardly numerous enough to be called a sect, nor of political importance sufficient to take rank as a faction, the Essenes yet form a feature in the period. The Essenes have been called the monks of Judaism, and they are the nearest approach to anything in the way

of monks that Judaism has to show. They were men who in a sort of holy selfishness, and in utter weariness of the world, gave it up, so far as they could, altogether. Their own souls were their chief objects of interest. They passed their days in praying and preaching, and such few possessions as they had were common to all alike. They lived in the very simplest and most uncomfortable fashion, dwelling in caves and huts and deserted places, more like birds and beasts than men. They led this sort of life from duty, but it was an odd conception of duty, and one so entirely opposed to Jewish notions that the Essenes never gained much sympathy among Jews, and were never regarded as more than an eccentric offshoot of Judaism. The little body was never numerous, and gradually died out.

6. Reign of Alexander Jannæus (105–79 B.C.).—The eldest son of Hyrcanus succeeded him as priest-king, but he only lived to wear the robes and the crown for a year. His brother, Alexander Jannæus, who then came to the throne, was very brave and warlike, and, during the twenty-seven years he ruled, found plenty of use for his energies both abroad and at home. He was constantly fighting to extend or to defend his frontier, and in one of his many little wars he found allies and helpers in Jewish-Egyptian generals. In his own capital a good deal of desultory rioting went on between the rival factions, rising at times almost to

the proportions of civil war. Once, when he was officiating as high priest on the feast of tabernacles, some of the neglected Pharisees, angry at the attitude of the priest-king, pelted him and the smart Sadducees who stood around him with the citrons which had been supplied for so very different a purpose. Alexander Jannæus responded to the attack rather as king than as priest. He charged the people, and some six thousand of them were killed. He certainly could not have liked the Pharisees, but he must have thought well of them, for when he found himself dying he desired his wife to form a government with them rather than with the Sadducees.

7. After the Death of Alexander Jannæus.—Salome Alexandra took her husband's advice. She was an earnest, strong-hearted woman herself, and keen enough to appreciate these qualities in the Pharisees. She turned to them at once in her trouble, and the Pharisees rose to the occasion. They forgot themselves, and remembered only the needs of the kingdom. They proved wise counsellors and staunch friends to the widowed queen, and for the nine years in which Salome Alexandra lived to rule over Judea, the country was prosperous and at peace. She had two sons. The elder, Hyrcanus II., who was rather a sleepy, indolent sort of person, was made high priest. The younger, Aristobulus, who was of a much more energetic nature, busied himself in State affairs, and took an

active interest in the army; and differing from his mother and brother, he looked for his friends and his supporters among the Sadducees.

CHAPTER VII.

A NEW DYNASTY.

1. Antipater the Idumean.—When the wise queen Salome Alexandra died (B.C. 70) the differences between the characters and the interests of her two sons resulted in open discord. A certain Antipater, the son of a governor of Idumea, found opportunity for his ambition in fanning the flame. He was a bold, crafty, unscrupulous man, this Antipater, and wanted the sovereignty for himself. He grasped the position at once. He saw that it would be important not to make enemies of both brothers. To gain his object he must seem to espouse the cause of one or the other. He did not covet the position of priest-king, only of king. Hyrcanus, the weak elder son of Alexander Jannæus, was already installed in the priesthood.

Antipater determined, for the present, to support him in the double dignity. He shrewdly thought that it would be easier to hoodwink, and, when the time came, to supplant such a puppet as Hyrcanus, than to make a tool of the younger brother.

2. Rome arbitrates.—So after the death of their mother the two brothers began fighting for the crown. The Pharisees were mostly on the conservative side of Hyrcanus, and the Sadducees with the more attractive Aristobulus. In an evil hour Aristobulus asked Pompey, the great Roman consul, to arbitrate on the matter. Pompey was busy himself at the time with his conquests in Asia, but presently he received envoys at Damascus from the rival brothers. For a while Pompey's decision was held doubtful, and the impatient Aristobulus one day withdrew without waiting for it any longer. This disrespectful action helped Pompey to come to a decision. The victorious Roman general determined to settle the dispute in his own fashion. He marched against Jerusalem, reduced it after a three months' siege (B.C. 63), declared the possessions of Alexander Jannæus to be forfeit to Rome, proclaimed Aristobulus a rebel, and confirmed Hyrcanus in the priesthood, but with the lower title of ethnarch instead of king. It was a strong measure on the part of Pompey. Still it was strictly political and not religious warfare, and in that sense to be honourably distinguished from the tactics of Antiochus

Epiphanes. Pompey made war on the Jews, and not on Judaism. Though the Temple was in his power, he left its altars undesecrated and its treasures untouched.

3. Antipater's Plans.—It turned out a fortunate arbitration for Antipater. He was very clever and quite unscrupulous. He recognised the power of Rome, and having no feeling for Judea except as regarded himself, determined at all costs to keep friends with the Roman government. Great as Rome was at this time, she did not despise small partisans; and, like the mouse in the fable, Antipater more than once made himself really useful to the lion. Little by little he gained his object, and saw his own house rise and the house of the Asmoneans fall. He got his two sons, Herod and Phasael, appointed to the governorships of Jerusalem and Galilee. Later on, he arranged a marriage between his son Herod and a beautiful girl called Mariamne, the great-granddaughter of Alexander Jannæus. This alliance, he thought, made another firm rivet in the family chain he was forging. If he had only known, that seemingly strong link was fated to be the first to snap. But if he had known, it would probably have made no difference in his selfish, headlong course. Hyrcanus was such a puppet that he was left in possession of such shadowy dignity as the priesthood conferred. Antipater transacted state business in Hyrcanus's name, and minor and local matters in the provinces were settled

on the spot by representative councils, which were set up in five different places. Supreme authority on all subjects was exercised by the Sanhedrin, which had its seat in Jerusalem.

4. The Sanhedrin.—The Sanhedrin was a council consisting of seventy-one learned men, chosen entirely for their goodness and their wisdom. Character was the great point; no proselyte, no money-lender was admissible. The members of the Sanhedrin were taken from all ranks of the nation, but the high priest himself could not *claim* to be a member, and the king was excluded, lest his opinion, backed by his lofty position, might carry too much weight. Young men, too, who might be hasty in their judgments, and unmarried men, who might be harsh, were alike ineligible. Grave cases, of the sort which come before our English judges in the criminal courts, were brought to the Sanhedrin to decide upon, and it was finely thought that men, who had not the sympathy and experience which years and children bring, could not rightly weigh the temptations which lead less happy folks to sin. The Sanhedrin could settle small disputes arising out of civil or ceremonial law, and in serious cases it had the power of punishment, under some limitations, even to the extreme penalty of death. But this right was taken away by the Romans about the year 30. From that date the procurator had to confirm the order to any capital sentence which the Sanhedrin might

pronounce. Some people think that the beginning of this national court of justice may be traced, like so many other good things, to Ezra. They think that the men of the Great Synagogue, which Ezra founded on the return to Palestine, gradually developed into the councillors of the Sanhedrin. Other historians say that the Great Synagogue and the Sanhedrin were quite distinct institutions, though both names come from Greek roots, and mean the same, an 'assembling together.'

5. The Fall of the Asmonean House.—Aristobulus and his two sons were taken prisoners to Rome by Pompey (61 B.C.). They escaped, and were recaptured, and revolted again; and a few years later Aristobulus died, and the elder son, Alexander, was beheaded by command of Pompey. Yet a few years more, and the younger son, Antigonus, after a desperate struggle, was executed by command of Mark Antony (37 B.C.). The interval was a stormy one. Under the successive changes in the Roman Government Judea remained tributary to Rome, and the Asmoneans were treated as rebels. Hyrcanus continued to reign, but did not govern, as the Roman nominee. Pompey, Cæsar, Cassius, and finally Mark Antony, all favoured Antipater, who was the virtual ruler. So much power had he, even over the Sanhedrin, that when his son Herod, the governor of Galilee, was once summoned before that assembly to answer for a lawless act of bloodshed of

which he had been guilty, the very judge lost courage to accuse the son of the dreaded usurper. Herod, on his own responsibility, had had some captives executed. Sentence of death was the distinct, and solemn, and seldom exercised right of the Sanhedrin alone. It was, nevertheless, only with great difficulty that the poor weak Hyrcanus had been induced to summon the council. Herod came forward, bold and defiant, and at the sight of him and his armed followers, all the members of the Sanhedrin, save the old judge Shemaiah, lost their courage and dignity, and, with much greater haste than he had summoned it, Hyrcanus dissolved his council. There were endless insurrections. Under the triumvirate (Cassius, Cæsar, and Pompey) there was a serious revolt, and Jerusalem was occupied and the Temple robbed (52 B.C.). When Julius Cæsar came to be first consul of Rome and first power in the world there was a little breathing-time. He showed himself friendly to the Jews, and his murder (44 B.C.), which was so great a blunder that one a little forgets the crime of it, was nowhere more deplored than in Judea. The grief of the Jews lasted, perhaps, the longer because Julius Cæsar's successor, Cassius, imposed a very heavy tribute on them. Herod was collector-in-chief, and showed himself more Roman than the Romans in his activity of extortion. The Roman government, so supported by the Idumean usurpers, continued consistent in its support of them. Antipater was poisoned

during the consulship of Cassius, and his murderer was executed by Roman soldiers. At last Antigonus thought he had a chance. It was after the battle of Philippi, when Mark Antony came to Palestine (40 B.C.). Antigonus got the Parthians to help him, and for three years this brave descendant of the Maccabees held Jerusalem against the enemy. He got Phasael and Hyrcanus into his power, and Herod barely escaped. Phasael seems to have lacked the Idumean audacity; he killed himself in his prison. Poor old Hyrcanus had his ears cut off—a hard fate for the gentle, inoffensive old man. But the hope of Antigonus was not only an Asmonean restoration, but to unite and renew in his own person the offices of priest and king. No mutilated priest might stand at God's altar, so Hyrcanus, by having his ears cut off, was as effectually put out of his nephew's way as if he had been put to death. Possibly Hyrcanus, if he had been consulted, might have preferred the latter fate as the more merciful. He had it in the end. The triumph of Antigonus, great as it was while it lasted, lasted only a very little while. The Roman and his legions were more than a match for the Asmonean prince. Mark Antony took Jerusalem at last (37 B.C.), exactly twenty-six years, to the day, after Pompey's capture of the city. Antigonus was put to death, and Herod the Idumean was proclaimed King of Judea.

CHAPTER VIII.

REIGN OF HEROD.

1. Antipater's 'Desire' fulfilled.—In the seventy-eighth Psalm there is a sort of dramatic summary given of some of the early experiences of the Israelites. We are told the story of the sins and sorrows in the wilderness, of 'the fire that was kindled against Jacob,' and 'the anger that came up against Israel.' Presently we come upon the verse, 'And He gave them their own desire.' If we did not know the sequel, how gladly we should stop at this happy-sounding little verse, thinking, 'Now surely their troubles are over; here is peace at last for those grumbling wayfarers, since God has granted them their own desires.' But we do know. The whole story is before us, not spelled out bit by bit, as it was with them. And we know that the gift of their own desire was just the worst of all their troubles. The moral is easy to see, if a little difficult to apply. All of us, now and then, have greedy longings for 'flesh in the wilderness.' We cry for it, and pray for it, with eager angry passion. And sometimes we are given our 'desire,' and allowed to eat to the full of the unwholesome food we crave. It was so with Antipater. He had longed to found a royal house, and had schemed and sinned to that

end. He was ‘granted his desire.’ His son Herod was now King of Judea, and of all the rightful family none were left but the old, deaf Hyrcanus and a young lad named Aristobulus, the brother of Herod’s wife Mariamne.

2. How Herod strengthened his Position.—This Aristobulus, the great-grandson of Alexander Jannæus, was of course the real heir to both crown and priesthood. The crown was out of the question, but Herod thought he might indulge his wife and please his mother-in-law, and perhaps conciliate the people, by letting this young Asmonean wear the high priest’s robes. So Aristobulus was installed in the office. He was handsome and brave, like all that race of heroes; and the people, who never quite forgot that Herod was an Idumean and a usurper, were more pleased at Aristobulus’s installation than the king had reckoned on or thought safe. Presently Aristobulus was drowned, accidentally it was said, but those who knew held the king accountable for the ‘accident,’ and called it murder. The widowed mother of Aristobulus, and his beautiful sister Mariamne, were miserably angry at his death—the sister, who was also a wife, perhaps too miserable to show her anger. But the mother’s suspicions of Herod were so strong, and her desire for revenge so great, that she sent secret appeals to Cleopatra to urge Mark Antony to interfere. The Roman woman felt for the Jewish

woman through all the difference of their circumstances. Herod was forthwith summoned to Rome, and commanded to explain his conduct. He explained so well that Mark Antony not only did not doubt, but was delighted with him, and Herod came back to his capital, triumphant. Later on, when Antony was defeated at the battle of Actium (B.C. 31), and fled away with Cleopatra, Herod, in doubt as to what might turn out to be the policy of the conqueror, Octavius, thought it safest to let poor old mutilated Hyrcanus quietly disappear. It was given out that he died. Perhaps he did. If so, his death was singularly opportune, for it removed the last faint chance of Roman interference, or of a popular rally on behalf of the Asmoneans. Then Herod went to Rome, and had an interview with Octavius. His manners must have been better than his morals, for the great Roman was charmed with him. His friendship with the defeated Antony was forgiven him, and Octavius readily renewed and confirmed the valuable Judean alliance with Rome. Herod returned to Jerusalem, his position assured, and proud and pleased at the result of his diplomacy.

3. Herod as Husband.—Delighted with his success, Herod reached his palace, hoping to receive from his wife the sympathy which would be most welcome of all. He was disappointed. To further his ‘desire,’ Antipater had, as we know, married his son to the young Asmonean princess. It

was a diplomatic marriage, which did not turn out a success. Mariamne, if she had any feeling for her race, could scarcely be expected to feel any love for the man who had planned and profited by its downfall. Herod, to do him justice, did love her in his way. But it was not a nice way. He was jealous and mistrustful. Both times, before he set out for Rome, he left secret orders that, if accident befell him, she was not to survive. The secret leaked out. Mariamne was no patient Hindoo wife to submit to involuntary suttee. She was a proud and passionate princess, and she did not care for her husband. She never wanted his love, and she was bitterly indignant at these crooked proofs of it. There were thus no bright congratulations to greet Herod on his return, but the coldest, angriest reproaches. And there was a mischief-maker at court, a certain Salome, a sister of Herod's, to make matters worse between the royal couple. Salome hinted that the informer, who had told Mariamne of the secret compact, was a great admirer of the beautiful queen. It was altogether a most miserable home-coming, and Herod, between his love, and his suspicion, and his ambition, and his disappointment, was half mad. Perhaps wholly so, for the time, for in his fury he ordered the execution, first of the informer, and then of Mariamne herself. At this point in his career one pities Herod. His remorse was deep, and more lasting than his rage.

4. Herod as Father.—In this relation,

too, he failed. ‘On the whole, I had sooner be Herod’s swine than Herod’s son,’ said the Roman Emperor Augustus, and Augustus was Herod’s friend! Poor Mariamne had quite a little regiment of successors, none of them loved so deeply, and none treated quite so brutally as she had been; but these eight, some say ten, successors gave rise between them to endless quarrels and conspiracies in the palace. Herod feared, or was led to fear by one or other of the later wives, that two boys of his, who had called Mariamne mother, would one day avenge her death. So these two sons were executed. Another son, Antipater, was more than once in danger from this extraordinary father’s suspicions, and in the end, and only five days before his own death, Herod had him also killed.

5. Herod as King.—Disappointed in gaining the affections of his family, Herod was equally unsuccessful in attaching his subjects to him. He made great efforts. He restored the temple at immense cost; he built a great palace for himself to give work to the unemployed; and when a time of pestilence and famine afforded him his chance, he was really helpful and generous to the sufferers. But it was all in vain. He gained at best but a sullen submission. For one thing, he never understood the people. Even when well-intentioned, he made mistakes and jarred on them. He introduced into Jerusalem the Roman fashion of public games and fights with wild beasts. He did it

to amuse and please his subjects, but it was a dire offence to Jewish feelings. And his home life was a standing scandal to all the good Jewish husbands and wives who lived happily and respectably with their children. Altogether his kindnesses were distrusted and his motives suspected, and his pleasant relations with Rome were regarded as so many concessions to heathenism. Herod boasted, and not untruly, that Jews in all parts of the great Roman Empire were protected because of him and through his influence. The favour in which the Roman Emperor held him was, in truth, useful to the Jews. But nevertheless, in all his thirty-three years of kinghood, Herod never won one bit of loyal love from any one Jew who was near enough to him to know him.

6. The End of Herod's Reign.—He died at last, four years B.C. The long unlovely reign of the Idumean usurper was over. 'He was not estranged from his desire; and while the meat was yet in his mouth the wrath of God overtook him.' So miserably conscious was the bad, unhappy king of the rejoicing which his death would cause, that he actually left orders for wholesale executions to take place on the day of his funeral. He longed, with an intensity that is somehow pathetic, in spite of the grotesque wicked form it took, that some sound of mourning should be heard in the city. But his unrighteous will, which in life had been fulfilled from fear, in death was disregarded. He lived, and men and women

wept; he died, and they smiled on one another.

7. Hillel: a Contrast.—There is never a cloud without a silver lining. Whilst Herod the Idumean raged in the palace, Hillel, 'the greatest of the Rabbis,' taught in the schools. Hillel was president of the Sanhedrin from 31 B.C. till the year 9 of the common era. He was one of the first, and certainly the most famous, of the presidents to whom the title of Nasi[3] came to be given. Hillel was born in Babylon, but when quite young he went to Jerusalem, which was a sort of university for students. He was very poor, and had some difficulty once in getting admittance to a certain school. It is said that, one winter's morning, he climbed up on the window-sill of the class-room, and there listened as well as he could till the cold and the cramp made him drowsy. The lesson went on, and the master fancied that the room was darker than even the thick-falling snow would account for. He went to the window, and there was poor Hillel curled up fast asleep and more than half frozen. When Hillel grew up and became teacher instead of student, pupils in his school met with no such adventures. He was always ready to listen and to help, and as painstaking and sweet-tempered as he was wise. 'As patient as Hillel,' and 'as modest as Hillel,' came to be used as proverbial standards. One day there came a knock at his school door. A heathen lad stood there, laughing and defiant. 'Teach me the law,' he

cried, ‘in the time in which I can stand on one leg.’ He meant to mock at the Rabbis and at the Law they taught, and he had already been driven away from the door of Shammai, another famous Rabbi. Shammai took impertinence as a personal affront. Hillel looked on it rather as a sign of disease or deficiency. ‘A sensible and well-bred man will not offend me, and no other can.’ That was the spirit in which Hillel received the rude jester. ‘Certainly,’ we may imagine him saying to the lad in his dignified way, ‘it is rather a short time for a lesson, and, possibly, standing before me in the usual attitude would be more comfortable for you. But I can teach you what you want to know whilst you stand on one leg. “Do not unto another what you would not that another should do unto you. That is the whole of the law; the rest is commentary.”’ Often Hillel would robe his wisdom in wit, as is somewhat a Jewish trait. ‘I must hurry home to a guest I have been rather neglecting of late,’ he said one day as he finished his lecture at the school, ‘a guest who is here to-day and gone to-morrow.’ Some of his disciples wondered, but some were quick enough to divine their master’s meaning. Hillel meant his soul, the guest who has his ‘lordly dwelling-place’ in the body, but often has very little given beyond the lodging.

A great many of Hillel’s sayings have been preserved. Here are two helps against conceit and hasty judgment. ‘Do not believe in thyself till the day of thy death.’ ‘Do not

judge thy neighbour until thou hast stood in his place.' And Hillel had another charm which, perhaps, is not quite so universal as wit and wisdom amongst scholars. He was very particular as to personal appearance. 'They wash the statues,' he used to say, 'and cleanse and beautify the temple. How much more attention ought we to give to the temple of the soul!' His work, too, was as good as his talk. He plodded away at the traditional store-heap, and made some order and system out of the chaos. He set to work on the numerous injunctions, and made a beginning at their collection. He laid down certain rules—seven in number—for the interpretation of the Law. His labours were of great use to other workers in the same field, later on. His own life, however, was the very best of all his lessons.

CHAPTER IX.

JUDEA BEFORE THE WAR.

1. Herod's Will.—So ill brought-up a family as Herod's naturally took to quarrelling about his property after his death. His will was characteristic. It left much of his wealth to Rome, and divided his dominions. The crown, with Jerusalem and the greater part of the kingdom, was bequeathed to a son named Archelaus; another son, Herod Antipas, was to have Galilee and Petræa; and to a third son, Philip, was given the northern provinces. But as Herod himself was only a tributary king, the whole will had to receive the approval of Rome before it could be carried into effect. The Emperor Augustus did not decide quickly, and meanwhile the rivals indulged in endless rioting. The country endured all the miseries of civil war, with no motive to lend it dignity. Beside the regular rivals named in the will, impostors

and pretenders to the crown arose, and each claimant had his own little set of adherents, and each behaved as if might were right. The only point on which there was any approach to agreement was the very general desire to share all round in Herod's treasures. Of all the deputations which waited on him, the Emperor Augustus must have inclined to receive most favourably the one which brought to him a humble petition to abolish altogether kingly rule in Judea. At last the Roman Emperor gave his decision, and in all important points Herod's will was confirmed.

2. Judea sinks into a Roman Province. —Under the title of ethnarch instead of king, Archelaus ruled Judea and Samaria for nine years. He imitated in a weak sort of way the vices of his father, and in the year 6 of the new era he was deposed and banished by Roman decree to Gaul. His dominions were declared forfeit to Rome, and Roman governors of Judea were appointed and given their head-quarters in Cæsarea. These procurators, as the Roman governors were called, were subject to the Syrian proconsuls, and these, in their turn, to the supreme power of Rome. Each procurator, during his term of office, was given the right of nominating all Jewish officials, including even the high priest. The responsibility of signing death-warrants was vested solely in the Roman governor for the time being, and the authority of the Sanhedrin was reduced to the limits of an

active synagogue council. In view of a subsequent charge brought against the Jews of this period, it is well to bear in mind this fact concerning the strictly defined judicial power of the Sanhedrin. The Roman court alone could pronounce, or carry out, the sentence of death. The procurators followed each other in rapid succession. Their oppressions had a terrible sameness, and the many revolts and riots caused by their extortions differed but little in character.

3. Jesus of Nazareth.—In every direction Rome was tightening that iron grasp of hers, and each new tax and each fresh restriction was an occasion for revolt. The miserable, impatient people were longing for a leader, for another Judas Maccabeus to raise the standard and 'break their bonds asunder.' And if such a hero had arisen, and had dealt with the Romans as Judas Maccabeus had dealt with the Syrians, he would assuredly have been hailed by the Jews as Messiah, the anointed of the Lord. The restlessness and rioting, which had their centre in Jerusalem, prevailed throughout the whole of Palestine, and nowhere more strongly than in Galilee, the northern province, in which Jesus, the son of Joseph a carpenter, first attracted attention. When Jesus was a tiny child a certain Judas of Galilee, a very ordinary hero indeed, only just escaped the perilous distinction of being altogether believed in by his countrymen. Judas the Galilean had headed a frantic outburst of

passionate patriotism. It had been locally successful. Led by him, the Galileans had revolted and the Romans had retreated, and, like his great namesake, this Judas conquered for a while. But it was for a very little while; and his followers had not time to turn this leader of theirs into Messiah before he was crucified by the Romans as a rebel. The enthusiastic reception which was given to this poor straw of a hero shows the tendency of the time and the temper of the people. The very stones seemed crying out for a Redeemer and Deliverer to come unto Zion. Under the circumstances a Messiah was almost bound to appear. And just in proportion to his pretensions and to their own wild hopes would be the rage of the populace if their Messiah disappointed them, which, if quite true and honest, he could scarcely fail to do. In all their dire need Jesus of Nazareth was never recognised as Messiah by the Jews. His title came to him in the Greek form. Christ means Messiah, or anointed; but it means it in Greek, and not in Hebrew. Jesus of Nazareth never got any real hold upon his own people. His followers in his lifetime were few, and of an unimportant and illiterate sort. The Jews of the time took little notice of his existence and his doings. He lived and worked just as many other Jewish teachers then lived and worked. He went about from place to place, healing, helping, and exhorting, and rousing in the hearts of those who heeded a sense of better things. But many of the Essenes preached

and tended the sick, and the virtues of humility and charity, and contempt of worldliness, were virtues common to all honest Pharisees. It was chiefly in Galilee, among the heathen and among such Jews as had wilfully or heedlessly gone astray, that Jesus attracted attention. The bulk of the nation were not so much hostile as indifferent. Yet, though the sympathies of Jesus were avowedly with the 'lost sheep of the house of Israel,' the wholesale and indiscriminate denunciations reported in the New Testament as made by him against the Pharisees are the inventions of a later time, when Christians had begun to take up a hostile attitude towards their mother religion. There were, doubtless, shams and hypocrites among the Pharisees, who well deserved to be denounced; but also we know there was a whole class of them—they must have been pretty numerous to be classified—who 'did the will of their Father which is in heaven, *because they loved Him*' (Jerusalem Talmud, Berachoth, ix. 5). Jesus himself probably never denounced Pharisees nor Judaism. But of Jesus himself very little that is trustworthy is known. It was not till long after his death, perhaps fifty years, that even the first of his biographies, which are contained in the various books of the New Testament, came to be written.

The Jews readily admit that Jesus of Nazareth, an enthusiastic preacher of their own race, was good and virtuous. They regard the morality he preached as identical with the morality which forms the basis of

Judaism. They look on it as pure to the point of unpracticality, on which point it differs from the Jewish ethics which were its inspiration. They consider 'Love thy neighbour as thyself' (Old Testament) a sufficient injunction. The command, 'If he ask thy coat, give him thy cloak also' (New Testament), they venture to think excessive. They trace the text of the Law, which Jesus declared he 'came not to destroy,' in all the discourses of Jesus; they find the influence of the prophets in his parables, and they read Hillel between the lines of the famous sermon on the mount. But at the same time Jews reject altogether the divine pretensions of Jesus; they deny the possibility of the Law, revealed by the Almighty, being abolished, and they abhor every deviation from the pure doctrine of the absolute Unity of God. As to the death of Jesus, the Jews disown all religious responsibility for it. They look on it as a Roman execution, and one due to political, rather than to religious, causes. Jesus was brought before the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate in the year 29, and was, by him, condemned to die, on the charge of provoking revolts against Roman authority. On the cross was inscribed 'King of the Jews,' which goes far to show that it was as a pretender against Rome, and not against Heaven, that Jesus was crucified.

4. Jews in Egypt and Syria.— Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, and Antioch, the capital of Syria, at this period

took rank with Rome in all the arts of civilisation; and in science, and in philosophy, and in commerce, the Jews were in no wise behind their neighbours. Egypt had at this time a great number of Jewish inhabitants, perhaps a million altogether. They were artisans and merchants for the most part, but there was a goodly sprinkling too of soldiers and of scholars. And to the capital came, as it were, the cream of all the cultivation of the country. The Alexandrian philosopher Philo, who has so wide a classical reputation, was a Jew, not only by race, but by conviction and sympathy. He was born about the year 1 C.E. Both in Egypt and in Syria the civilisation was wholly Greek, and the Greeks were what is called pagans or heathens. Now there are pagans and pagans. The cannibals who murdered poor Captain Cook were one sort; these were not at all of that kind. The Greeks were cultivated, delightful, attractive heathens, and the science and philosophy, and the charm and polish, that the Jews of Egypt and of Syria gained from their intercourse with the Greeks was of distinct benefit to them. The drawback of it all, the weak point, was of course the paganism, which proved almost as catching as the polish. Greek Jews grew to be different from Palestinian Jews. To the Palestinian Jews, the Law, in sober truth, was ‘a light,’ and the commandment ‘a lamp.’ They hungered after no other ‘wisdom;’ and although its paths were no longer ‘the paths of peace,’ its ‘ways’ to

them were ‘ways of pleasantness,’ and often the only ways of pleasantness they knew or cared to know. Greek Jews would have said, perhaps, that they took broader views of Judaism. They certainly took views broad enough to overlook a good deal, and their wide way of regarding things made them a trifle inexact about ancient landmarks. To Grecianised Jews the rigid practices of Judaism had become a little irksome, and the mystical rites of paganism a little attractive.

5. Birth of Christianity.—Christianity, as a new religion in opposition to Judaism, was founded by Paul of Tarsus, who proclaimed the abolition of the Mosaic code of laws. Paul had not known Jesus. He had been at first an opponent of his doctrines, but he was converted about the year 37, and soon went much further than his master. What Jesus preached was scarcely a religion, and Christianity is something perhaps a little different even from the so-called religion of Christ which Paul formulated. Paul became the apostle to the Gentiles, who, in a sense, were ready for him. The cultivated heathens were wanting, by this time, a more spiritual religion than their own, and they were used to worshipping so many gods, that to require belief only in three was a great simplifying of their faith. To strict Jews the Trinity would have been unthinkable. What Paul taught was in effect a new faith—new in dogma, and new, to some extent, in

doctrine. Jesus had distinctly said ‘not one jot nor one tittle of the Law should pass away.’ Paul disregarded this, and definitely and deliberately cast aside the obligations of ‘the Law.’ Strict Mosaic observance was a burden which the pagan would not have taken upon him, and was one from which the lax Jew was glad to be relieved. Antioch and Alexandria were the cradles of the new faith, and, stripped of its Jewish swaddling clothes, the infant Christianity was soon strong enough to run alone, and pagan images, like Dagon, fell before it.

6. Reign of Herod Agrippa.—In the year 36 the procurator Pontius Pilate was recalled to Rome, and in the person of a grandson of Herod’s there came about a restoration of the Herodian dynasty, which lasted for seven years. When, some five-and-forty years before, Mariamne’s sons had been put to death by order of their half-mad father, there had been a mother and a tiny baby left desolate by the execution. The wife of the murdered Aristobulus had fled with her little orphan boy to Rome, and the Emperor Tiberius’s sister-in-law, who was also a widow, had formed a strong friendship for the poor Jewish lady. The Emperor had a young son called Drusus, of about the same age as Herod Agrippa, and the two boys were constantly together at court. When Drusus died the Emperor found it at first too painful to see Herod Agrippa, as it reminded him so much of the loss of his son; and later on, when an intimacy

sprang up between the pleasant young Jewish prince and Caligula, the Emperor's grand-nephew and probable heir, Tiberius seemed to find this new affection as trying to his feelings as the memory of the old. Perhaps he was jealous of his heir, and grudged him his friends. At any rate, Herod Agrippa, who had been a court favourite, became a court prisoner, and iron chains took the place of golden ones. In the year 37 Caligula became Emperor, and one of his first acts was to take his friend Agrippa out of prison and to find a throne for him. Herod's son Philip, who had been ruling the northern provinces of Judea as tetrarch since the year 4, when the Emperor Augustus had confirmed Herod's will, just at this juncture opportunely died. His uncle Philip's possessions were given to Herod Agrippa, and presently the dominions of Herod Antipas were added, and the title of king conceded. The Roman governors were withdrawn, and a Herod once more reigned over Judea. Herod Agrippa was a very different man from the original Herod, his grandfather. Prosperity and adversity are each, in their different ways, sharp teachers, and Agrippa was an apt pupil. He hung up in his palace his iron and his gold chains side by side; and the iron that had entered his soul, and the gold that had gilded his circumstances, put rivets and framings to a very complete life. Herod Agrippa was a good Jew and a good king. He 'strengthened the foundations' in a double sense. He built a third wall round Jerusalem, and he began

to build up in his people a sense of comradeship and of self-restraint which would have been to them as a triple line of defence against their enemies. But he had so little time. He died in 44, in his fifty-third year, and only seven years after his accession.

7. Caligula and the Jews.—Such influence as his friendship gave him, Herod Agrippa exercised over Caligula for the good of his Jewish subjects. But it is impossible to put into a quart vessel gallons of water. Caligula could only appreciate Herod to the extent of his capabilities, and these were not great. He was his own hero, so, necessarily, his power of hero-worship was low and limited. He believed in himself, this Caligula, and it was such a poor self to waste belief upon. His vanity drove him mad. He had his statue cast in gold and put up in his own heathen shrines, and then he gave orders to have the like erected and worshipped in the Jewish temples of Jerusalem and of Alexandria. To a man the Jews resisted. From Alexandria they sent a deputation to Rome, and the philosopher Philo left his Greek studies to head this deputation and to plead for his fellow-Jews. In Jerusalem Agrippa made a grand banquet, and introduced the appeal to the Emperor after dinner. Both temples gained a reprieve from this impious insult. How long it would have lasted we cannot tell; but Caligula was assassinated in 41, and under his successor, Claudius, the religious liberty

of the Jews was not interfered with.

CHAPTER X.

THE WAR WITH ROME.

1. Agrippa II. Roman Governors.—Herod Agrippa's son, who was named after him, was only seventeen years old at the time of his father's death. Judea was once more, to all intents, a Roman province; for although the Emperor Claudius left the young Herod Agrippa in nominal possession of his dominions and his title, and was personally on pleasant terms with him, yet Roman governors of Judea were again put in commission. This Roman governorship was like an open wound to the Jews. It was not only that the procurators were often plunderers and oppressors; the people might have borne that more or less patiently; but the very presence of foreign rulers, alien in faith and race, kept up a constant irritation. And for another thing, they were unwisely selected. Once an apostate, a nephew of

Philo, was put in command, and the people were expected to obey a man whom they very properly despised. Another time a brother of a favourite slave of the Emperor Nero was appointed governor, and this relationship was the sole qualification for the appointment that any one ever discovered in him. Jews are always, at the best of times, a little impatient of authority. They were not too easy to manage even under Moses. Under these unsympathetic Romans, and that Rome-patronised king of theirs, they grew turbulent and desperate. Herod Agrippa, in truth, was not of much use to them. He had a beautiful sister, Berenice, and on occasion she would kneel in picturesque attitudes, and he would plead in eloquent periods, to one or other of the Roman oppressors; but, on the whole, Herod and Berenice both kept on excellent terms with Rome, and prudence rather than patriotism was their ideal. They came of a self-seeking race, this royal brother and sister. Herod Agrippa preached peace when there was no peace to his subjects; and when he found his smooth counsels were unheeded he retired with his sister to Rome, and there found other things to talk about with Titus. Meanwhile in Judea riots grew into rebellion, and rebellion into organised revolt. In 66 the Roman garrison at Jerusalem was overpowered and put to death by the Jews, and the Roman governor, Cestius Gallus, had to appeal to the prefect of Syria for assistance.

2. Vespasian sent to Judea.—The war had begun in earnest. The Emperor Nero could not understand a repulse to the Roman arms from this small corner of the world; yet judging, from the accounts which reached him, that the desperation of the Jews was making the Judean revolt a somewhat serious affair, he sent the famous general Vespasian and his son Titus with orders to quell it at once. From a distance it did not seem a difficult order—the skilled cohorts of Rome, with obedient Syria for their base of operations, against that handful of undisciplined desperadoes. But it took four years to do—four long, dreadful years of terribly unequal struggle. Rome found these Jews no ordinary rebels, and the invasion of Judea was no 'walk over' to the conquerors of the world. The Romans encountered a people with a history and a faith, fighting valiantly for both, and found them very hard to conquer.

3. Preparations for Defence.—The Jews saw at once that, with such a foe as Rome, pitched battles in the open would be a mistake. Their best chance lay in defending the fortified cities, and in endeavouring to wear out by resistance the patience of the invader. There was no trouble to find commanders, the difficulty lay rather in the selection. There were volunteers in plenty for the post of officers, more in proportion perhaps than for that of privates. But supplies and troops were both forthcoming, and north, south, east, and

west the country roused itself for the effort at freedom.

4. Josephus.—The province of Galilee was put in command of a man named Josephus, a descendant of the Asmoneans, who lived to earn for himself a better reputation as a chronicler of his country than as a soldier in its service. At this time (66) Josephus was about thirty years old, extremely clever and capable, and well inclined to play the part of his famous ancestor, and lead his followers to victory, if victory was to be won. It all lay in the 'if,' for Josephus was a very different sort of man from Judas Maccabeus. If Judas had been defeated by the Syrians he would have died fighting; he would never have surrendered. Judas Maccabeus fought in the uncompromising spirit that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego have made historical. 'We are not careful, O king, to answer thee in this matter,' said those model Jews: 'if our God whom we serve will deliver us from the fiery furnace, He will deliver us; *but if not, be it known to thee, O king, we will not serve thy gods*.' Josephus had no thought of cutting off all possibility of retreat in that fashion. His service was more after the sort of the half-hearted heathen, Naaman. He would fight for Judea, but Rome was his Rimmon in the background, and, in his most enthusiastic moments, Josephus was never unmindful of his own interests. He organised his troops, and defended in person a fine fortress built

on a rock at Jotapata. This citadel he held for forty-seven days against Titus, and his soldiers supported him gallantly. The Romans were more than once repulsed, and presently Titus set up a strict blockade, intending to starve the garrison into surrender. The Jews liked fighting better than starving, and surrender was out of the question. They had no food, and hardly any water left, but they soaked their clothes in those last few precious bucketfuls, and hung the dripping garments in the sun. The Romans could not believe in such wilful defiant waste, and believing the garrison must be better supplied than they had imagined, they raised the blockade and began the attack again. The famine-stricken garrison fought like heroes—again and again the Romans were driven back. At last 'the battle was to the strong,' and Jotapata fell. The Romans entered the fortress, and found none to receive them save the dead and the dying. Josephus, and just a few like him, had made good their escape to a neighbouring cavern, and to this safe little retreat a Roman envoy from head-quarters was presently despatched. Vespasian was most anxious to transform Josephus from an enemy into an ally, and Josephus was equally anxious to give his strength to the stronger side. But it had to be managed. His followers were not so ready as he, to act like the rats in the proverb. The envoy was desired to wait. 'We must submit to the will of God,' Josephus piously began, and, pressed by his companions for clearer

counsel, he proceeded to urge that the death of martyrs during the siege having been denied to them, it were vain to seek that distinction now. The faces around looked but half convinced, and then, more boldly, the tempter hinted, ‘We may live to serve God and our country in other ways.’ The eager listeners frowned; they had faltered enough to flee, but not to altogether fall. Such counsels sounded to them like pious, unpatriotic platitudes. The crafty commander was quick to note the dark looks of his companions, and changed his tactics. He professed to agree with them. ‘You are right,’ he exclaimed; ‘it is better to die than to surrender. Let our own swords be the preservers of our honour.’ This was more welcome advice to men in an exalted mood, and they all agreed to die by each other’s hands, and the last left, it was arranged, should kill himself. They cast lots to settle in what order they should die, and in the end, whether by good luck or by good management, Josephus was one of the only two remaining. Josephus at once politely offered to be executioner, but the other man hesitated, and offered his services in that capacity to Josephus. Neither really wanted to be victim, and so both made up their minds to live, and left the cave together. Josephus accompanied the waiting envoys to Rome, and was received by Vespasian with every mark of respect. The fact of the surrender was slurred over; Josephus called himself a prophet instead of a renegade, and claimed to be fulfilling events which he had

all along foreseen. Vespasian smiled quietly at these pretensions. He had gained what he wanted, the co-operation of Josephus, and the qualms of the man's crooked conscience were no concern of his.

CHAPTER XI.

THE END OF THE WAR.

1. The Defence of the Provinces.—The story of the siege of Jotapata repeated itself throughout the country. One fortified place, and then another, fell after heroic resistance. Tarichea and Gamala and Gischala are names as honourable to the Jews of the first century as are Lucknow and Sebastopol to Englishmen of the nineteenth. To students of history the ancient and the modern names alike recall memories of patience and pluck undaunted by overpowering numbers. But with the Jews the heroism was all in vain. Gamala, like Jotapata, fell, and Gischala was abandoned, and Tarichea was betrayed, and

the end was always the same though the means varied. Vespasian and his son Titus, accompanied too by the time-serving Agrippa, pushed northwards through the country in a miserable sort of triumphal progress. The beautiful Lake of Tiberias flushed red as they passed, not in the sunset, but in blood; and gates were opened, not in welcome, but in response to battering-rams. There was a brief lull whilst Vespasian was taking possession of his imperial dignities in Rome, but in 69, when crowned emperor, he thought it quite time, for his own credit's sake, that the furious little dependency should be completely crushed. Titus was ordered to advance against Jerusalem, the Emperor judging that when the capital should be in the hands of the enemy, the sullen, dogged resistance of the provinces would cease.

2. Affairs in Jerusalem.—The capital was not ready for the foe. It was showing itself stronger in defiance than in defence, and wasting time and energy and supplies in miserable internal strife. There was a war party and a peace party in Jerusalem, and each split up into various factions, and each finding some separate form of expression. The war party were the most numerous and the most noisy. Every one was eager to fight, but every one had his own opinions as to the best manner of fighting; and if each one did not exactly expect to have a post of command himself, he at least held strong views as to the merits and claims of his

immediate neighbours. The zealots who had fought under Judas the Galilean in the year 4 had grown fiercer since his time, and worse men had joined, and lowered, the standard of revolt which he had raised. Those who had cried that they would obey only the Law of God, protested now that they would not obey the law of Rome, which was a different position to take up. In effect, it pretty nearly came to mean being a law unto themselves and rejecting all recognised authority. In many cases these men had put themselves into the power of the law, and so had personal reasons for hating and defying it. The other extreme section of the people, the most timid, would have had peace at any price. They cowered at the very name of Rome, and losing their trust in the 'strong Hand and outstretched Arm,' grew fearful and superstitious. Strange stories were tremblingly repeated from mouth to mouth of 'a light that never was on earth or sea,' which came and went in the starry heavens, and disclosed by fitful gleams an awful conflict raging between awful combatants. Bands of the most lawless of the zealots, under the well-earned name of Sicarii, or assassins, patrolled the streets, whilst the poor souls who saw visions slunk in the shadows. The 'terror by night' had come upon the doomed city, the 'arrow that flieth by day' was nearing its walls.

3. The War Party and the Peace Party: their Leaders.—In the beginning of his

career Josephus had had a rival in a certain John, who was subsequently appointed to the command of Gischala. John conducted the defence of that place ably enough, but was at last compelled to capitulate. He accepted the Roman terms, and then, by flight, evaded them. A delay in admitting the enemy into Gischala had been asked and granted, and John had taken advantage of this delay to make off with all his armed followers. When the Romans marched into the city, there were only women and children there to be led away captive. John reached Jerusalem safely, and, a fugitive in reality, was received as a warrior and a patriot, come to lay his arms at the service of the distracted city. Circumstances, rather than his merits, ensured him a welcome. The true story of the fall of Jotapata had only just reached the capital. News travelled slowly in those days, and the people had supposed Josephus to have died fighting at Jotapata at the head of his men, and had mourned him sincerely as a hero and a martyr. When the secret of the dark cavern became known to them, and they found that the commander whom they had trusted had betrayed his trust, and was a comfortable traitor in the Roman camp, their indignation knew no bounds, and in their rage John of Gischala found his chance. He joined in the outcry against the unpatriotic Josephus, who had once been preferred to him. ‘These be thy gods, O Israel!’ he cried, and the impulsive populace, remembering only that the man had been a rival of the

hated Josephus, and had been passed over for him, were eager now to make amends. They took John of Gischala for a leader on his own evidence, and they were not calm enough to hear the false ring under his brave words, and were too blind with rage to see how ambitious and useless were his fair-seeming designs. It was a terrible time. The Zealots had called on the Idumeans to help in the defence, and their presence in the city added another element of discord. Party was pitted against party, house was divided against house; even members of the same family took different sides, and hands and weapons that were sorely needed against Rome were turned with fierce anger and suspicion against fellow-Jews. The more moderate of the people had come by this time to sadly see that no possible heroism could avert the Roman conquest, that the defence of Jerusalem was at best the most desperate of chances, and that under such men as led the war party the struggle must be hopeless. This minority believed that a timely yielding might soften the severity of the foe, and preserve to them their religion even at the cost of their country. The truer patriots counselled conciliation, and at the head of these was the good old high priest Ananias. But his gentle advice was shouted down, and his supporters were accused of sympathy with Rome and hooted at as traitors, and the poor old man himself, before the end of the war, met with a violent death at the hands of the Zealots.

4. The Siege of Jerusalem.—It was a strong and beautiful city on which Titus looked as he slowly rode round the walls to reconnoitre. Jerusalem was built in a bowl of mountains. Even in its ruins, and eighteen centuries later, it is written of the city which its poets called the 'joy of the whole earth,' 'I never saw anything more essentially striking, no city except Athens whose site is so pre-eminently impressive.'[4] In those days it was fortified by three enormous walls, and the Temple, in all its glory, stood within the innermost. To the Jews it seemed impossible that even the first and outermost of these protecting walls should be taken. Begun by Herod Agrippa, and formed of great blocks of unhewn stone, the wall stood now 45 feet high and 17 broad, and 150 battlemented towers were built up in it at intervals. But battering-rams thundered night and day, and the first wall fell after a desperate defence, and then the second, and at last only the third and innermost was left to guard the Temple.

5. A Mediator sent: Terms proposed.—Titus, throughout the war, was consistently disinclined for unnecessary slaughter. When the first wall was taken he had hinted at capitulation, and had offered to distinguish between the people and the garrison in his punishments. He had reviewed his splendid troops in full view of the famine-threatened city, in the hope of inducing them to surrender, and he had sent

back mutilated prisoners of war to arouse a wholesome dread of his severity. It was all in vain; all idea of compromise was scouted, and when a breach was made in the second wall the defenders lined it with their living bodies, and for three dreadful days actually barred the conqueror's progress. But this wall, too, was taken, and then Titus, at his wits' end, sent Josephus as an envoy to see if it were possible to come to any terms, short of slaughter, with his countrymen. The case was desperate; Romans were without the city, and rioters within. 'In hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, in want of all things,' they were enduring 'the siege and straitness of their enemy.' And now came a messenger to them with proposals of peace. Josephus—he is the historian of it all—gives us an account of this interview with curious frankness. He retails his own eloquence at full length, and expresses his astonishment at the indignant refusal of any party of the people to even listen to it. Perhaps there was some mutual astonishment on the occasion. If Titus was sincere in wanting to come to terms, Josephus was certainly an oddly chosen ambassador. The sight of that fluent traitor, who had fallen so comfortably on his feet, must have been enough, in truth, to make the most peaceable citizen clutch at his sword. His mission, of course, failed. Josephus went back to his Roman patron, and his people went back to their impossible defence. A forlorn hope is sometimes better than an accomplished desire. Not one of that heroic garrison, for

all their misery, would have changed places with Josephus.

6. The Destruction of the Temple.—As befitted a kingdom of priests, their Temple had become to the Jews, in literal truth, their stronghold and their tower of defence. If only they had worshipped within those 'borders of precious stones' with half the fervour that they fought there, the end might have been very different. On the 7th of Ab, 3830 of the Jewish era (corresponding to the year 70 C.E.), fire was set to the cloisters of the Temple. All that day and all the next the flames smouldered, and the people, faint with hunger and sick with misery, looked on with dull eyes, unregarding. Then again their mood changed, and on the morning of the 9th, with desperate, despairing effort, they rushed forth on the Roman swords. They were driven back, and Titus, seeing the crisis had come, summoned a hasty council of war to decide upon the fate of the Temple. His generals, smarting under their repulses, voted for its complete destruction. Titus had some touch of human feeling, some sympathy with that passion of defence. He would have spared the Jews their Temple, and have been content to plant the Roman eagle on its walls. It was saved that last degradation. On that same evening a detachment of Roman soldiers was told off to put out the smouldering cinders of the blackened cloisters. The pent-up people, faint with famine and restless

with misery, burst out once more in ineffectual fury. Once more they were driven back to the very door of the Temple, and a Roman soldier, in careless wrath, took up a burning brand and tossed it after the retreating crowd. It fell on some inflammable stuff in a porchway, and quickly the Temple itself was on fire. Titus rushed to the spot, and tried with hand and voice to stay the work of destruction. It was too late. The shadow of the sword was lifted in the light of the flames. Then that too faded and died out, and darkness closed in upon the Jews, a thick darkness that could be felt.

BOOK II.

70 TO 1600.

DARKNESS.

וַיְהִי חֹשֶׁךְ־אֲפֵלָה

EXOD x. 22.

'A fifteen hundred years' tragedy.'

CHAPTER XII.

AFTER THE WAR.

1. Titus completes his Conquest.—With the taking of the capital the war was practically at an end. Jerusalem, 'grander in her fall than even in her days of magnificence,' was in the hands of the Romans, and Titus did not loiter nor grow lenient over the rest of his work. What fire and sword had left standing was ordered to be deliberately destroyed, and the ruins of the city and its Temple and its walls were all made level with the ground. The chief leaders of the defence were taken to Rome, and John of Gischala made a strong point of interest in Titus's triumphal entry. There was presently a ceremony in which the ambitious Jewish soldier once more played the first part; he was led out to public execution.

2. Masada.—There were three fortresses which held out even after the fall of Jerusalem, and one of them, Masada by name, in a certain sense was never taken by the Romans. The garrison of this place was commanded by a descendant of Judas of Galilee, named Eleazar. Eleazar was quite hopeless of victory and quite fearless of death. When he found that the entry of the enemy was only a question of hours, he

called all his little world together and made them a speech. He told them of the Roman way of dealing with prisoners of war, and bade them make their choice between surrender and self-inflicted death. Like the voice of one man came the answer of the nine hundred men who listened to him. 'We will die by our own hands, we and our wives and our children; rather death than dishonour.' Then they deliberately set fire to their poor dwellings and exchanged death-wounds. Thus, guided by fires lit by dead hands, and stumbling over unresisting corpses, the Romans entered the silent city, and came into possession of the last Jewish stronghold.

3. What became of the Chief Actors.—By the events of the war Herod Agrippa had lost his kingdom and his reputation, but he had contrived to save his fortune, and that kept for him the friends he cared about. In Rome he was very much appreciated. He and his money and his charming sister Berenice were all made very welcome at the court of the Emperor Titus. Josephus was very often one of the party. He, in his retirement, took to literature, and almost managed to make that disreputable. He wrote the 'Wars of the Jews' and the 'Antiquities of the Jews,' and his own most instructive autobiography. All these works are very valuable contributions to history—are, in fact, the chief, and almost only, records extant of these events; but each one of his books shows proofs of the authorship

plainly enough to make it a trifle untrustworthy. In compliment to his Roman patrons Josephus took the surname of Flavius. He lived in the full sunshine of imperial favour, and managed to find three women in succession to marry him. We may conclude that they were not Jewesses.

4. What became of the Country and the People.—Palestine was parcelled out into lots; parts of the land were given as loot to the Roman soldiers, and parts were sold to the highest bidders. Many of the people were slaughtered outright; many were reserved to be killed more artistically in gladiatorial shows, or in combat with wild beasts. Some of them were carried off into slavery, and some remained as slaves on the soil. The slave markets of the world were glutted, and Jewish captives became a drug in the marts. As citizens of a separate state the Jews ceased to exist. They had no longer a national centre. Long before the destruction of Jerusalem the dispersion of the nation had begun, but now it was complete, and, so to speak, official. There had been Jews in Alexandria from the time of the Ptolemies, and in Rome from the days of Pompey; they were to be found at this date in every place important enough to be remembered, throughout the wide Roman dominions. There were numbers of Jews in Antioch, in Greece, in Italy, on the north coasts of Africa, and in the sunny islands of the Mediterranean. But each and all of these dispersed and separated Jews had hitherto

turned in loyal thought to Jerusalem, and a self-imposed tax from 'him that was near and from him that was far off' had been regularly forwarded to Jerusalem every year towards the support of the Temple. This very tax was now used as a means to crush the nationality out of the people. Titus decreed that a like sum should henceforward be contributed by every adult Jew in his dominions towards the support of the temple of Jupiter.

5. Salvage.—To put up tamely with preventable evils is only less weak than to fret unceasingly over unpreventable ones. The Jews, at this crisis in their history, fell into neither error. They realised the wreck, and looked bravely round to see what could be rescued. Their country was gone, their nationality was threatened, their religion was in danger. Their 'Law' remained to them. They made a raft of that, and saved Judaism.

6. Jochanan ben Saccai: the Schools.—After the fall of Jerusalem, some members of the now houseless Sanhedrin asked, and gained, permission of Titus to establish themselves with their scrolls at Jamnia, a village on the sea-coast, not far from the port of Jaffa. Jochanan ben Saccai was president of the Sanhedrin at the time, and he at once called his disciples together and set up a school. Soon such schools became general, but the one in Jamnia was the first and the most famous, and was known as the

Vineyard. A good name, and prophetic, as it turned out; for a store of life-giving wine that vineyard came to yield. Their Law, in very little time, took the place of the Temple in the hearts of the people. It became the new Jewish stronghold, and by-and-by the Rabbis garrisoned it. It was a wise movement, and Jochanan was just the character to head it. He had sense as well as sentiment, and he was as practical as he was patriotic. 'Fear God even as ye fear man,' was the very last bit of counsel which Jochanan gave to his disciples. He was old then, and ill unto death, and some of those who listened criticised the words. They did not seem enough for the occasion. So much is expected of a last utterance. 'What!' said the disciples doubtingly, 'fear God only as we fear His creatures?' 'Even so,' came the answer, in weak, thrilling tones. 'You fear to do wrong in the presence of man; you are always in the presence of God: therefore fear Him as you fear your neighbours.'

7. An Unforeseen Result of the War: Jewish Christians.—There was one wretched and long-lasting consequence of the war with Rome, which grew naturally out of the circumstances, but which cannot be laid directly to the charge of Rome. Thirty years had passed since the death of Jesus and the conversion of the zealous apostle Paul. The little following had become a sect, not very large, not very important, nor as yet very pronounced in their opinions. The members of the sect

were known as Jewish Christians, and were perhaps at this time quite as much of the one as of the other. The war with Rome made the division between Jews and Christians sharp and final. The struggle on the side of the Jews had been a fight for life, for national existence. So impassioned were they, and so much in earnest, that even the help of the Samaritans and of the Idumeans, for the first time in their history, had been accepted by the Jews. In the great and pressing need for united action all differences seemed small, and to be overlooked in face of the fact that their country was in mortal danger. The one unforgivable sin in the eyes of the Judeans was that any Jew, for any reason whatever, should coldly stand aloof. There was a peace party among the Jews; a small minority who, as we have seen, honestly and sadly believed in the impossibility of victory, and who counselled conciliation on the principle of saving what could be saved. This party would have let the country go—provided their religion was left to them intact. They, even, were not too popular. But the Jewish Christians were different from these. They hoped for the success of the Roman arms, and it was in the name of religion that they refused to help their countrymen. They professed to see the fulfilment of prophecy in the destruction of Jerusalem. They declined to be on the other side to the prophets. They believed the Temple was decreed to fall, and they would not fight to avert its fate. All this they urged

quite earnestly and quite religiously in the light of their new and latest interpretation of the Scriptures. At any other time their opinions would have provoked only a discussion in the schools; at this crisis of national history it provoked national resentment. From the point of view of patriotic Jews, these others, Jews by race and by kinship, Jews who refused on religious grounds to strike a blow for Judea, were not only apostates, but traitors. The precepts of Jesus, and the practice of these his earliest followers, came by degrees to be regarded as cause and effect. The whole movement grew hateful to the Jews, socially and religiously and politically hateful. Hate begets hate, and deepens division. The small sect of Jewish Christians grew gradually less and less Jewish, and more and more Christian. The distinct position they had taken up in the war gave them a certain standing, and was another cause of their growth in numbers and in importance. The rift which had been so tiny at first between the old teaching and the new widened and deepened, and new causes for enmity forbade it to close as the years rolled into the centuries.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE REVOLT UNDER HADRIAN.

1. Conquered Jews in the West.—The first few years after the fall of Jerusalem, by contrast with what had gone before, were not, strange as it may seem, an altogether unhappy time for the Jews in Palestine. The worst had come, and the worst proved hardly so terrible as the waiting for it. The Romans were stern masters, but not vindictive ones. So long as the Jews accepted the new conditions, these were not cruelly enforced, nor were any of the private religious arrangements of the dispossessed people interfered with. The slaves, in many cases, bought their liberty. Their schools supplied an interest to the conquered Jews, and a link between them; and dispersed as they were, and despised to some extent as they were, the Jews did not become degraded. The existence of their Sanhedrin with its dignified literary labourers, chosen from their own ranks, kept up their sense of self-respect. Deep was the loyalty felt towards the president of the Sanhedrin. He became in some sort an uncrowned king of this fallen people. They called him their נָשִׂיא 'prince'; and, without one inch of territory, a very wide and a very real dominion this spiritual potentate grew

to have over the hearts and minds of his brethren. The internal government of the different Jewish communities in the Roman Empire varied. In Alexandria a head and chief, whom the Greeks called ethnarch, presided over a council of seventy elders. In Rome, each of the many synagogues had its own separate administration and its own separate name. Almost every place where Jews congregated had its own little council, a sort of miniature Sanhedrin, which looked after local Jewish matters. But all the various communities of the Western world, widely separated as they were, had one thing in common: they all acknowledged as supreme the authority of the נָשִׂיא or president for the time being of the Sanhedrin in Palestine. He came to be called the patriarch, and his head-quarters were first at Jamnia, then at Sepphoris, and afterwards at Tiberias.

2. Contemporary Jews in the East.—The exiles and captives in Babylonia and Mesopotamia had led a quiet life for centuries. They, like their brethren, were a captive race, but the Parthian kings, like the Persian kings, were milder masters than the Romans, and perhaps the Babylonian Jews themselves were more patient than the Palestinian Jews. It was, at any rate, an easier thing to be subject in exile than to be subject on native soil. The scattered communities settled between the Tigris and Euphrates had gradually established schools and seats of learning in the Babylonian

country. Besides the heads of these schools (רֵישֵׁי כַלֵּי), there was a political head or chief whom the Eastern Jews invested with a good deal of general authority, and whom they called רֵישׁ גָּלוּתָא, Head or Prince of the Captivity.

3. Under Trajan.—The quiet time for the Jews ended in the reign of Trajan, who was Emperor of Rome from 98 to 117. He made a campaign against Parthia, and this roused all the Jewish subjects of Parthia to revolt, partly in help of their Parthian masters, and partly, perhaps, in dread of Rome and of the fate of their Western brethren. Trajan conquered Parthia in 114, but his death ended the Jewish fear of Roman rule in the East, for Trajan's successor, Hadrian, gave up this latest conquest.

4. The Policy of Hadrian.—Hadrian, when he became Emperor in 117, restored Parthia to the Parthians. He found he had enough to do to keep what he had got. But the Jewish readiness to revolt against Roman supremacy was not lost upon him. He did not forget how quick the Jews had been to fight. East or west, it seemed to him that if but a breath of freedom were in the air, it was fanned among this Jewish race into a perfect whirlwind. Why should they not submit to Rome, and sink their own nationality? Greater nations than they had passed more or less peacefully under the Roman yoke, whilst to subdue this tiny

troublesome dependency had tasked a Titus! To conquer Jews was not enough; they wanted crushing. That was this new Emperor's view of the case, and he proceeded to set about it. He was keen enough to see that there was religion at the root of this dogged Jewish resistance; that the Jews had fought for their convictions as much as for their country; that they were the people of the Book as well as the people of the Land. And reasoning thus, the Emperor Hadrian determined that he would pluck up this Jewish religion by the roots, and not be content to lop away at the branches as his predecessors had done. He would pass the ploughshare over Jerusalem, he would build a new city with a new name on its site, and where the Temple had stood he would erect a shrine to Jupiter. And he did all this, and yet he failed. The heathen Emperor did not know that Judaism was quite beyond the power of his legions. He had never heard 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.' If he had heard, he probably would not have heeded. But he certainly did his best, according to his lights, to effect his object.

5. The Jews in Revolt: their Leader.— No Josephus has left a minute record of the last struggle between the Jews and Rome, and a great many details are altogether absent. We know generally that the Jewish resistance to Hadrian lasted three years, from 132 till 135; and that Julius Severus

had to be summoned from Britain before the Roman success could be assured. The Jews fought against Hadrian as, fifty years before, they had fought against Titus, with the obstinate courage of men who valued their own lives less than the life of the nation. They were led by a man who, at the beginning of the revolt, they called, in their enthusiasm, Barcochba, son of a star; and at the end, in their despair, Barcosba, son of a lie. His real name we do not know. He fought and he died fighting, and in defence of the truth as he believed it; and so far, and although he failed, he takes his place among the heroes of history, and earns a right to the title first bestowed upon him. His claim to the second is, happily, less clear. Tradition tells of tricks he played to incline the people to believe that his powers were supernatural; and there are tales, too, told to his discredit, which, if true, might make 'impostor' a free translation of Barcosba. But the only facts of which we are sure are that he led the Palestinian Jews in their second revolt against Rome, from the year 132 till 135; that for a little while the forlorn hope of the people seemed possible of realisation, and that Barcochba took possession of the ruins of Jerusalem; that he and his followers were dislodged from thence, and that the last stand against the Roman enemy was made at a fortified place called Bither, which fell on the same sad anniversary, the 9th of Ab, which was already so full of fatal memories to the Jews.

6. Akiba: the Romance of his Youth.— There was one good and famous man who believed in Barcochba, and who stood by him to the end. This was Akiba, one of the greatest of the Rabbis, who left his books and his home to share the dangers of the campaign, and to carry the standard by the side of the Jewish leader. And books, and home, meant more to Akiba than to most men, for he had not inherited these happinesses, but had had to work and to wait for them. His was a romantic story. He, like Moses, had been a shepherd. By craggy torrents and by grassy plains he had wandered with his flocks, until one day he had met a fair maiden, and they had walked and talked together, and then the long sweet summer day had seemed unaccountably to shorten. He and the maiden had straightway fallen in love with each other. But she was a rich man's daughter, and her father, when he heard about it, was extremely angry. He declared she should not marry 'that beggar,' which was calling names, and not quite true ones, for Akiba was no beggar. Then the father threatened. He said she should have no fortune if she persisted in her 'folly.' The girl was much too much in love to care about money, and Akiba, who might have hesitated, and not thought it honourable to marry a rich girl, gladly took her now that she was to be poor and friendless. So they married, and for a while they were most unreasonably happy. But of course it was not a prudent marriage. They were very

poor, they had to sleep upon straw, and to go out into the fields to gather that. Akiba's wife was a sensible woman as well as a loving one; the sort of woman who would do her husband good and not evil all the days of his life. She saw this could not go on. She knew her husband had talent; she advised him to go away and get admitted to one of the schools, where his talents would be recognised, and he would have the opportunity to study. She would not go with him, she said, to be a drag on him: he must labour, and she would wait. So he went, and the years went on, slowly and sadly for her, for her father was unforgiving; slowly and successfully for him, for strangers were kind. He had not only talent, but perseverance, and when at last he was chosen head of the college which he had entered as a poor student, he travelled back to his native place for his reward. He was a famous Rabbi by this time, and crowds flocked round him in eager welcome. One shabby, large-eyed woman hung back a little, but Akiba saw her and knew her at once, though all the girlishness and half the beauty were gone. He drew her to the front and held her close, and proudly told the story of her patience and of her trust in him to the sympathising onlookers. And as they listened a message came from the rich man, who had not joined in the common crowd of welcome. He desired to consult the famous Rabbi, whose visit was an event and an honour to the place. This rich man must have been one of those Jews who call

themselves Jews in their heart; he evidently was not a Jew in his actions or his interests, or he would have surely heard that Akiba was something more than a distinguished stranger. However, Akiba went to him, and found that his advice was wanted. The rich man told the Rabbi of the vow which he had made never to see or help his daughter; he was getting old now—was there any way the Rabbi could suggest in which the vow could be conscientiously broken? 'Would you have minded your daughter marrying a distinguished scholar, even had he been poor?' asked the Rabbi. 'No,' said the father, puzzled; 'but she married a stupid beggar.' 'Well,' said Akiba, smiling, 'I know not if I be the distinguished scholar that men call me, but I do know I am that Akiba who married your daughter.' So it all ended happily, and the good, patient wife regained her husband and her father at the same time.

7. Akiba: the Romance of his Age.—That was the home side of Akiba's life story. In the schools he won a distinguished place, and all his life he was as loyal to his duties as to his affections, and faithful to both even unto death. In the revolt against Rome the scholar turned soldier, and the husband was patriot. Akiba stood by Barcochba to the last, and when Bither fell, he was taken prisoner by the Romans, and by them most cruelly put to death. But his beautiful enthusiasm did not desert him even under torture. There is a Talmudic legend that he

smiled at his executioners, and that one of them tauntingly exclaimed to the poor old man slowly dying under their hands, 'Why, you look as if you rejoice!' 'And I do,' came the unflinching answer. 'Every day of my life I have repeated the שְׁמַע. To-day, for the first time, I *feel* what it is to love the Lord my God with all my heart, and all my soul, and all my strength. How should I not rejoice?'

8. Hadrian's Resolve accomplished.—Akiba's death was the last act in this war, which the Talmud calls 'the war of extermination.' Hadrian did what he had proposed to himself to do. A ploughshare was passed over what had been Jerusalem, and the foundations of a new city were laid, and it was called Ælia Capitolina—Ælia in honour of the Emperor, Capitolina in honour of Jupiter. 'One hundred and fifty years later Jerusalem was a term of ancient geography.'[5] The Jews of Palestine were massacred by thousands. Numbers were sold as slaves at the same price as horses at the annual fair held near Hebron. Judea was left, practically, a desert. Wolves and hyenas prowled about the ruined city, and such of the people as were not sold or slaughtered lived a banished, frightened existence in the caves among the mountains. One right the Roman Emperor conceded to the Jews he had 'crushed.' Once a year they were given the opportunity of 'buying their own tears,' as the Church historian, St. Jerome, expresses

it. Throughout all the long months they were forbidden, on pain of death, to approach the city. But on each anniversary of the sacking of Jerusalem all Jews who wished might come near and look upon what had been ‘the joy of the whole earth.’ The outcasts might come and lean against the bit of broken wall which was all that was left to them of all that had been theirs. They might weep and pray; but if they asked to wait and weep a little longer than the limited time by law permitted, then the Roman guard who watched could fix his own price for the privilege. He could make them ‘buy their tears.’

CHAPTER XIV.

THE REVIVAL OF THE SCHOOLS: THEIR WORK.

1. One of History’s Miracles.—If, shivering in the winter, we stand in a frozen field, full of dry brown trees, all stumps and

twigs and branches, looking all alike and all lifeless, we can hardly believe that, six months hence, that bare field will be a blooming orchard, with the sunlight flickering down on it through a canopy of pink and white and green. It seems a miracle, and in a sense it is one. Like nature, history, too, has her miracles, and both sorts of marvels are easy to understand when we remember that 'kings of the earth and all people,' like 'snow and hail and stormy wind' עֹשֶׂה דְבָרוֹ, 'fulfil His word.' Hadrian left Judea a desert, and the life, as he thought, crushed out of Judaism. He was hardly dead—he died on the first day of the year 138—when the seemingly sapless twigs began tremblingly to put out their little tender shoots. What one may call the oak of the forest, the glorious Temple, was hopelessly shattered by the storm, but, to keep up the simile, little cuttings from it were planted, and watered with tears, and they took root and grew. Small meeting-houses for prayer became general throughout the country. And these meeting-houses served, too, a double purpose, showing the intimate practical relation which exists between charity and religion. 'He prayeth well who loveth well.' These little buildings were used also as temporary homes for poor strangers, who were therein provided with free board and lodging. The recital of the קְדוּשׁ in our synagogues on the eves of Sabbaths and holy days, and of the הַבְדָּלָה the going out of Sabbaths and holy days, is a remnant of this institution. And in

these ancient, humble synagogues, as in our grander modern ones, the presence of ten men (*minyan*) made a sufficient beginning of a congregation. One after another, too, the schools of Palestine reopened, and by the year 175 the Sanhedrin was in active work, with Simon, the sixth president in direct line from Hillel, at its head.

2. The Schools: their Work.—The head-quarters of the schools of the west were fixed at Tiberias, and the centre of the eastern group was at Sura. The נָשִׂא or Prince, was the patriarch of the western Jews; and the רֵישׁ גָּלוּתָא, or Prince of the Captivity, ruled the eastern division. But there was a great difference, both of social and of religious position, between the patriarch and the prince. The patriarch in the west was president of the Sanhedrin, and generally distinguished by learning and knowledge of the Law; the prince, in the east, was merely a political vassal of the Persian or Parthian court. Some ‘princes’ acquired distinction in the knowledge of the Law, but it was an accident of their position, and not a cause or a consequence of it. Each eastern school had its own president. The high colleges, or Kallahs, were not always sitting; they met only for some months during the year. The work they did was not quite on the same lines as the university education of these days, although the name Kallahs may possibly bear a like meaning. Some commentators find the root of the word in כַּל which

means all or universal. The teaching was certainly that, in every sense. A week before each of the festivals popular lectures were given, and any one who liked might enter the halls. Tents were often put up to accommodate the extra numbers. One teacher of the period is said to have had 1,200 regular pupils of his own. The professors, however, did not deliver lectures, of which their students took more or less attentive notes. The instruction in these colleges was carried on by means of discussion and debate. Question was met by counter-question, and answers were often wrapped up in a parable or an allegory. The widest digressions were encouraged. The mere mention of some historical personage who had lived somewhere would lead perhaps to a long debate on political geography; this might glide off into a description of the physical peculiarities of the place or the people named, and this again into an animated botanical or even physiological discourse. All sorts of subjects were included in the 'course' of study—ethics, metaphysics, jurisprudence, and all the science that the period was capable of. Astronomy was one of the favourite subjects, and a certain famous scholar named Samuel, who died about the year 250, and who was a friend of Shapor, king of Persia, said, 'The paths of the heavenly bodies are as clear to me as the streets of Nehardea.'

3. The Masters of the Schools.—If the

method of instruction differed somewhat from our modern sort, no less different were the instructors. Many of the most eminent 'doctors' were only humble tradesmen. Tentmakers or shoemakers often, or carpenters, or weavers, or bakers. One of them, Rabbi Zadok, distinctly taught, 'Use the Law, not as a crown to shine with, nor as a spade to dig with.' Their practice gave expression to their belief that labour is one form, and perhaps not the least admirable form, of praise. They hated idleness, and they loved learning. They managed to give full employment to their heads and their hands, and they kept their hearts too in active and healthy condition, since the good of others rather than self-culture was the aim of their studies. The *Tanaim*[6] did not indulge in writing books, but they made good shoes, and good tents, and good loaves, and they turned out good and fairly educated young Jews by the score. So we, their descendants, may be grateful both for what they did and for what they did not do.

4. The Moral Influence of the Schools.—Dispersed as the Jews were amongst all people, these schools became a breakwater against the floods of barbarous ignorance and ungodly cultivation which surged around. The schools gave a religious education in the widest sense of the word, since the word of God supplied the text for every discussion and for every discourse. A guide for health, a code for justice, a theme for literature, a field for every branch

of historic and scientific inquiry, was sought and found in the Bible. 'Turn it, and turn it again,' says the Mishnah, 'for everything is in it.' The 'Law' was to the Jew a treasury of knowledge as well as a 'tree of life.' The minor moralities, the everyday virtues of sobriety, and of content, and of cheerfulness, the students must have learnt by example in the persons of their humble and hard-working teachers.

5. The Political Influence of the Schools.—Politically, these schools united the Jews and kept them a nation. Each community was visited in turn by a legate of the Patriarch, and this brought the whole of the scattered people into close and intimate relations. And besides this official connection with one another, there was the feeling of freemasonry which always exists among scholars, and which keeps up a bond of mutual interest. The constitution of the schools, too, helped and confirmed this sense of community. There were no class distinctions in the Kallahs, no broad line of division between 'town and gown'—absolutely no differences, save of character and of brain power, between student and student, or even between student and professor. Those who taught and those who learnt were all workers, and all of the people. This old Jewish school system produced a democracy of a very pure and patriotic sort, and with no opening for demagogues.

6. The Literary Influence of the Schools.—The literary influence was the most lasting of all, for the Talmud was its outcome. ‘Moses commanded unto us a law.’ From the very first, the ‘Law’ had to be explained and applied. The unwritten record of the numberless instances in which it had been so explained and applied, from the time of Moses unto that of Ezra, had become by this date an enormous traditional store. There had come to be a commentary and a precedent attaching to every phrase and almost to every word in the Pentateuch. The comments on the Law dated from its giving, on Sinai. Take, as an instance, the command, ‘Ye shall dwell in booths.’ It looks at first simple enough. But questions would soon arise. Did the ‘ye’ mean men, women, and children? did the ‘dwell’ include sleeping and eating? of what sort and material were the ‘booths’ to be? All such points were endless subjects for commentary, and were practically settled by custom. Commentary by this time had grown to an unmanageable bulk, and custom, in dispersion, had grown somewhat uncertain and unsettled. Whilst the Temple stood, and the people dwelt in their own land, wise and educated men were always at hand to expound the Law, and there was no need for all the shifting wealth of tradition to be stored, as it were, in one bank. But when the schools were scattered, and might at any time be closed, the fear grew that the currency, so to speak, might be debased, and perhaps some valuable bits

of it altogether lost. A resolve was gradually formed to make the oral Law into a written one, and to turn the traditions of seventeen centuries into an authoritative code. In one sense it was a pity, for wise men, who obtained a knowledge of the Law of Moses with its traditional interpretation through *vivâ voce* instruction, were better able to get at the true spirit of the Law and of the tradition than those who had to rely on the dead letter of books. Once written down, misunderstandings might creep in, and what had been useful as a guiding rein might be twisted by awkward hands into a yoke or a halter. There was a danger even of very earnest folks receiving this new written law with so much enthusiasm that they would count it as a second revelation, and hold it equal with the Law itself. But few things are unmixed good or unmixed evil. In most matters there is a balance to be struck, and here it was certainly better to risk some drawbacks from making the oral Law into a written one, than to face the grave chance of its being by degrees forgotten altogether. To Hillel, 30 years B.C., had first occurred the idea of collecting and sifting the enormous traditional store; and, about the year 200, Jehudah the Prince, or Jehudah the Holy, as he is often called, the seventh president of the Sanhedrin in succession from Hillel, seriously began the work of compilation. It was no light work. Rills from the 'fount of living waters' which first flowed at Sinai had run into two channels—Halacha, rule; and Hagada, legend—the one

an arguing and legal sort of commentary on the Law, the other a chatty and poetic and discursive one. Jehudah ha-Nasi gathered up all the vast store of Halacha; the traditions and interpretations of the wilderness, the decisions of the judges, the constitutional customs under the kings, the earnest communings of the exile, the vivid expoundings of Ezra, and the later commentaries and discussions in the schools. Jehudah ha-Nasi classified all this accumulation of Halacha, and by the year 200, he had arranged it all, under six different headings, into some five hundred chapters. Rabbi Jehudah's compilation became known as the Mishnah, from the root שָׁנָה to learn by heart, as contrasted with Mikra—which stood for Bible-reading, from קָרָא to read from a book. The Mishnah contains nearly four thousand rules, under the six heads of Seeds, Festivals, Women, Civil and Criminal law, Sacrificial laws, and laws of Cleanliness. To this code, later on, was added the Gemara, which is a sort of complement and commentary to the Mishnah, and includes the store of Hagada. Mishnah and Gemara together form the Talmud. And as the Talmud literature grew, which was a literature more or less intended for the learned, and was the result of learned discussions in the schools, there grew up also a system of popular lectures, and Biblical expositions and sermons for the people. These discourses were given in the synagogues, and formed the basis of the Midrashim literature (Midrash, from דָּרַשׁ to

expound). The language of the Talmud is partly Rabbinical Hebrew, partly Aramaic. There are two Talmuds in existence, the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud. The Babylonian one is the more perfect and authoritative, and was completed by a certain learned Rabbi Ashi, about the year 500. Long before that date the Palestine schools, one after the other, had to be closed, and the Palestinian scholars had mostly emigrated to Babylon.

CHAPTER XV.

CHRISTIANITY A STATE RELIGION.

1. How the new faith spread among the Heathen.—Whilst the growth from the seed which Moses had sown was being threshed out in the schools, the gleanings of the apostle Paul were being garnered as harvest in high places. The new religion had made progress in its first three hundred years of existence, but without the practice of universal love which it professed to

teach. The Christian command, ‘Love one another,’ was being, indeed, even less generally obeyed three hundred years after the death of Jesus than had been the Mosaic injunction on which it was founded, ‘Love thy neighbour as thyself,’ three hundred years after the death of Moses. But notwithstanding that sects in Christianity were already both plentiful and pugnacious, the new faith was driving paganism to the wall, and it is not difficult to understand how it was that this had come about. To Jews, the dogma of a Trinity was, and always is, unthinkable; but to heathens it was a welcome thinning of the ranks of their crowded Olympus. Christianity gave them a much purer and simpler idea of Divinity than they had hitherto held, and such selections from the old morality as they were bidden to accept with the new doctrine were not of an irksome sort. All the observances, and many of the restraints, of the Jewish Law, Paul, we know, had cast aside, and thus his teaching had been well received by the heathen almost from the first. Paul was accommodating, and proselytes in the early days had been won by persuasion; but Christianity, grown stronger, had grown aggressive, and by the end of the third century it had become a political as well as a religious danger to pagan supremacy. In the year 306, when Constantine, after a struggle, had succeeded in gaining the imperial dignity, he clearly saw the advantage which putting himself at the head of the Christian party would secure

to him. He faced both ways for a while, but before the end of his reign Christianity was the state religion of Rome.

2. The First Christian Emperor.—Constantine was sixty-two years old at the time of his formal conversion. He had been a quite comfortable heathen all these sixty-two years, and on his accession had ruled at first with fairness and justice. But when political motives, and his mother, the Empress Helena, who was an ardent believer in the new doctrine, had united to make him change his faith, he changed with it his character. He became both cruel and unjust. It seemed as if he really could not understand why, if he were converted, pagans, or Jews either, should remain unconverted. He never could grasp the fact that he, in his unconverted state, had been a heathen; whilst the Jews, in their unconverted state, were Jews. But this really made all the difference.

3. Constantine legislates on the Subject: the Effects.—Constantine tried to force the Jews into Christianity by making Judaism difficult to them and distasteful to others. All sorts of harsh and oppressive measures were passed into law. Throughout the Roman dominions Jewish subjects were forbidden to hold slaves or property, and, unless baptized, every office in state or army was closed to them. No new synagogues were allowed to be built, and restrictions were put upon Jewish forms of

worship. On the place in Jerusalem where the Temple had stood a grand church was raised to the memory of Jesus. The permission to make occasional pilgrimages to the ruins of the city was withdrawn. Jews might no longer draw near the walls of Jerusalem and buy the privilege of weeping there. Constantius, the son and successor of Constantine, was just as zealous in the new faith as his father, and quite as unsuccessful in his object. His Jewish subjects did not become converts to Christianity, but crowds of them throughout the Roman Empire left their homes, and joined their brethren in Babylon and Mesopotamia, or made new settlements on the shores of the Tigris and Euphrates. The schools of Palestine were gradually closed, and the power of the Patriarch, with his followers so thinned, naturally declined. It was one of the last of the patriarchs, Hillel II., who fixed the permanent Jewish calendar which is still in force. Before his time each president, for the time being, of the Sanhedrin had, month by month, fixed the date of the new moon by observation, and had settled at the beginning of each year, by calculation, what the character of the year was to be, whether a leap year or an ordinary year. Gamaliel, who died in 420, was the very last patriarch נְשִׂיא or president, of the Sanhedrin.

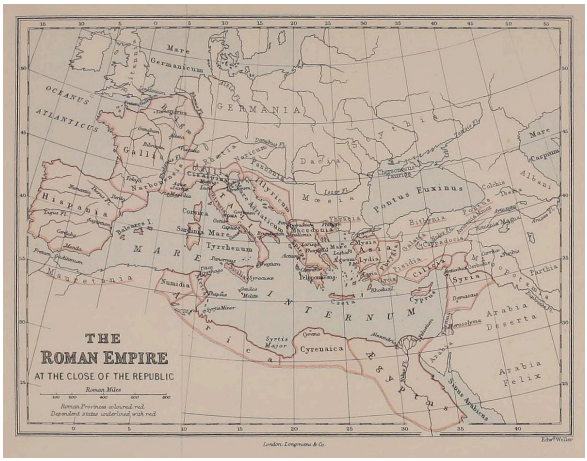
4. Jews in the East under Persian Rule.—The Eastern Jews, reinforced by these Western ones, remained under their Persian masters unmolested for quite

another century. The Persians were fire-worshippers, and their simple belief forbade persecution under the name of religion. The sun was their divinity, and every morning as they stood on the hilltops to salute it as it rose, and watched it shining impartially on sea and on land, on the pinnacles of a king's palace and on the twigs of a bird's nest, they made a beautiful meaning out of the beautiful sight. They saw that there was no limit and no selection in their sun-god's rays. As he warmed the roses into life, he did not stay to ask if they were going to be white roses or red ones. So these Persians who worshipped the sun tried humbly to imitate its wide and generous ways. They did not stay to ask any questions of their fellow-citizens, but like the sun with the roses, so long as each was good 'according to its kind,' gave each his due share of warmth and light with the rest. Thus, under the kindly protection of the fire-worshippers, the Babylonian schools flourished when the Palestinian schools were closed. And as the patriarch of the West lost his followers, the reigning Prince of the Captivity רֵישׁ גָּלוּתָא gained extra state and influence. He came to be greatly respected by all the scholars of the period, whether native subjects of Persia or immigrants from the Western world.

5. Julian the Apostate.—The zeal of the early converts, and the legislation of the first two Christian Emperors, made life very difficult to the Jews; and Christianity, in the

name of which they were persecuted, grew very distasteful to them. When on the death of Constantius, in 360, an emperor was crowned who proclaimed himself a pagan, there was great and barely concealed delight amongst the Jewish subjects of Rome. One's estimate of men or things depends so much on the point of view. By the fathers of the Church this pagan Emperor is called Julian the Apostate; by the heads of the Synagogue he must have been looked upon as a saviour. Immediately on his accession he declared all the persecuting laws to be a dead letter; he reduced taxes, abolished disabilities, and finally gave permission to the Jews to rebuild their Temple. Great were the rejoicings wherever this good news travelled. East and west, throughout the Roman dominions, Jews met and congratulated each other, and all hastened to send gifts and contributions to Jerusalem, like as in the old days when the Tabernacle was furnished in the wilderness by loving, liberal hands, which had to be 'restrained from giving.' Those on the spot set to work with a will, and the walls rose as by magic; and it really seemed to the Jews, in the exalted mood they were in, as if the ruins were helping to transform themselves into the Temple. It was all like a dream—so hurried, and so wonderful, and so unreal. Julian's whole reign only lasted three years. He was crowned Emperor in 360, and he died in 363, and his death put a stop to it all. Even before his death a check had come.

There had been a slight earthquake, or explosion, on the site of the ruins, which had greatly startled and terrified the excitable workmen. This incident gave rise to all sorts of tales of supernatural interference with their purpose; and very soon the work, so enthusiastically begun, was despairingly abandoned. A new and Christian Emperor was crowned in Rome, and the old bad state of things was re-established. Altogether, this brief lapse into paganism in the middle of the fourth century is like a flash of lightning from out dense thunder-clouds. It just enables us to see the surrounding 'thick darkness.'



Edw^d. Weller

THE ROMAN EMPIRE
AT THE CLOSE OF THE REPUBLIC

London Longmans & Co.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE BREAK-UP OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE: SOME OF ITS CONSEQUENCES.

1. Political Changes.—Theodosius, who died in 395, was the last of the Roman Emperors who held undivided sway over those vast dominions. After his death the ancient empire of Rome was split up into two great states, and styled the Empire of the East and the Empire of the West. The Northern barbarians found their opportunity in this division, and, in 410, and again in 455, great hordes of Goths and Vandals swooped down on beautiful, debased Rome, and plundered it. Within a century of the death of Theodosius the Roman Empire of the West had ceased to exist. The Emperors of the Eastern division —the Byzantine Emperors, as they were by-

and-by called—fixed their court at Constantinople, and kept up their title and much of their power for over one thousand years—till the year 1453, in fact, when Constantinople was sacked by the Saracens. The general shifting of boundaries which ensued on the break-up of a great power like Rome brought about various changes in government, which are easier to recognise than changes in sentiment and circumstance. We will look at the political changes first, and the map will be a help to the understanding of them. The conquests of the barbarians resulted in new names and new masters to the old historic sites. Goths and Vandals, Lombards and Franks, rose on the ruins of the great Roman state. From the latter half of the fourth century to the end of the fifth there was general storm and upheaval throughout those dominions, in almost every province of which Jews were to be found. Not to speak for a moment of the Eastern division of the empire, there were Jews in Italy, in Greece, in the Archipelago, in such parts of Germany as were civilised, in Gaul, and in Spain. By the beginning of the sixth century, things had settled down a little, and we can see some order, and find some well-known names and landmarks. Justinian was at that date Emperor of the Eastern remains of the great Roman state; Recared, the first Christian king of the Goths, ruled in Spain; Chilperic, who has been called the Nero of France, was his contemporary; and towards the end of that same century Pope Gregory I. was

the head of the Church.

2. Social Changes.—At this period of stress and storm, Jews were scattered in all the places where it was felt. But the legislation of the age forbade them to take the part of Roman citizens in the struggle. They were not regarded as Roman citizens either by Church council or by State code. In the eye of the law they were heretics, to be compelled or converted into Christianity, but to stand distinctly outside of it meanwhile. War was the all but universal profession. Jews might not hold military rank. They might not even be civil guardians of the peace, since 'no Jew in any cause could be witness against a Christian.' They might neither aspire to be owners of land, nor leaders of men. There were difficulties put in the way of their holding property, and difficulties in the way of their bequeathing it. By the time of Justinian (530–560) the 'must nots' and the 'shall nots,' of which the Jews were the occasion, amounted to quite a considerable portion of the famous Roman code. This sort of legislation, and the warfare consequent on the break-up of the Roman Empire, together produced one very noteworthy effect. With the fall of Jerusalem the people of the Land became in a sense the people of the Book. With the fall of Rome they seem to gradually become, and for many centuries to remain, the people of the ledger. It was another and a narrower change, and one for which the Jews themselves must be held

wholly free from blame. Cruel legislation turned a people with the strongest home instincts into an almost willing community of wanderers. It reduced men who, through generations, had loved to live by the work of their hands, to the necessity of living by the exercise of their wits. There was no leisure to train workers of the Bezaleel and Aholiab type into 'skilfulness in all manner of cunning workmanship,' for rough weapons were the chief demand of the age. There was no longer a chance for the old to sit, in peaceful sense of proprietorship, under their own vine and fig tree, whilst young tillers of the soil vigorously 'gathered in their corn and their wine and their oil.' The oliveyards and the vineyards and the corn-fields were often battle-fields, or sometimes pleasant adjuncts to the monasteries which were beginning to be built. In any case they were not for Jews, who might not be landowners, save in the sense that 'six feet of English soil' were offered in perpetuity by our English Harold to the invader.

3. Monks and Saints.—In the practical occupation of their lives, Jews and Christians were distinctly divided by legislation, and through religious sentiment they were drifting further and further apart. About this period, the end of the fifth century, the Church hero of the day was a certain Simon Stylites, afterwards canonised as saint, and added to that long roll of deified beings, to be prayed to and

protected by, which was making the Christian heaven something of a heathen Olympus. Saint Simon Stylites's claim to saintship and to hero-worship lay in the fact that he was living on the top of a pillar, and that 'living' meant to him not the common round of daily duties and daily cares, but a miserable and useless existence, persevered in from the purest motives. Saint Simon Stylites may serve as an extreme example of what was then, and for centuries after, the highest Christian ideal. There came to be a whole class of men called monks, and of women who were called nuns, who of their own free will gave up all the innocent pleasures and happinesses of life. They prayed, and fasted, and scourged themselves at regular intervals, and chose to live in bareness and discomfort, and often in actual dirt. They put peas in their shoes, and hair shirts on their backs; and the kindnesses they did—and they did many—were done from duty to God rather than from love of man. In the intervals of their set prayings and fastings they doctored the sick, but they seldom remembered that 'a cheerful heart doeth good like a medicine.' There was once a small sect among the Jews[7] who thought they could best serve God by selfishly withdrawing from the world in which He had placed them, who chose to suffer rather than to do, and who made an especial study and an especial care of their own souls. This sect, the Essenes, which was scanty and short-lived, was never in sympathy with the body of the Jewish nation. It was a system

altogether repugnant to Jewish notions of what is pleasing to God. Cleanliness, in the Jewish code, is not even next to godliness, but is a detailed and indispensable part of it. Wilful dirt, and discomfort, and dismalness, are, all alike, considered immoral, and the whole teaching of the Bible is on the lines that 'the servants of the Lord shall rejoice before Him,' and 'serve Him with gladness.' The monks of Christianity were an exaggerated outcome of that outlived error, the Essenes of Judaism; and we can understand how the silent, cowled, and barefooted monks, and the multitude of the readily worshipped 'saints,' made the principles of Christianity distasteful to the Jew, in like manner as the persecuting, blundering populace rendered the practice of it disgraceful. More and more the Jews lived a distinct and separate life from the peoples among whom they dwelt, separated by religious thought as well as by so-called religious legislation.

4. How Jews became Traders.—Leisure and a sense of security are needed for any industrious or cultivated occupation. The irruption of the barbarians, with the warfare which it brought in its train, not only gave little leisure for industry, but the constant movement of armed hosts made settled work of any sort impossible. There was also the less occasion for skilled labour, as food and clothing and weapons were the principal wants of those conquering and uncultured hordes from the North. The

misery, however, which these men caused as they marched was felt less by the Jews than by the natives of the soil, whose peaceful homes and whose growing crops were destroyed. Jews, by this time, were used to most minor hardships. They had, for very long, been wanderers and pariahs. They had been learning now for centuries, to 'hold all mortal joys with a loose hand.' 'I do not call my wife wife, but home,' said a Jewish scholar once. The tender little love speech came to have a very wide and literal meaning. Home, in our sense of the word, was to the Jew often roofless, and his pack served for his pillow. But steadfast, faithful affection, as often, walled the roofless dwelling round like a fenced city, and wife and children made 'home' to him out of the most unlikely places.

Jews accepted the new state of things. They bravely adapted themselves to the altered circumstances of their lot, and made the best of it. They had to live, though a hard and hurried and undignified sort of living it became. With a quickness which experience taught and self-interest quickened, they tried to make themselves useful and acceptable. Their own wants, as wayfarers in strange lands, made them swift to perceive the wants of others. They used their sorrows for stepping-stones. They had known 'straitness and the want of all things;' surely they could supply some. Such property as they managed to keep must needs have been of a portable sort, and much of it of a serviceable kind, and likely

to prove useful to rough new-comers. Barter would naturally ensue, and what the purchaser could not get from the Jew at hand could probably be obtained, through his medium, from a Jew farther off. And this was the very small beginning of the great system of international trading, in which Jews have so large a share. The descendants of David the sweet singer, and of Ezra the Scribe, and of countless unrecorded generations who 'gathered in their wine and their oil,' and were 'skilful in all manner of workmanship,' turned to buying and selling, and often to haggling and to hoarding. It was circumstances which made traders out of the studious, vine-growing handicraftsmen of the Book. And it was circumstances, quite as much as their own wits, which made them successful and proficient at their new calling. Jews were widely dispersed and yet closely connected, and were forced to be onlookers rather than actors in the world's affairs. This position gave them exceptional opportunities for trading. They were denied all healthy and ordinary ambitions, and thus money-making became to them an interesting and sometimes an absorbing pursuit, even when it was not; which it mostly was, a painful and sordid necessity. Jews ceased to be producers; the Land and the Book seemed alike to be closed against them. They developed into the chief traders and financiers of the Middle Ages, ranging from pedlars and hawkers to contractors of State loans.

5. The Slave Trade.—The incessant warfare, and the imperfect civilisation, of these early centuries made of men and women and children a recognised article of commerce. Selling people into slavery has a dreadful sound, but in those days it was not quite so dreadful a thing, nor even so avoidable a one, as it would be in these. Great tracts of cultivated land were constantly being laid waste; what was to be done with the vanquished dwellers thereon? In that rough and ready system of waging war, it was centuries too soon for trying any of our modern methods of treaties of peace or diplomatic settlement. The hostile inhabitants of a conquered state had to be exterminated or to be rendered harmless. It really resolved itself with the victors into a question of slaughter or of slavery. And of that hard choice, slavery was possibly the less uncomfortable fate to the conquered, whilst to the conquerors it was decidedly the more economical arrangement, and on the whole, perhaps, the more humane; for, transformed from enemies into property, the slaves were pretty sure of fair treatment from buyer and from seller both, and their chief hardship would be the chance of being sold in separate lots, and of being divided from their families as well as from their country.

6. Jews as Slave-owners.—In their owners, at any rate, as events turned out, the captives were, for the most part, fortunate. The principal purchasers of slaves

were found among the Jews. Jews were so widely scattered by this time that they seemed to be always and everywhere at hand to buy, and to have the means equally ready to pay. They were the kindest of masters. 'Remember how ye were slaves in the land of Egypt,' is the preface to God's law on the treatment of dependants. 'For ye know the heart of a stranger,' is further and tenderly urged. To the credit of these trading Jews, so often tempted to drive a hard bargain, to seem and even to be hard, and sordid, and grasping—to their credit be it said that they acted in the spirit of their Law, and proved the gentlest and most generous slave-owners the world has ever known. So fond grew the grateful slaves of their Jewish masters, that they very often desired to become Jews themselves, and were thus the indirect cause of an immense deal of harsh and suspicious legislation. The Church conscientiously abhorred Jews. It could not be expected to look on calmly at the possible manufacture of more of them. So council after council of the Church busied itself in devising plans to prevent, or in imposing penalties to punish, any conversions to Judaism.

7. Church Councils.—The early Church, in its practice as in its precepts, borrowed much from the ancient Synagogue. The Sanhedrin was something of a model for the Council. Both assemblies claimed a supreme authority quite independently of political conditions. The new faith had held its first

deliberative sitting at Jerusalem about the year 50, when the matter to decide was the question, which had been raised at Antioch, whether heathen converts could dispense with the Abrahamic covenant. According to Church tradition, a brother of Jesus presided at this assembly, and Paul opened the discussion. At any rate, this was the very first so-called Council of the Church. As time went on the meetings multiplied, though the debates were rarely decisive of such great issues as was that first one. Jews were a frequent and favourite subject for discussion, and concerning them the expression of opinion and the consequent legislation were apt to be, unhappily, unanimous. There were occasional exceptions. The Pope or Father of the Church, for the time being, was the head of these councils, and towards the end of the sixth century, when Gregory I. was Pope, his firmness and humanity for a brief while gave some check to the persecuting mania. Pope Gregory was just as much in earnest as any of the Church dignitaries, past or present, in hating the slave trade, but he hated it because it was slavery, and not only because Jews were slave-owners. He loved righteousness and he hated wrong-doing, but he did not put Jewish or Christian labels on these things, and love or hate accordingly. Pope Gregory was several centuries in advance of his age.

8. Eastern Jews.—Whilst the Goths and the Vandals were overrunning Europe, and

the Jews of the West were turning into pedlars, the Jews of the East were also beginning to have a history apart from their schools. For nearly 500 years the history of the Babylonian Jews was almost that of the happy nations who have none. From the time when Jerusalem fell, till the beginning of the sixth century, the troubles of the Jews who were settled on the banks of the Tigris and of the Euphrates had been but slight; occasionally irritating, but very rarely serious. In Mesopotamia, for a very long period, Jews as citizens were undistinguishable from other citizens, and they on their side, as a certain Rabbi Samuel expressed it, 'respected the law of the land no less than the law of Moses.' Their Judaism was absolutely uninterfered with, and they had leisure for little scholarly quarrels among themselves. There was, it is true, a fanatic sect among the fire-worshippers, who were often trying to disturb the pleasant and peaceful terms on which the Jews lived with their Persian masters, but they seldom succeeded. Unluckily, however, neither the peace nor the pleasantness was secure; both depended on a good many causes, among which the disposition of the reigning ruler counted for much. At the beginning of the sixth century troubles began for the Eastern Jews, and speedily grew formidable. In the year 530 their reigning רֵישׁ גְּלוּתָא Prince of the Captivity, was hanged by order of the State. This act was followed by other persecuting measures. Many Jewish religious rites were

prohibited, and the schools were closed. Luckily, by this time the great work of the schools was accomplished, the Babylonian Talmud having been finished by Rabbi Aschi some forty years before.

9. War between the Persian and the Byzantine Empires.—Early in the next century there was a terrible struggle between the Persians and the Romans, or, to be exact, between the Persians and that Eastern division (all that was left by this date) of the great Roman Empire which held its court at Constantinople, and which was now called the Byzantine Empire. The Jews throughout the Persian dominions, despite recent differences, were loyal to their Persian masters, and helped them to fight and to conquer. Egypt and Syria were wrested from the Romans, and Jerusalem fell before the Persian arms. Throughout the war the Jews helped the Persians loyally as Persian subjects, but in Jerusalem it is to be feared that the Jews fought rather as personal, than as Persian, enemies of Rome. The old scenes brought back the old memories, and Jews remembered only too well and too fiercely. There was terrible fighting in Jerusalem. The church which Constantine's mother, the Empress Helena, had built on the ruins of the Temple, was pulled down, the Christians were cruelly massacred or sold as slaves, or sometimes sold as slaves and then massacred. It was to a great extent a religious war, which accounts for its bitterness. The Persians

were monotheistic in their faith, and they hated what was pagan in Christianity, the trinity of Gods, the plurality of saints, and the worship of relics. The successes of Chosroes, the Persian Emperor, did not, however, last long. Twenty years later the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius reversed it all. He reduced the Persian ruler to submission, he made Syria and Egypt come again under his control, he rebuilt his churches in Jerusalem, and forbade the Jews, as in the days of Hadrian, to approach within a certain measured distance of its walls. This was contrary to the promise which the Emperor had made to the Jews, and was a weak concession to the wishes of the bishops, who readily, however, gave him absolution for breaking his word.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RISE OF MAHOMEDANISM.

(600–650.)

1. 'The Koran or the Sword.'—Another change was impending. Persians and Romans both were soon to be put on their defence against a common enemy. By the beginning of the seventh century it was clear that boundaries were again to be altered, and faiths to be again unsettled. A new and mysterious movement had begun, with Mahomed, half soldier and half prophet, at its head. The end Mahomed had in view was conversion; the means he employed was conquest. Across the deserts of Arabia came his cry of 'the Koran or the sword.' It sounded a fierce and fanatic cry enough, but at least there was a suggestion of choice about it, and that may have been part of the secret of its success. People by this time were so used to the threat of the 'sword,' that many were more than half willing to accept, without any inquiry, the 'Koran,' which was offered as an alternative. And those who did inquire were, for the most part, all the more ready to accept. For the Koran, or sacred book of Mahomed, was a simple book. The unity of God was its one dogma. It promised much in the way of reward, and demanded little in the way of belief. Its acceptance was the main point, and to the 'faithful,' things were to be made pleasant in both worlds. The Koran was a formidable rival to the books of Zoroaster, and to the Gospels of the Christian Church. The fire-worshippers in the East, beset by civilising influences, were ready for a new creed, and the Christ-worshippers in the West, possessed as they were by the

persecuting spirit, and materialised as they had become by pagan influences, were making their religion dishonoured and unacceptable. So the victorious cry of 'the Koran or the sword' swept onward like a trumpet call, and the man who raised it, before he died—and he died in 632—found half the inhabited world ready to cry with him that 'Allah was God, and Mahomed was His prophet.'

2. What Mahomed learned from the Jews.—From very early times there had been a settlement of Jews in Arabia. Tradition says that the Queen of Sheba travelled thence to pay her famous visit to King Solomon. But, however that may be, there are tolerably trustworthy records which tell of Jewish dwellers in Arabian valleys before the Christian era. At one time there undoubtedly existed an Arab-Jewish state. Its limits and dates are not very exactly defined, but over this Himyerite kingdom, as it was called, there was certainly a Jewish king ruling at the time of its downfall in the year 530. It was brought to an end by a Christian king of Abyssinia, who in his turn was defeated by Chosroes II. of Persia. There is also a story, seemingly legend, and yet historical, of a people called the Khozars, whose king, Bulan, became a convert to Judaism, and who founded a Jewish dynasty and ruled long and happily by the shores of the Caspian Sea. But however much or however little of truth there may be in these traditions which treat

of kings and dynasties, certain it is that, divided by the desert from the pursuit of persecutors all round, Arabian Jews did live, century after century, in their fertile valleys, secure in the possession of perfect freedom of faith. In the northern parts of Arabia these Jews were wandering herdsmen like their Ishmaelitish brethren, but in the south and east they carried on a considerable trade with India and Persia and the Byzantine Empire. They were much more civilised than the native Arabs among whom they dwelt. The Jews were people with a past, which is in itself impressive. They could tell tales without end, of heroic ancestry, or could speak of the higher life with the authority befitting descendants of seers and prophets. They were the direct heirs of Abraham; these other Arabians, fulfilling the destiny of Ishmael, whose 'hand was to be against every man, and every man's hand against his,' had the blood of Hagar the bondwoman in their veins. The Arabian Jews came naturally to have that influence over the native tribes which the higher always exercises on the lower. And thus it came to pass that the new faith, which Mahomed came from Arabia to preach, showed many signs of the Jewish surroundings in which its founder had been born and brought up.

3. Islam.—The very name which was given to Mahomedanism has a certain Jewish suggestiveness about it. Arabic and Hebrew belong to the same group of

languages, the Semitic. The Arabic ‘Islam’ and the Hebrew שָׁלוֹם are derived from a like radical term, which denotes soundness, or a perfect and unimpaired condition. Peace is another rendering of the word, and expresses a very similar meaning, since ‘peace’ would naturally ensue from a sound and healthy state of things.

4. Likenesses between Islam and Judaism.—There was a kinship of religious thought, as well as of language and of race, between the Arab and the Jew. The Unity of God is the first principle of Islam as it is of Judaism. Abraham and Moses are the heroes of the Koran as of the Pentateuch, and the covenant of Abraham and the dietary laws of Moses are enjoined by Mahomed on his followers.

5. Differences between Islam and Judaism.—But there were differences too, and these of a very vital sort. ‘Allah was God.’ That doctrine of the new faith, the Jews, worshippers of One, might agree with. That ‘Mahomed was His prophet’ was debatable. Moses, even, was not always unquestioningly obeyed. There was small hope for Mahomed. And much of the teaching of the new prophet soon showed that the deserts of Arabia, and not the heights of Sinai, inspired it. Judaism, for all its minute bodily observance, is essentially a spiritual religion. Future rewards are not mapped out after any human pattern, and such Hereafter as is hinted at is of a purely

spiritual kind. ‘In My presence there is fulness of joy,’ is the nearest glimpse God vouchsafes of His heaven. ‘Allah’s’ promised paradise was of a quite different sort. Creature comforts, and very earthly delights, were to be the portion of believers in him, and in Mahomed his prophet. It was a programme likely to appeal to a lower class of mind, and the Jews remained unaffected by it. Mahomed was never able to count the Jews among his converts. From among the Jews of Arabia he met, indeed, at first with contempt and opposition. They would not grasp the hand that held the Koran, and so the other, the sword-arm, was lifted against them. There was some fighting, and much bad feeling, at first between the Jews and the followers of Mahomed. During the lifetime of the Prophet some Jews were oppressed and some were exiled, and some were forced to serve under the banner of Islam. But after his death, and as the tide of Mahomedan conquest swept on, the Jews found cause to rejoice in the more tolerant treatment which they experienced from the rulers who adopted the faith of Islam.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CONQUESTS OF THE KALIPHS: EFFECT, RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL, ON THE JEWS.
(600–800.)

1. Progress of Mahomedanism.—There were great changes brought about in the position of the Jews from the spread of the new faith. The followers of Mahomed conquered east and west. First Syria was overrun, and the Christian subjects of the Byzantine Empire driven out of Jerusalem, and a mosque, sacred to Allah, was erected on the ruins of the Jewish Temple and of the Christian church. The power of Persia was broken and finally subdued by the Mahomedans,[8] and their victories over the Persians were rendered the easier by the help and sympathy which they found among the oppressed Persian Jews. Then from Asia the followers of the Prophet turned to Africa, and, establishing themselves in Egypt, looked threateningly across the straits at Spain. Within fifty years of the death of Mahomed the enormous empire of the kaliphs, as his successors were

called, extended from the Caspian Sea to the Straits of Gibraltar, and was soon to bridge these, and to come to its greatest triumph in the Peninsula. It was just in these countries that Jews most congregated, and therefore the history of Islam has a special importance for the students of Jewish history.

2. Gaonim.—The first effect of the Mahomedan supremacy was felt in the neighbourhood where it arose, and chiefly amongst those scholars of Babylon who, within the memories of elderly men, had seen their schools closed and their רֵישׁ גָּלוּתָא hanged. It was no part of the Mahomedan policy to make war on schools. Conquest once assured, the conquered might occupy themselves as they pleased. So long even as contrary beliefs did not take the active form of opposition to Islam, the holders of such beliefs were contemptuously and good-naturedly ignored. It was a pleasant experience for the Jews. Under the tolerant sway of the first kaliph, Omar, who had reason, in his quarrels with the Persians, to make friends with the Jews, the schools were reopened, an heir of the murdered רֵישׁ גָּלוּתָא was reinstated, and the heads of the colleges took on themselves all their old duties and dignities with the new name of Gaonim.[9] Talmudic studies were again revived, and the *kallahs* (high colleges) of Sora and Pumbaditha grew to be quite celebrated centres of learning. They were diligent students, these Gaonim, and a Gaon

called Jehuda, who was blind, and who lived about the year 750, was one of the most active of them all in compiling the laws and decisions contained in the Talmud, and arranging them in systematic order. The Gaonim gradually became the great authorities on all religious and legal questions; and only political matters, and subjects which lay a little outside of the keenest interest, were left to the management of the רֵישׁ גְּלוּתָא. His authority waned again. Some of those who wielded it were not very wise, and managed to come into collision with the Mahomedan rulers. Then from an hereditary dignity it became an elective one, and the succession provoked quarrels. At a certain stage in their history the Jews would seem to have prized scholars more than 'princes.' At any rate, the Gaonim came to the front, and the office of Head of the Captivity grew to be of less and less importance. Finally, under the combined influences of neglect from the Jews and of some jealousy from the Mahomedans, the office, after having existed for 700 years, expired altogether, as we shall see, in the tenth century.

3. Spain in the hands of the Mahomedans.—Eighty years after the death of the Prophet, the Koran and the sword, having made their triumphant way in Asia and in Africa, the Mahomedans proclaimed the one and sheathed the other in Europe. In 710 the flag with the crescent floated from the cathedrals and citadels of

Spain, and Mahomedan kaliphs ruled in the place of Catholic kings. It made an enormous change in the condition of the Jews. Christian legislation had been hard on them for centuries. In public life it kept them from ‘use and name and fame,’ and in private life it prevented any sort of dignity or pleasantness. A Jew might neither be born nor be married, neither love nor work nor play, without penalties and restrictions. He might have the children he had begotten, or the servants he had bought, taken from him at any moment without excuse or possibility of redress. He could be forced into a church and made to listen unwillingly to bad sermons, and if he resisted he might be scourged. Would he be converted, or would he have his property taken from him? was a common form of question to the Jews. And when, about the date of Mahomed’s death, a Catholic king named Sisebut was reigning in Spain, even so much of choice, as was implied in this, was withdrawn. Not conversion or confiscation, but baptism or exile, was the alternative presented to his Jewish subjects by this royal fanatic Sisebut. It was a terrible state of things, for the difficulty to the Jews was to find any place where they should be better off. Dagobert was the contemporary king of France, and the laws he administered, and those that his predecessor Clotaire had had to administer, were precisely of the same sort. Heraclius, the ruler of the Byzantine Empire, had only lately renewed those edicts of Hadrian and

Constantine which forbade Jews to approach Jerusalem; and with his recent experience of the part which Jews had taken in his struggle with Chosroes, Heraclius could not have been in a very friendly mood towards Jews generally. They could anticipate no welcome in any corner of Heraclius's dominions. They might perhaps have tried Italy, where the Popes were powerful; for the Popes, as a rule, were not unjust to the Jews. And some did, and found in the comparative kindness of the heads of the Church good cause for believing that religion was not always a motive for persecution, though it too often served as an excuse for cruelty and plunder. And many had migrated to the East; and many, who were obliged to remain in Europe, had taken upon them, in hate and fear and trembling, the forced disguise of converts. Then came the conquests of the kaliphs, which brought about an altogether new state of things for the Jews. In Spain, we shall see that it made a brilliant silver lining to the clouds, a rift in that thick darkness which had descended upon the nation when Jerusalem fell.

4. The Karaite Movement.—Mahomed did not succeed in converting the Jews, but nevertheless the indirect influences of the faith he preached, helped perhaps a little by communal disputes, did produce a distinct sect among the Jews about the middle of the eighth century. There is so little that is really new, that many historians call

Karaism only an old school of thought revived under new conditions and with a fresh name, and consider Judaism to be quite as accountable for it as Islam. We know that there were anciently three Jewish sects: the Essenes, who never struck root in Judaism at all; the Pharisees, the best of whom developed into the great earnest body of Rabbis; and the Sadducees, of whom Josephus said 'they were able to persuade none but the rich,' and who did, in truth, all but die out with the prosperous days into which they had fitted so easily. With Islam triumphant the prosperous days seemed dawning again, and once more the yoke of the Law began to be grumbled at. The oral law was now a written and settled code, and the obligations of codified tradition were more numerous than the injunctions of the Law. The murmurers said that they would observe the text, but not the commentary; they would read the Law, but they would skip the traditional interpretations. These grumblers grew numerous enough to be recognised: they were called Textualists, or Scripturalists; and yet more distinctively Karaites, from the Hebrew root קָרָא to read. [10]

5. Mahomedan Causes for Karaism.— In their objection to tradition the Sadducees and the Karaites were alike, and so far it seems probable that the one sect was a survival of the other. But there were other influences at work, which may account for the appearance or the reappearance, as it

may be, at this period of the later sect of separatists. The Arabs, by whom the impressionable Jews were surrounded, had enthusiastically accepted a most simple form of faith, a faith which had no priesthood and but one prophet. No sooner did tradition gather about Islam than a sect arose among the Mahomedans to throw it off. There had come quickly a Sunnah to the Koran, as there had grown slowly a Talmud to the Law. A party in Islam rejected the stricter traditions of the Sunnah, and a party among the Jews, about the same date, grew openly impatient of the Rabbinical ruling of the Talmud. Rebellion of any sort is catching, and there can be little doubt that each set of grumblers helped the other.

6. The Leader of the Karaite Movement.—The man who first gave expression to the Jewish discontent with tradition was a certain Anan, son of David, a native of Babylon. Anan had a personal grievance of his own, a position which gives a certain point and eloquence to any general sense of injury. He had wished to be made רֵישׁ גָּלוּתָא. But the election had come and gone, and he had been passed over; and, worst slight of all, a younger brother of his own had been appointed to the office. So Anan, disappointed of being patriarch of his people, and of leading them on the old and orthodox road, determined to become their spokesman and advocate in the new direction.

7. What became of the Sect.—Their tenets never made much way. They were, in fact, impossible. The Karaite said he would obey 'the Law'—the strict and literal text, but would have nothing to do with tradition. Now let us see his difficulty. Take, as an instance, the command, 'Ye shall kindle no fire in your habitations on the Sabbath' (Exod. xxxv. 3). A 'literal,' consistent Karaite, living in a cold climate, would have to freeze for twenty-four hours regularly every seventh day, for he could not accept traditional observance, which lightens the yoke of the Law by limiting the meaning of the 'ye' to Jews, and permitting fire to be kindled in Jewish dwellings by the friendly hands of outsiders. Commentary—that is, explanation of some sort—is necessary to every law, and personal and off-hand interpretation is no more likely to be right than traditional ruling. It is somewhat conceited to think our own wisdom is all-sufficient, and that of our ancestors must be wrong; and it is just a little mean, perhaps, to be over-eager to throw off burdens which good men have deliberately borne. As our English poetess[11] wisely says,—

'If we tried
To sink the past beneath our feet, be sure
The future would not stand.'

The Karaites never grew very numerous nor very powerful, though they were occasionally very troublesome. At the

present day, stray remnants of the sect are discoverable in Jerusalem, and in parts of Turkey, Egypt, Galicia, and the Crimea.

8. Good out of Evil.—Sects never do prosper among Jews. The ideal of the nation, like the ideal of the religion, is Unity. The Karaites made but little impression in the way they wanted, which was a separate and a harmful way, but the means they employed brought about another and a very useful end. Rejecting all commentary, and relying entirely on the text of Scripture, they were forced to examine the text very closely. The Rabbis, to refute them, had to be equally particular about their interpretations. No arbitrary renderings could be given where both parties were inclined to be so positive. Each would examine, and re-examine, every phrase and word and letter for himself. This contest between Karaites and Talmudists brought about a very exact sort of scholarship; and accuracy is, we know, one of the conditions of truth. The Scriptures were exhaustively studied; the language was treated grammatically and scientifically; punctuation was added to the text, and the Pentateuch, after being divided into portions and paragraphs (פָּרָשִׁיוֹת and סִדְרוֹנִים) was thus, as it were, put under the microscope. This work was mostly done by the Karaite scholars, and it was called the Massora[12] text. Thus the chief effect of the Karaite movement was to bring about a religious-literary revival. Historians who are

fond of tracing back big events to a small original germ tell us that among the causes which led to the English Reformation (1525) may certainly be counted the spirit of earnest and profound inquiry into Scriptural renderings which Anan, son of David, aroused among the Jews. In this sense the Karaites are sometimes called the Protestants of Judaism.

CHAPTER XIX.

LIFE UNDER THE KALIPHS.
(700–1000.)

1. Jews in the East.—With Persia and Mesopotamia under the sway of the Mahomedans, the *kallahs* of Sora and Pumbaditha flourished, the Gaonim pursued their studies, and the Head of the Captivity had his settled rank as one of the many vassals and tributaries of the kaliphate. The position of the Jews was much improved. In the time of Omar, the second kaliph, the coinage, which was of course a very important trust, was given into the charge of a Jew. Early in the next century, the ninth, under the famous kaliph, Haroun al-Raschid, a Jew named Isaac was employed as ambassador, and sent on a delicate diplomatic mission from the court at Bagdad to Charlemagne of Germany. But nevertheless, although individual Jews rose

to eminence, and Jewish institutions were unmolested, some amount of prejudice against the nation still lingered in the East. Perhaps the remembrance of the opposition which their Prophet had met with from the Jews had a stronger influence on his successors among the scenes where he had personally moved; for the early kaliphs or sultans, as they are indifferently called, were not always so favourably inclined towards their Jewish subjects as was Omar and the great Haroun al-Raschid. In the beginning of the eighth century a Mahomedan ruler named Mutavakel was very hard upon Jews and Christians both. He made them wear a leathern girdle, to distinguish them in their dress from his 'faithful' followers, and neither Jew nor Christian in his dominions was allowed to ride on horses, only on donkeys or mules. This sultan would certainly seem to have been an all-round persecutor, and rather an exceptional one. The insecure position, however, of the Jews in the East at this period was due as much to dissensions from within as to persecutions from without. More and more the office of רֵישׁ גָּלוּתָא grew to be a stumblingblock and an offence. The succession was a constant cause of quarrel among the Jews, and these squabbles made it impossible for the kaliphs to either respect the dignity or to ignore it, either of which attitudes on the part of the Mahomedan sovereign would have been a comfortable one for his Jewish vassals.

2. Close of the Schools: some Scholars.—The schools did some good work, and produced some good scholars, before the end came. Towards the middle of the ninth century we hear of a complete dictionary of the Bible being compiled by a certain Rabbi Menahem ben Saruk. The book is still in existence. Then there was a celebrated Gaon called Saadia ben Joseph (892–942), who translated the Bible into Arabic, which language was now becoming a second mother-tongue among the Eastern Jews. Another of the more celebrated of the Gaonim was named Sherira, and he has left us quite a detailed chronicle of these Babylonian schools. Sherira was very nearly the last of the Gaonim. He upheld the office worthily for thirty years (967–997), and towards the end of his patriarchate he associated his son Hai with him in the dignity. The ruling kaliph cast a jealous eye on the old man's wealth and honours. On a trumped-up charge, both father and son were cast into prison, and their riches confiscated. Hai escaped, and a little later, another attempt at this dangerous dignity was made by a certain Hezekiah. It failed, and this last Gaon was executed (1036) by order of the kaliph. All the Eastern schools were now closed, and the scholars were once more scattered. Palestine and the whole of the Byzantine Empire became almost deserted by Jews, and the interest shifts to the Western division of the world.

3. Jews in the West.—In Italy, during

the Middle Ages, we hear but very little of the Jews. The Lombards and Florentines were the chief merchants and money dealers, and the Popes, who were paramount in Italy, neither patronised nor persecuted the Jews. As a source of revenue the Popes did not need the Jews. From all quarters, and under all kinds of pretences, streams of money were continually flowing into the Papal treasury. Absolutions, indulgences, dispensations, had each a price, and a heavy one. Rich sinners were even more numerous than rich Jews, and quite as profitable. The Popes were for the most part too busy, and often, it may be said, too religiously indifferent, to turn persecutors for conscience sake. They lived in great state, and were intent on extending their political as well as their spiritual sovereignty. In these superstitious Middle Ages, which recognised in the Pope the actual 'infallible' agent of God, the most effectual weapon in the Popish arsenal would have been powerless against Jews. Jews would have cared nothing for that most dreaded of all punishments in Catholic countries, the Papal malediction. Thus, their money and their souls alike insignificant in the sight of the Popes, the Jews throughout the Papal dominions were mostly let alone. In the northern parts of Europe, where the influence of Mahomedanism had hardly penetrated, the Jews were subject to the old Roman law. They might not enter military service, and had to pay largely for local 'protection' from the lords of the soil. In our

own England, Jews up to this period have no history. There are but two very slight mentions of them in all the Saxon Chronicles. They would seem not to have settled in England in any numbers before the Conquest, when probably some came over from France in the train of William the Norman. The interest centres now in Southern Europe, and chiefly in Spain, where the kaliphs attained to their greatest state, and where the Jews attained to their greatest prosperity since the captivity.

4. The Policy of the Early Kaliphs.—When the empire that had been founded by help of the Koran and the sword was once firmly established, the sword was sheathed, and the Koran ceased to be flourished as a weapon. The kaliphs resolved to uphold their sovereignty by the seductive arts of peace rather than by the exterminating process of war. They aspired to something beyond barbarian chieftainship. They aimed at becoming leaders of men and patrons of learning, and of controlling the thoughts as well as the destinies of nations. To this end they cultivated the Jews. The Arabian rulers had the keenness to appreciate the reserves of patience, of loyalty, and of scholarship in the Jewish people. They desired to graft these valuable qualities on their own rather rough and ready followers. They wanted the arts of civilisation to adorn their new dominion; they longed to be as great in the schools and in the marts of the world as they had proved on its battle-fields. ‘The

teachers of wisdom are the true luminaries and legislators of the world,' was a saying of the Kaliph Al-Mamun, who ruled from 813 till 832. The Mahomedan rulers knew how much of all that they desired could be learned from the Jews in their midst. And so, throughout the kaliphate, political and social equality was granted to its Jewish subjects, and the energies and the capacities of the nation were given room to grow.

5. Some Effects of this Policy.—The Empire of the Kaliphs was of immense extent. By the tenth century it had three separate seats of government—at Bagdad, at Cairo, and at Cordova, and the influence of each of these three kaliphates was felt even beyond its own immediate boundary. The Carlovingian dynasty in France caught for a while something of the enlightened spirit of the Mahomedan rulers, and in France as in Spain, Jewish physicians and Jewish teachers and Jewish merchants became quite the fashion. Not only did there come to be crowded colleges presided over by Jewish Rabbis in the sunny southern cities of Europe, but fleets of trading vessels, commanded by Jewish captains, were to be seen sailing in the Mediterranean. The sight awoke some slumbering enmities. In the ninth century a certain Archbishop of Lyons was as concerned for the worldly interests of his countrymen as the most zealous of Church dignitaries could have been for their spiritual ones. This Archbishop Agobard presented a petition, in 829, to his royal

master, Louis le Débonnaire, praying that the commerce of good French Christians might be protected against the wicked Jews. Conscience would have been a safer cry than commerce to have raised, and a fairer one to have invoked religious legislation about. King Louis refused to receive the worthy archbishop's petition. He was evidently in favour of free trading, and so long as the vessels were seaworthy, and the freight honest, he did not appear to consider the religious opinions of the supercargos to be any of his business, or of his archbishop's either. King Louis had a Jewish physician, and it seems as if this doctor—Zedekiah was his name—managed to keep his royal patient healthy in mind as well as in body. At any rate, whether from nature or from 'treatment,' this King of France was, certainly, possessed of fine principles. 'Divine law,' we find him writing in one of his despatches, 'bids me protect my subjects who share my belief; but it nowhere forbids me to be just towards those who differ from me.' His acts matched his convictions, and under the more tolerant treatment, which had been first introduced by the Mahomedans, the Jewish position in all the south of Europe improved greatly in the eighth and ninth centuries. Not only were commercial operations extended, but Jews were largely employed in public and in private positions of trust. They were often made collectors of revenue, and stewards in the great households of the nobles. They were allowed to serve in the army, and

there is evidence that at least in one province, that of Languedoc, they were permitted to be landowners. In Narbonne, for years, one of the two annually elected prefects or mayors of the town was a Jew. Their synagogues and their schools multiplied, and those of Salerno, and Montpelier, and Toulouse, and Marseilles, and, a little later on, of Paris, produced some famous Rabbis, and many crops of diligent students.

CHAPTER XX.

JEWS IN SPAIN.
(711–1150.)

1. 'Like a dream in the night.'—Life in Spain, for the four centuries during which the dynasty of Ommeyade kaliphs ruled, was to the Jews like a brilliant dream breaking in on the long night of their history. There was to be by-and-by a terrible awakening, but while the dream lasted they gave themselves up to its delight. 'An earthly paradise,' 'a garden of

Eden,' Spain is fondly called by old Jewish writers of those days. The liberty it gave was so new, so wonderful, so sweet. Men might work and might worship at their will. Women might be fair without fear. Children might grow up clever, and find no locked doors, labelled 'conversion,' barring their pathway to success. Wealth might be honestly won and pleasantly enjoyed, taking its rightful place as a means for diffusing happiness. Each country, says a recent writer,[13] has the Jews it deserves. Mahomedan Spain deserved good Jews, and it had them, and it was richly repaid in its own generous coin. In the Middle Ages, Spain led the van in culture and in commerce, and in her loyal Jewish subjects she found, literally, her guides, philosophers, and friends. They stood by her as loyally on the field of battle as in the council-chamber and in the mart. Jews must have been also a valuable contingent of the army, for in 1086 we find the generals on both sides, on the eve of a decisive engagement, agreeing so to fix the day that it might not interfere with the Sabbath of their Jewish soldiers. The kaliphs took, too, an intelligent interest and a keen pride in their scholarly Jews, and there was plenty of space in that beautiful land for every one to enjoy his little corner and his little book.[14] The memory of the sunny skies and the gracious leisure of Spain took deep root in grateful Jewish hearts. The long dream of liberty was so sweet that the sharp awakening to persecution was forgotten, or,

at least, the fragrant shade of the orange groves would seem to have been remembered longer than the fierce heat of the fagots and the stake. It is good to be able to 'write injuries in dust, and kindnesses in marble.' In 1492, the Jews were wickedly expelled from the land in which they had been, for centuries, so happy, and 200 years later we hear of descendants of those cruelly exiled Jews sending secretly to Spain and Portugal for citrons and branches of the palm, that their סוכות might look 'homelike' in the bleak north lands in which their lot was cast.

2. The Schools.—Once given a fair field and some choice, Jewish activity showed itself, as of old, in an intellectual direction. The schools of Spain soon became as famous as the *kallahs* of Babylon. Cordova and Granada and Toledo took the place of ancient Sora and Pumbaditha, and of yet more ancient Jamnia and Tiberias. Cordova under the kaliphs was the Athens of the Middle Ages to Southern Europe; and as for Toledo, a Hebrew poet[15] shall speak for himself on the subject of its charms:

'I found that words could ne'er express
The half of all its loveliness;
From place to place I wandered wide,
With amorous sight unsatisfied,
Until I reached all cities' queen,
Tolaitola,[16] the fairest seen.'

And among the fairest of the sights in these

fair cities were the crowded colleges in which Jew and Arab learned often side by side, and from which Jewish Arabic professors turned out students by the score, wise in literature and in philosophy and in medicine, as well as in their own especial theological line. It is said on good authority, that at this period, nearly a thousand years before the era of Board schools, there was not a Jew in Spain who could not read the Bible in Hebrew and in Arabic.

3. The First Nagid of Spain.—One day in the year 948 there was a sudden stir and commotion in the famous college of Cordova. A knotty point had come on for discussion, and puzzled silence had ensued in place of ready answers, when, from an unnoticed corner, a very shabby-looking stranger quietly got up and solved the difficulty. All eyes were turned on the ragged scholar, and the president rose impetuously from his high seat, and in tones of earnest admiration exclaimed to the astonished assembly, 'Yon slave in sackcloth is my master, he must be yours.' It was a hasty decision to come to, but it was fully justified by the facts of the story. The stranger in the mean garments was in truth an escaped slave, or, to speak quite accurately, a captive redeemed. In the lately closed schools of Babylon he had been one of the most learned of the Rabbis. He had had thrilling adventures since those quiet days at Sora, which place he had left, accompanied by three other scholars, for

the purpose of collecting contributions for the maintenance of the schools in Babylon. His wife and his young son had travelled with Rabbi Moses ben Hanoch, and all of them had fallen into the hands of pirates, and had been carried on board a privateering vessel engaged in the slave trade. In dread of worse than captivity, the wife had thrown herself overboard during the voyage, the three companions had been sold at ports at which they touched,[17] and Rabbi Moses and his son were exposed for sale in the slave market in Cordova. It was considered, in those days, a paramount duty of every congregation to redeem captive brethren, and a kind-hearted Jew, seeing two co-religionists in such evil plight, had at once bought them at the current price, which was not high, for their attainments were not known, and were therefore not counted in, and had set them free. Then father and son, sad and yet grateful, had wandered through the stately streets of Cordova, and some instinct had led them to the doors of the synagogue and the schools, with the result we have seen. 'Moses clad in sackcloth,' as he was called, became quite a celebrated character in Cordova. The reigning kaliph, Abderahman III., was a very enlightened ruler, and took a scholarly, as well as a kind-hearted, interest in the learned Rabbi. Abderahman had, too, a Jewish minister named Hasdai ben Isaac, whom he greatly valued; and it is quite possible, since the whole Jewish nation is often judged by single specimens, that the

kaliph's experience of the upright Hasdai influenced his general policy towards the Jews in his dominions. Moses ben Hanoch lived long as president of the schools, and his son, Hanoch ben Moses, succeeded him. Hanoch ben Moses' powers and privileges were considerably extended, and he was given the title of Nagid, or prince, of the Jewish community in Spain. It became an office somewhat more honorary and less official than, but yet very similar to, that held of old by the רֵישׁ גָּלוּתָא Head of the captivity, in Babylon, and thus the dignity that had died out in the East was revived in name, at least, in the West.

4. Another Nagid: Troubles in Granada.—Another famous Nagid was Samuel ha-Levi ibn-Nagrela, who was born in Cordova nearly fifty years later (993). In 1013 the kaliphate of Cordova had suffered from a barbarian invasion, and many of the great people had moved into other cities of the Peninsula. The colleges at Granada grew famous, and Samuel ha-Levi, or Samuel ha-Nagid, as he is generally called, who was at their head from about 1025 till 1055, was not only a first-rate theologian and a tolerable poet, but a clever statesman and a very charming companion. Like Hasdai ben Isaac, Samuel ha-Nagid held the post of minister at the court of the kaliph, and like him again, he held it to the benefit of his sovereign and of his co-religionists. His son Joseph inherited his honours, but not all his fine qualities. He had not good manners,

and he was imprudent. During his Nagidship there was a very serious riot in Granada (1066). The Jews were accused of converting their neighbours. This was a fault of which they were so very unlikely to be guilty, that one has to look deeper for the cause of the disturbance. One may find it perhaps in the fact that the populace spent their wrath not on the synagogues, but on the houses and warehouses of the Jews. That looks as if plunder had more to do with the matter than religion. It is, however, quite possible that the Nagid Joseph, through want of tact, had managed to excite some ill feeling. If it were so, he paid the penalty. He was killed in the course of the riot. A great deal of property was destroyed and more stolen, and some fifteen hundred Jewish families had to leave Granada, and to find an asylum in the other provinces of Spain. This riot in Granada was the first interruption to the 350 years of pleasant and peaceful relations which had existed between the Mahomedans and the Jews. But the Granada riot was like the 'little cloud' that Elijah's servant saw 'rising up out of the sea,' after the long drought. The cloud was at first, we read, no bigger than a man's hand, yet very soon 'the heavens were black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.'

5. Revival of Catholicism in Spain.—Two causes helped to bring about the change that was impending on the Jews, and the first, sad to say, was the gradual

return of Spain to Christianity. From the time of the Mahomedan conquest in 711, a small remnant of the Visigoths, who were Christians, had managed to keep their hold on some of the mountain passes in the north of Spain. From the very first this tiny settlement had never ceased trying to win back their country from the Moors. The little Christian remnant had grown bigger and stronger by degrees, and one by one, very slowly, but very surely, several Mahomedan states had been won from Islam, and separate crowns had been set on the heads of Catholic sovereigns. By 1060, Castile, Leon, Asturias, Arragon, Navarre, and Portugal were all independent kingdoms, separate from the Kaliphate in politics and in religion. In 1085 the important city of Toledo was added to the confederation under the presidency of Alfonso VI., and became the capital of his kingdom of Castile.

6. Effect on the Jews.—So long as the Mahomedan power was paramount in the Peninsula, the partial return to Catholicism made little difference in the position of the Jews. The Catholic kings did not like their Jewish subjects in the same way as did the Mahomedan kaliphs, but, in their newly established kingdoms, they found Jews too serviceable and too much respected to make it either safe or politic to ill-use them. Their own footing was hard to win and hard to keep. It needed constant fighting, and even then it was not too secure. Meanwhile, the

whole business of life could not be carried on by soldiers. People had to be fed, to be taught, to be healed; and all these very necessary functions were most admirably filled by Jews. It would not have done for the kings to snub such useful subjects, and it was hardly possible at that stage to persecute them. One wants both hands free for earnest work of any sort. Catholicism was not yet strong enough in Spain to strike out a different line of action from Islam. It is even possible that the kings learnt some lessons from the kaliphs, and got to see, as they did, something of the value and of the virtues of Judaism. It is quite certain that at the close of the eleventh century, when crusades came into fashion, neither Alfonso (VI.) of Castile nor Peter of Arragon, who were both good Catholics, would allow the cry of *Hep, Hep,*[18] to be raised in their dominions. And it is equally certain that this same king Alfonso put down with a strong hand an outburst at Toledo, in 1108, which threatened Jewish peace and Jewish property. The early kaliphs of Spain practised toleration as a principle; the early kings, perhaps, more as a habit; but the result to the Jews was the same. Whilst the Ommeyade dynasty yet maintained its supremacy in Spain the Jews still prospered, and Judaism was unmolested.

7. The Almohade Dynasty of Kaliphs.—The second cause of the change in Jewish fortunes was the result of a change in the Mahomedan succession to the Kaliphate.

The Ommeyade kaliphs were enlightened, just, and liberal rulers, enthusiastic in their belief, and therefore tolerant in upholding it. The Almohade dynasty, which came into power about 1150, introduced a quite different state of things. The Almohades were a sect of fanatic warriors. They had already conquered Barbary, and it was an evil day for Jews and Christians both, when, flushed with their barbarian successes, they succeeded in governing Spain. One of the earliest edicts of Abdel-Mumen, the founder of this line of Mahomedan sovereigns, was directed to the conversion of his subjects. Very soon, Islam or exile was the only choice given to Jews or to Christians. Some took upon them the disguise of the alien faith and held their own in secret, but many more chose the harder and nobler course of exile, preferring ‘dreary hearths to desert souls,’ Numbers of Jews left the country altogether, and joined their co-religionists in Egypt and in the Mediterranean islands. There were schools at this date in Egypt, uninterfered with by the tolerant Mahomedan sultans, whose seat of government was at Cairo. Of one very celebrated student, whose family sought refuge in that country from the Almohade persecution in Spain, we shall hear later.[19]

CHAPTER XXI.

JEWS IN SPAIN

(*continued*).

(1150–1492.)

1. Under Catholic Kings in Spain.—Most of the Jews who were driven into exile by the Almohade persecutions, travelled no further than those provinces of Spain which had seceded from Mahomedan rule. The Catholic kings were ready, for their own sakes, to give a welcome to the learned, useful Jews. Alfonso VIII., who reigned in Castile from 1166 till 1214, was particularly well affected towards them. It was said that he loved a beautiful Jewess of Toledo named Rachel; the poor girl, at any rate, was murdered by good Catholics on the suspicion of it. For the next hundred and fifty years after the Almohade persecution, the position of the Jews in Spain was still seemingly, and on the surface of things, a position with which to be satisfied. They were rich, they were at ease, and they were of use to their countrymen in a hundred ways. But as Spain grew, by sure degrees, less and less Mahomedan, and more and more Catholic, the Popes began to take a more active interest in its affairs. The head of the Church disliked the sight of so many

synagogues in Christian Spain, and in respect to heresy in general, and to the Jews as special examples of heresy, the clergy were often more Papist than the Popes. The earlier Catholic kings, however, were too alive to their own interests to be tempted into persecution from religious motives only. They needed the Jews. They depended on Jewish loyalty in their armies, and on Jewish brains in their offices. They could not afford to alienate such service. When, in the middle of the thirteenth century, Pope Gregory IX. tried hard to stir up Alfonso the Wise to join in the general European craze of the time against the Jews, we find Alfonso, proving one of his claims to that surname of his, by refusing to be stirred up. Alfonso's predecessor, Ferdinand the Saint, had shown a like wisdom under similar circumstances. The Popes notwithstanding, the kings of Spain continued to personally employ Jews as physicians and as ministers of finance, and in every branch of culture and of commerce in their kingdoms, remained well content to see Jews come to the front. So life went on smoothly under those sunny skies, but the volcano was only slumbering, and every now and then ominous little rumbles gave forth a warning of the explosion that was in store.

2. The Toledo Synagogue.—Toledo, the capital of Castile, had become in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries a second Cordova. In 1360, when Pedro the Cruel was king, very serious trouble arose for the Jews of

Toledo. Pedro earned that surname of ‘Cruel’ from his own subjects, and not from his treatment of the Jews. To them he meant to be kind, but he was a bad man, and even the tender mercies of the wicked, we read, are cruel. Like most of his predecessors, Pedro had a Jew, Samuel Levi, for his finance minister. One of the duties of such a minister is to raise taxes. This office Samuel Levi performed with such a will for his royal master that he became most unpopular with the people. Whilst they were groaning under their imposts, they saw this favoured Jew living in great state, accumulating a large fortune, and building at his own expense a magnificent synagogue in Toledo. They looked on this synagogue as built with their money, and grew to detest the sight of the worshippers in it. In an illogical sort of way they hated the man, and his religion, and his wealth altogether. It was but a step from feeling the hatred to expressing it. One sad day the Jews lost their beautiful synagogue, and poor Samuel Levi was tortured to death. His fortune was confiscated, and King Pedro, his sympathy notwithstanding, took a large share of it. Personally, however, Pedro seems always to have done his best to protect and be pleasant to the Jews, and they were wonderfully faithful to him. In a long struggle which he had with his brother Henry of Transtamare for possession of the crown, the Jews fought loyally for their liege lord Pedro. Henry triumphed in the end, and both during the civil war, and at

the close of it, there was more slaughter and plunder of the Jews than could be put down to the strict account of the war. Religion was made the excuse for a great deal of the cruelty. 'Kill them like sheep if they will not be baptized,' said one famous knight of the period, Bertrand du Guesclin. The illustration had a grim and unintentional point about it. Jews were generally killed 'like sheep,' their fleeces being first carefully sheared.

3. The Downward Slope to Death.—From the date of Pedro's death (1369) things grew gradually worse for the Jews of the Peninsula. Perhaps the episode of Samuel Levi hurried events a little. It may have taught people that to confiscate a Jew's wealth was a quicker way of getting rich through his means than to employ his services. The kings of Spain had begun to have more need of money help than of brain service, for their position had grown to be more secure, and their subjects more cultivated. And they themselves became, to a certain degree, infected by the fanatic enthusiasm of the age. Their religion, interpreted by the priests, had impressed upon them for centuries that Jews were heretics, and their own observations showed them that Jews were rich. They put the two facts together, and acted upon them. 'Be converted to Christianity,' they began to cry, 'or at least let your goods be confiscated to Christians.' And in their subjects the sovereigns of Spain found keen

supporters of these views. That the Jews had grown rich because they were thrifty, and temperate, and industrious, gained them no popularity among neighbours who were just a little short of these virtues. The clergy, too, had great influence over the populace, and they all but uniformly used it to the prejudice of the Jews. Though so woefully mistaken, it is quite likely that some of the clergy were conscientious in their efforts, and honestly longed to make proselytes of the Jews. Perhaps not one of the least of the trials of the time was an edict which, to this end, decreed that Jews might be marched off to listen to long sermons preached with the object of converting them. Eloquence, however, was by no means depended on by itself; sterner measures were resorted to. In 1380, Jews who openly clung to their religion began to be legally deprived of the rights of Spanish citizens. They were no longer allowed to hold office in State or army, or to practise among Christians as physicians. Their Nagid from that date had no recognised authority, and Jews were requested to have their dwellings apart from the other inhabitants of the cities and towns. The Jewries were to be the distinct quarters for the Jews. This sort of legislation produced its natural effect. Ten years later (1391), after a terrible riot at Seville, in which 4,000 Jews are said to have perished, some of the more brave took heart of grace and made an appeal to the Cortes, or council of the nation, against this state of things. The

Cortes, which sat at Madrid, responded to the appeal, acknowledged the injustice, and sent a commission of inquiry to Seville. It did little good. A fierce and eloquent preacher, named Ferdinand Martinez, roused the rabble to further violence by declaiming against State interference with religious doings. It was the bounden duty of a Christian, declared this fanatic demagogue, to hunt down Jews, and it was the inalienable right of a free-born citizen to defy his government. The commission proved powerless, and nobody was punished. Similar outbreaks soon occurred in other cities of Castile, and spread to the neighbouring kingdoms of Navarre and Arragon. On a certain saint's day in 1391 there was a terrible massacre in Barcelona.[20] The Jewry was sacked, the synagogues were pulled down, and the streets were heaped with dead and outraged bodies. In this riot, however, some Crown property was destroyed by accident, and so punishment was dealt out to some of the ringleaders.

4. The Marannos, or New Christians.—For a hundred years this state of things went on throughout the Catholic dominions of Spain, which, by this date, included nearly the whole of the country. Not only did the unrighteous laws set Jews apart in their dwellings and in their occupations, but in their dress also there was a mark set upon them. They might wear only the coarsest materials, and no trimmings or

ornaments; and the men might not shave nor the women adorn their hair. These impertinent, everyday degradations must have sorely hurt a people like the Jews, who delight in taking life pleasantly. The alternative of baptism became a terrible temptation, and very many yielded to it. They let the waters of baptism flow over their limbs, and they stood, unprotesting, whilst the sign of the cross was made on their foreheads. In the eyes of the Church these men, who lied with their lips and in every outward action of their lives, were new Christians, and eligible for all offices of trust and state. In the language of the synagogue, they, who thus sold their souls and took the profit, were Marannos, a corruption of the word maranatha,[21] which means 'anathema,' or 'curse on thee.' In their own sight they were Jews still—'Jews in their hearts,' they would have said, for secretly, and at some risk, they practised Jewish rites, holding the Passover service often in cellars, and singing the Sabbath hymns under their breath, with doors and windows fast shut. Perhaps the truth lies between the two extremes, and it needs Him who 'sees with larger, other eyes than ours' to judge justly of this human weakness and hypocrisy. If the sin was great, so also was the penalty.

5. An Effort at Argument.—Early in the fifteenth century an attempt was made by a Jewish convert to have the question between Judaism and Catholicism discussed

and settled, if possible, by force of talk. Under the presidency of the Antipope Benedict XIII. a prolonged sitting was held at Tortosa, in Spain, between Rabbis and monks. The conference held sixty-eight meetings, and lasted twenty-one months (from February 1413 till November 1414). It must have been conducted rather on the model of the famous argument between the wolf and the lamb in Æsop's fables, for, as the upshot, the Rabbis were dismissed, and the Pope issued a bull imposing new penalties on the Jews, and forbidding them, among other things, to read the Talmud.

6. The Inquisition.—In 1469, Isabella, sister of Henry IV. of Castile, married Ferdinand, Crown Prince of Arragon. This marriage made a united and Catholic Spain; for Granada, the last of the Mahomedan cities, fell before the end of their reign. The young sovereigns were very anxious that their beautiful kingdom should be quite and altogether Catholic, free from any touch or taint of alien faith. They both agreed that, for the air to be entirely pure, no Jews or Mahomedans ought to breathe in it. Isabella really thought this, for she was sincere in her bigoted belief, and good according to her dim lights. Ferdinand, it is to be feared, had a second thought for his treasury. He liked to convert Jews, but he also very much liked the confiscated possessions of unconverted Jews. The first official act of the royal pair was to ask from the ruling Pope, Sixtus IV., permission to set up a

tribunal which might make searching inquiry into the religion of any suspected subjects. The request was granted, and in 1480 the Inquisition was started, with the Pope's blessing, at Seville.

7. Objects and Functions of the Inquisition.—The inquiry was aimed not at the Mahomedans, who were open and nearly vanquished enemies, nor even at those Jews who were living honest and unheeded if poor and degraded lives in their Jewries, but in reality at the converted Marannos. The Marannos were rich and prosperous, and by this date so numerous that it is said quite a third of the whole population of Spain were New Christians. Many of them were nobles in the state, and for a century past they had been marrying and intermarrying amongst the best Catholic families. These were the people who were suspected, and truly, of being still Jews in their hearts, and in secret observance. The chief object of the Inquisition was to hunt out this hidden Judaism, and to make it an excuse for despoiling the 'New Christians' of the evident wealth and state which were so envied. Under penalty of being himself excommunicated, every loyal Spaniard was invited to become a spy. No one was safe from this terrible tribunal. A child might denounce his parent, a wife her husband, a brother his sister, or even a criminal his judge. The accused was not allowed to know the name of his accuser. He was not

permitted to have any legal adviser. Torture was resorted to on mere suspicion. There was no possibility of appeal. The punishments of the Inquisition, which were wholly capricious, varied from penance, scourging, and imprisonment, to death. All degrees of punishment were accompanied by confiscation of goods to the State. The executions were solemn ceremonials, and were called *autos-da-fé*, or acts of faith. The accused was clothed in a long flame-coloured garment (the *san benito*), a cross was placed in his hand, and then, with a crowd of victims similarly robed, he was led to the *Quemadero* (place of burning). A pause was made whilst a sermon was preached to ears dulled a little, we may hope, to this profanation of 'the Name.' Then, at a given signal, fire was set to the fagots, and, in presence of king and queen, and court and crowd, the act of faith was finished in flames.

8. Some Statistics of the Inquisition.—On its first establishment 15,000 arrests were made. From January 1481 to November of the same year, 2,000 people were burned in the province of Cadiz, and 400 in the city of Seville alone. The prisons overflowed, and even the dead were not let lie in peace, for graves were opened and desecrated. In 1483 a monk of the order of St. Dominic, named Thomas Torquemada, was appointed chief Inquisitor, and the powers of the office were extended to Arragon. Under the direction of

Torquemada the work went on, faster and fiercer than ever. In eighteen years of Torquemada's Inquisitorship over 10,000 persons were burnt at the stake, and over 97,000 underwent varying degrees of 'punishment.' The Pope himself trembled at the monster he had raised, and wished, perhaps, that he had heeded the stern Jewish command, 'Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.' But the scruples of the Pope were powerless before the passion of Torquemada, and the Inquisition continued denouncing and confiscating and burning, and in this awful reckoning, 6,000 victims are counted to Torquemada's personal share.

9. Edict of Expulsion.—'When thou passest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned.' 'No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; this is the heritage of the servants of the Lord.' Did Ferdinand and Isabella, by chance, in chapel or at confession, hear some echo of these words in the year 1492? Did they reflect how utterly futile were thousands of mortal burnings against God's eternal will? Did they tremble for the 'prosperity' of that threatened 'weapon' of theirs, the Inquisition? And was it in hate, or in fear, or only in desperate foolishness that they resolved upon another method of rooting out the Jews? We shall never know; but in the March of that year, 1492, a royal edict was suddenly published that all Jews, men, women, and children, on that day four

months were to be expelled from Spain. They were to take no property with them, except such as they could carry; and one alternative only, that of being converted to Christianity, was offered to them. It was an awful sentence. Not only had Spain for centuries been home to the Jews, but in all Europe at that date there seemed no chance of finding another. It was exile without hope. And yet, to the everlasting credit of Jews and Judaism, that alternative of conversion was never entertained for a minute, and for conscience sake, the whole body of Spanish Jews, some 300,000, literally and truly left *all* to follow after righteousness. All history cannot show a finer example of national steadfastness and suffering for the truth.

10. Abarbanel's Intercession.—An effort was made at the last moment to soften the hard hearts of Ferdinand and Isabella. They had a Jewish treasurer called Abarbanel, a learned, upright man, who used all the weight of his influence and his character and his services on the side of his unhappy people. He even condescended to bribe the king, and offered to pay 3,000 ducats into the treasury as a ransom. The mercenary Ferdinand hesitated. The property of the Jews was as precious to him as their souls—perhaps, on the whole, more so, and the edict might have been repealed after all, had not Torquemada passionately broken in on the interview. He held a crucifix on high, and exclaimed, 'Behold

him, whom Judas sold for thirty pieces of silver! Are you bargaining to sell him yet again, and at a higher price?' The king and queen were frightened at this threatening eloquence, and held to their resolve. And on the 30th of July, 1492, to the disgrace of the rulers and to the ruin of their country, every unbaptized Jew and Jewess was turned out of Spain.



Edw^d. Weller

EUROPE

in the

MIDDLE AGES

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CHAPTER XXII.

JEWS IN CENTRAL EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE AGES.

1. General Position of European Jews.—Some faint reflection of the happiness and prosperity that was, for so long, the portion of the Jews in Spain, fell fitfully, and for a short while, to the share of their neighbouring brethren in France, and in the few civilised states of Central Europe. Such happiness and prosperity, however, was nowhere, and at no period, even for the brief intervals in which it lasted, secure. The tolerance extended to the Jews, in the Middle Ages, was based on no appreciation of their higher qualities, and was dictated wholly by self-interest. The scholarship of the Jews was very little cared for, perhaps not at all, unless it showed itself in medical skill. And even then it was a perilous, rather than a precious, possession, for if a Jewish

physician cured his patient he was quite likely to be accused of witchcraft, or if, despite all his care, the patient died, some affectionate relative or some disappointed legatee would very possibly bring a charge of poisoning against the poor doctor. This happened once in a very distinguished case. Charles the Bald of France died rather suddenly in 877, and it was widely said that he was poisoned by Zedekiah, the Jewish physician of his good father, Louis le Débonnaire, and from that date the fortunes of the Jews in France steadily declined. The schools in the south of France certainly flourished, and were maintained even in the less settled districts in the north and east, and in small towns on the Danube and the Maine, for Jews hunger after education as much as they do after bread; but to the eyes of the outer world the Jews of Central Europe, in these centuries, were just a big mercantile firm planted in a community of boors and warriors. The circumstances of the age, as we have seen,[22] made traders of them, and the tendency of the age was to despise trade, and, while profiting by Jewish enterprise, to put every difficulty in its way. Jews were thus a caste apart. 'Society,' in the Middle Ages, knew of only two classes—the lords who owned the soil, and the serfs who, swearing on the Gospel their oaths of fealty, tilled the soil and went with it. In neither rank—in that of landowners nor in that of land-cultivators, were Jews to be found. In the feudal system there was no place for Jews. The only two

socially recognised professions were the Church and the army. The first, Jews could not enter; and the second, in almost all Europe, they might not. Shut out from all else, they became the universal providers of the Middle Ages. They promoted commerce by the interchange of commodities, and they promoted civilisation by the constant communication so kept up between the East and the West. It was a descent, perhaps, from the scholarly rank which Jews had held in the past; it was less pleasant, certainly, than their old pursuits of tilling, and sowing, and planting the grateful earth: but the position was forced upon them; they had practically no choice in the matter, and there was no reason why they should not cheerfully make the best of it. They accepted the state of things, and so long as they were let alone, commerce, too, became in Jewish hands a dignified, a useful, and an honourable calling. They dealt in slaves, as was the necessity of the time, and these slaves were the better off for having Jewish masters; their trading fleets sailed on the Mediterranean, and their ready-tongued travellers brought the products of the East to the markets of the West. But gradually all this sort of commerce became impossible. The troubles of the tenth century, when the Eastern schools were closed, and the Eastern Jews migrated, and lost both their position and their wealth, affected the Jews of Europe. They found themselves deprived of correspondents for extended trading. Then, by force of feeling as well as by law, the

slave trade was put down. And not only would the merchant vessels have less freight under these changed conditions, but the Norman pirates in the tenth and eleventh centuries made the peaceful navigation of the Mediterranean uncommonly difficult. Thus, from no fault of their own, all the larger mercantile undertakings of the Jews gradually failed, and they were thrown back on retail traffic. They were industrious, and honest, and patient, and they grew rich even on that; and then idle, envious eyes looked on them, and one after another of their rights and privileges, as traders, was taken from them. So far as Jews were concerned, trading was made difficult, dishonest, and disgraceful. Among Christians there existed semi-religious associations, or 'guilds,' as they were called, of masters and workers. In the thirteenth century such organisations were general in all trades. From these recognised and respectable guilds, Jewish apprentices and Jewish employers of labour were equally excluded. In the cities, and in the free towns, Jewish traders were put on a footing different from, and altogether lower than, the other inhabitants. Agriculture, commerce, public and professional employment, even honest citizenship, were all made impossible to the Jew of the Middle Ages. And almost at will he might be plundered. '*Les meubles du juif sont au baron*,' was a proverb. His possessions were held on so precarious a tenure that there came to be need for them to be portable and

of an easily hidden sort, and thus it was that the Jews, in the ‘dark’ ages, grew by degrees to deal chiefly in money.

2. Jews become Money-lenders.—Jews had no liking for the trade of money-lending, but if they were to live at all, some means of earning a living had to be hit upon. Coin and jewels and deeds and documents which represent money, were the easiest sort of property for hunted folks to hold or to hide. There were plenty of needy people, too proud or too idle to work, and just a little too scrupulous to rob outright, who were always eager to buy on credit and to borrow on interest. The knight might want a suit of armour, or trappings for his horse, or a set of ornaments for his lady love; the priest might covet a jewelled cup or cross for his altar, and from king to peasant a loan might be needed for any purpose. Every one with such wants would go to ‘his Jew’ to supply them, and if the actual things were not forthcoming, the money was generally at hand to procure them elsewhere. The very fact of being able to lend gained Jews a chance of consideration from eager borrowers. Only a chance, perhaps, for the mood when borrowing differs greatly from the mood when repaying. The goods or the money once had, the obligation to pay was frequently altogether forgotten, and the Jew’s reminder of what was due to him was often bitterly resented by the debtors, and his demand for interest on the debt

denounced by them as usury.

3. Charge of Usury.—Usury was a favourite accusation and a plausible excuse for ill-treatment of the Jews in the Middle Ages. Charges of killing Christian children and using their blood in passover rites, and accusations of poisoning the drinking wells, were both excellent means in their way of provoking a riot, and of justifying an ignorant populace in the plunder of Jewish quarters; but such charges had this drawback, that Passover, the presumed season for the bloodshedding, came only once a year, and an epidemic of disease, the effect not of poisoned wells, but of unclean living, was an even less regular and to be reckoned upon occurrence. Borrowing, however, was always going on, and there was just enough of dangerous half-truth in that charge of 'usury,' as applied to Jews, to make it always a safe cry to raise when creditors became urgent.

'A lie which is all a lie may be met and
fought with outright;
A lie which is half a truth is a harder
matter to fight.'

The word usury has a Latin root, and means simply interest on money; Shakespeare speaks of usance.[23] When Jews first became traders, instead of scholars and agriculturists, especial Rabbinical legislation was found necessary, and was brought to bear on the subject of lending on 'interest'

(נֶשֶׁךְ, which word is translated, in the Authorised Version of the Bible, 'usury'). The strict Mosaic prohibition, 'Thou shalt not lend to thy brother upon interest,' was then, as in Bible times, in full force. But because of the altered condition of things, Jews of a more elastic conscience were gradually led to give a wider meaning to the 19th and 20th verses of the 23rd chapter of Deuteronomy. Large trading operations involved the employment of capital, and capital could not be employed without interest. Transactions, therefore, which necessitated the use of money as a marketable commodity, gained, in course of time, a sort of sanction from precedent, and fair interest on money passed between Jew and Jew as between Jew and Christian, or between Jew and Mahomedan. Money, and just 'interest' on money, could be legally taken by either, or from either, it being always understood that the borrower should be of full age, of sound judgment, capable of completely understanding the full conditions, direct and indirect, of the bargain, and that the transaction should be, in every sense, a matter of public business and of mutual convenience. For the abuse of this state of things, for the demand of a usurious rate of interest for the loans required of them in those days, the Jews were not responsible. The value of money is variable. The lender may legally make his rate of interest vary with, and be more or less in proportion to, the risk to which his capital is exposed. The worse the security

and the less the chance of ultimate repayment, the higher naturally would be the 'interest' asked. Usury is unjust interest, and 'divers weights and divers measures,' and 'a false balance,' are all by Jewish law an 'abomination to the Lord.'[24] Usury, therefore, is contrary to the laws and religion of the Jews. There have been Jews who have been usurers, but it has been in distinct despite of their Judaism. And in so far as the poor Jews of the Middle Ages may have defiled and disgraced the Name by usurious practice, the blame may certainly, in fairness, be divided between those who lent and those who borrowed.

CHAPTER XXIII.

JEWS IN CENTRAL EUROPE (*continued*).

1. The Crusades.—Towards the close of the eleventh century there came to be national as well as individual causes for borrowing of the Jews, and national and religious, as well as individual and especial,

grounds for plunder and persecution. In the year 630, Mahomed had entered Jerusalem as a conqueror, and for over 400 years the mosque which he had erected to Allah stood unchallenged on the ruins of the Empress Helena's church. This particular conquest of Mahomed's was a religious as well as a political eyesore to Catholic Europe. It asserted the ascendency of Islam on the very spot of all others which was to Christians most sacred. As Catholicism spread, the desire to regain the sepulchre of their Saviour from unbelievers grew strong amongst the followers of Jesus. The warlike spirit of the age sought a pious motive for its expression, and thus, blessed and encouraged on all sides, sworn soldiers of the cross set off from France and Germany and England to wrest Jerusalem from the Mahomedans. 'Zeal is a good thing, but love is a better.' This sudden fury of fanaticism had very sad results for the Jews. To them, as a matter of sentiment, it made little difference whether Christian or Mahomedan ruled in their lost land, and whether the cross or the crescent was set up where the שְׁכִינָה had shone. In either case alike their shrine was desolate and deserted, and Jews must have looked on this struggle between Christians and Mahomedans, for the possession of their own lost city with a sullen sense of unhappy indifference. And yet, as a matter of fact and history, the Crusades were of very terrible import to the Jews. By a process of reasoning which it is not difficult to follow, the massacre of Jews

and the plunder of Jews were held to be rightful preliminaries to each of these chivalrous expeditions to the East. It was ‘unbelievers’ whom the crusaders were setting off to fight, and here were ‘unbelievers’ of an older sort, dwelling in their midst; was it not well to begin with them? Money, too, was wanted for their holy wars; was not Jewish wealth conveniently close at hand? Killing Jewish unbelievers was surely no murder; plundering Jews, to use their treasures in so holy a cause, was still less ‘robbery.’ This was crusading logic. Jews are always a little slow to appreciate the much-sung chivalry of the Middle Ages. They saw its seamy side.

An era of most wicked persecution opened for the Jews of Central Europe with the first crusade in 1096. The frenzy of intolerance and fanaticism which was called forth under the fair names of religion and chivalry spread like an epidemic. At Trèves it began; and there, the rabble, under the direction of heartless and impecunious knights, sacked the Jewish quarters and massacred the inhabitants. The example set at Trèves was followed at Metz, at Strasburg, at Mainz, at Worms, at Cologne, and at Spires. All along the banks of the Rhine, of the Moselle, of the Maine, and the Danube, in the flourishing towns which Jewish enterprise had made wealthy and prosperous, Jewish men and women, and even little children, were slaughtered like cattle. The spoils gained from murder and

robbery went to defray the costs of the holy wars. Sometimes the alternative of baptism was given to the victims; oftener no choice was offered, but sacrilege followed on sacking, and murder on robbery. Some commanders burnt the Jews; some contented themselves with burning only Jewish books and scrolls. But it is a remarkable fact that although their books were burnt, lest those who read them should be contaminated, it was never thought necessary to subject their valuables in coin and jewels to the like purging process! On the whole, burning was the favourite fashion of killing Jews, but occasionally some town or some leader would hit on a more original method. Spires, for instance, drowned her Jews, and Mainz once drove hers into wholesale suicide, and Strasburg got rid of two thousand at one time in an enormous bonfire.

In 1098, Jerusalem, after many a repulse, was safe in the crusaders' hands, and the conquerors celebrated their success by so complete a massacre of the Jews then living in Jerusalem and its suburbs, that when the city was again retaken by the Mahomedans, hardly a Jew was left to exult at the reversal of Christian arms. For fifty years Jerusalem remained a Mahomedan conquest. At the end of that time (1147) a second crusade was organised to retake it. All who joined this expedition were solemnly released by Pope Eugenius III. from all obligations to pay any debts which

they might owe to the Jews. And in this second crusade, as in the first, a broad red track of Jewish blood marked the way which the crusaders took to the East, and the flames from burning Jewries were beacon-lights on their path.

2. Glimpses of Better Things.—There were occasional incidents which show like light in the darkness of that cruel age. The Spanish Jews, whose misfortunes were of later date, did not neglect their unhappy co-religionists. More than once we find the still prosperous Jews of Spain sending sympathetic messages and substantial supplies to the persecuted Jews of France and Germany. And amongst Christians there was many a brave, good man who had the courage to be humane, and to stand out as an exception to the general line of conduct which was pursued towards the Jews. The Bishop of Spires and the Bishop of Cologne both did their very best to protect the Jews in the terrible scenes that preceded the first crusade (1096). And in the second crusade (1147) the famous monk, St. Bernard of France, distinguished himself in the same way. He did all he could, by voice and hand and pen, to check the prevailing fashion of cruelty. Pope Alexander III. was another advocate of fair treatment for the Jews, and Pope Innocent IV. actually issued a bull laughing to scorn the accusations brought against them of killing children for the flavouring of passover cakes, and denouncing as ‘crimes’ the cruelties which

were practised by Christians upon Jews. But how sadly exceptional such instances were may be judged from the fact that Church historians try to explain away the humanity of that good Bishop of Cologne in 1096 by saying that he was bribed by the Jews, and that his kindness to them was bought with their own money. 'Save me from my friends,' that poor bishop might well exclaim. It was defending his orthodoxy at the expense of his honesty with a vengeance.

3. Life in France till the Expulsion thence.—From the date of Charles the Bald's death (877), and the accusation of poison brought against his Jewish doctor Zedekiah, the position of the Jews in France grew slowly and gradually, but quite steadily, worse, till injustice reached its climax in an edict of expulsion (1394). From the ninth to the twelfth century Jewish schools and synagogues continued to exist, and the people were tolerably protected from violence. So late as 1165, when a famous Jewish Spanish traveller named Benjamin of Tudela was visiting France, he found such institutions flourishing in most of the towns which he included in his travels, and he seems to have made a very comprehensive tour both north and south. In Narbonne the traveller speaks of great tracts of land being cultivated by Jews and being held by them, under what we should call a leasehold tenure, from the lords of the soil. Paris

seems to have been a favourite city with the race even at that time, and Christian writers confirm Benjamin of Tudela's account of the prosperous and respected condition of the Jews who were dwelling there. The crusades, and the need of money for conducting them, were the chief causes for the persecutions which were so soon to follow. The sufferings of the Jews in France were, as a rule, due less to bigotry and religious hatred on the part of the priests and the populace, than to the avarice of the kings. In Spain, Jews were hunted out of the country as heretics. In France they were treated more as sponges, first squeezed, and then tossed away. Towards the end of the twelfth century King Philip Augustus ordered them, in a body, out of his dominions (1180), and the purchase-money that the Jews gave for the right to return brought them a short interval of 'protection.' Expelling the Jews, and selling permission to them to come back, was found an excellent means of raising a large sum of money, and the process was repeated in 1306, when Philip IV., one of the most cruel sovereigns who ever sat on any throne, was King of France. Before they were expelled, in 1306, their goods were pillaged and confiscated to a great extent, and it must have been difficult for the poor exiles to raise the enormous sum which was demanded, a few years later, for the right to return. Like Noah's dove, which in the whole wide world found no resting-place for the sole of her tiny foot, the Jews, at this

date, had small choice or chance of safe asylum in any country, or we might wonder at their paying for permission to go back to such inhospitable shores. Under 'Saint' Louis (Louis IX., 1226–1270) a new form of persecution was hit upon. Killing Jews and plundering their property was commonplace; it was decided to destroy their literature. So a raid was made on Jewish libraries, and, as a beginning, twenty-four cart-loads full of Talmudical books were burnt in Paris. It was under this king, too, that the Jews were prohibited from practising as physicians, and that they were all compelled to wear a conspicuous garment. It was called the *rouelle*, and its distinctiveness consisted in a bit of blue cloth being sewn in front of, and behind, the outer dress of both men and women. Louis the Saint must have the virtue of originality added to his other claims for saintship.

In 1320 there was another crusade, another accusation against the Jews, and another large sum of Jewish money paid into the royal treasury. These three contemporaneous occurrences, examined closely, seem to have a somewhat suspicious connection with one another. The crusade of 1320, which was called the rising of the shepherds, was set on foot by peasants, who were presumably too poor to pay its expenses, and a preliminary crusade against the Jews was a very convenient way of raising the necessary money for the holy expedition. So a cry was raised against them

of poisoning the wells. Any charge against Jews was sure to result in plunder, or in a bribe big enough to make plunder unnecessary. In 1348–1349 the Black Pestilence was raging in Europe. This frightful epidemic was said to spare the Jews. So far as it did spare them, their cleanlier lives and their more temperate habits would be quite sufficient explanation for all reasonable people of the somewhat doubtful fact. But the reasonable people would seem to have been few in those days, and the fanatics many. The Jews were accused, both of causing the pestilence and of not suffering from it, and again that ridiculous charge of poisoning the wells was brought against them. It must have been taken for granted that Jews lived without drinking! The accusation, however, was good enough for its purpose. The Jews died by the sword if not by the plague; they were not permitted the choice granted to David their king, who elected to be punished by the pestilence rather than by the sword, to fall by the 'hand of God rather than by the hand of man.'

4. Expelled from France.—On September 17, 1394, on יוֹם כִּפּוּר, when Charles VI. was king, with a six weeks' notice, the Jews were commanded to leave France altogether, and this third expulsion was decided and general, and included all the Jews in all parts of the country.

5. Treatment of Jews in the German

States.—In the ninth and tenth centuries many French Jews had crossed the Rhine, and, emigrating into Germany, had established colonies there, which the crusaders, some two centuries later, on their way to the Holy Land, found conveniently handy to pillage. From Germany the Jews were never expelled in a body as they were from France and Spain, and, as we shall presently see, from England, but there were many local and partial expulsions; and German Jews, from the ninth till nearly the nineteenth century, lived, as it were, in the midst of alarms, and led, for the most part, a miserable existence. Throughout the Middle Ages, their legal position in these dominions was that of serfs of the Emperor, and they paid a certain tax for somewhat uncertain 'protection.' The Emperors themselves were often kindly inclined towards the Jews, and Frederick Barbarossa, who ruled in the twelfth century, was particularly humane. A greedy fanatic once entered this Emperor's presence with the news that three Christian children had been found dead in a Jew's house on the eve of the Passover; and 'what was to be done?' the man excitedly asked. 'Three children dead!' said the Emperor calmly; 'why, let them be buried, of course.' But all the Emperors of Germany were not like Frederick Barbarossa, and very few of the princes. The Jews were shunned and oppressed in the German states, even when and where they were not openly and violently outraged. They walked among

men with Cain's mark set upon them without Cain's sin. Each city, each street, each house nearly in the German dominions could 'tell sorrowful stories.' And because *finis* was never written on the page of Jewish history in Germany as it was for a while in Spain, and France, and England, the sad tale in this part of the world comes to no abrupt and dramatic conclusion, and breaks off with no certain and settled date.

CHAPTER XXIV.

JEWS IN ENGLAND.
(1066–1210.)

1. The First Seventy Years.—Beyond a rare mention in the Saxon Chronicles, there are no records concerning English Jews till after the Conquest (1066), when Jews from France and Germany, seeking happier homes, may have crossed the Channel in the train of William the Norman, on the chance of finding such. They were probably accepted by William's new subjects as one of the many consequences of the invasion,

and Jews gradually gained a tolerably comfortable and secure position in the towns in which they settled. London and Oxford became head-quarters. The selection of London, the capital, is sufficiently explained. The attraction of Oxford was, in all likelihood, its scholarly reputation. King Alfred's idea of making Oxford a seat of learning was already being realised in the eleventh century, and although none of the colleges bear much earlier date than that of the thirteenth, yet the names of some of these—Moses-Hall and Jacob-Hall, for instance—give silent evidence of the presence of Jews and of the growth of Jewish teaching, and, it may be, of Jewish trading influences in Oxford. Little colonies of Jews established themselves also in York, and in Lincoln, and in Norwich, and in various other towns, and set up small businesses, and always managed, however poor they might be at first, to find some small room which would serve as a meeting-place for prayer and for school work. In London they were soon numerous enough and prosperous enough to gain the great privilege of being allotted a 'burying place for their dead.' This first בֵּית חַיִּים of the Jews in England was situated in St. Giles, Cripplegate. Thus things went well for a time. William I. was a conqueror, but not an oppressor; William Rufus, though dissolute and dishonest, was yet a mediæval sort of gentleman, who, having once promised protection, kept his word, and Henry I. was a scholar, and had some

sympathy with the historic race who were so bravely and patiently accommodating themselves to altered circumstances. It was in the reign of Stephen (1135–1154) that the troubles of the Jews in England began.

2. 'Saints' and Supplies.—The civil wars, consequent on the disputed succession after Henry's death, had drained the country of money. The wealth of the Jewish traders was in close and awkward contrast with the poverty of the Christian knights. An evil eye was cast on these riches, and as the conscience of the country was scarcely yet hardened to the open and unprovoked plunder of Jews, men cast about them for a plausible excuse for robbing them. Nothing more original was found, nor was perhaps necessary, than the one which had so often served on the Continent—the accusation of child-killing for Passover purposes. One day, in the town of Norwich, a certain small boy, named William, was missing, and straightway he was declared to have been murdered, and the Jews were accused of having murdered him. It is not even certain that the body of the little lost boy was ever found. William of Norwich, however, was made into a saint, and added to the muster-roll of miracle-working martyrs, whilst the supposed perpetrators of a never committed crime were hanged, and the English Jews generally were taxed to the estimated, and somewhat fancy, value of the sainted child. The real martyrs in the affair were certainly the Jews, and the real miracle was the easy

raising of vast sums of money through such manifestly ridiculous charges. The Jews had to submit to be plundered, and it was better for them, perhaps, that their goods should be 'confiscated' at the order of the king, than at the mercy of the populace. The fashion that Stephen set was found to be a convenient and ready mode of raising supplies. St. William of Norwich was the first saint that the Jews in England contributed to the calendar, but he was, during the Middle Ages, the type of a class of what might be called the patron saints of impecunious kings, and lazy priests, and 'chivalrous' nobles. These so-called saints always managed to fill the empty coffers of their devotees, and to that extent miraculous powers may certainly be conceded to them. The most celebrated of them all is a certain Hugh of Lincoln, who is said to have lived and died in the reign of Henry III. The local celebrity of this small saint was secured by the hanging of twenty Jews of that town, the imprisonment of more than a hundred, and a general confiscation of Jewish property in Lincoln. The literary interest attaching to the little Hugh, which has outlasted the religious, was ensured by Chaucer selecting him for the hero of one of his famous Canterbury Tales.[25]

3. Accession of Richard.—In 1189, Richard the Lion-hearted, the hero of so many romantic stories, ascended the English throne. The Jews, who had been growing

more and more unpopular all through the long reign of Henry II., thought that the accession of this, the most hopeful of his sons, might bring about a favourable change in their position. So to the coronation ceremony there came a little body of Jews, selected by their co-religionists as representatives, from every town in England where Jews had settled. The members of this deputation were all of the richest and most respected class. They were grandly dressed, and were the bearers of rich gifts, which were to be presented to the king in the name, and with the loyal congratulations, of the whole Jewish community in England. They never got the chance of making their contemplated pretty speeches, nor of offering their handsome propitiatory presents. Possibly the sight of so much wealth, brought as a free-will offering, suggested the idea of plunder. If Jews could give so generously, unasked, what might they not give with a little pressure? In this way reasoned the populace, and the result was that the deputation never reached the palace. It was pitilessly set upon and robbed, and one of the number, a Jew from York, named Benedict, was so badly hurt in the course of the rioting, that he reached home only to die of his wounds. In his fright, this Benedict had even submitted to be baptized, but the poor man's cowardice availed to save neither his life nor his fortune. Perhaps his 'conversion' became the means of attracting more attention to him and his

neighbours, for although the London outrage was rivalled in various parts of the kingdom, it was at York, on this occasion, that the Jews suffered most of all. History is said to repeat itself, and certainly the story of the fortress of Masada, in 72,[26] has a grim counterpart in that of the castle of York a thousand years later. In that terrible coronation month, the Jews of York had shut up their houses, and tremblingly taken refuge in the castle. The mob surrounded the walls, and resistance became hopeless. Then the Jews of York, in wild fear of the English, like the Jews of Masada in wild fear of the Romans, set fire to the unsheltering walls of the fortress, and headed by their Rabbi, and by an eloquent co-religionist named Joachin, killed first their wives and children, and then themselves. Thus the English in the eleventh century, like the Romans in the first, conquered a citadel, to find it garrisoned by corpses. Some say 500, and some say 1,500 Jews were massacred in York alone, in that year 1189. A commission of inquiry was subsequently held, and some punishments were inflicted on the ringleaders. But not on account of the massacres. In the course of the sacking of the Jews' houses, various deeds and titles to property, of which the value had not been recognisable at a glance, had been burnt or destroyed. The owners were presumably dead. By the law of the land in those days, all such ownerless property reverted to the Crown. The massacre of the missing owners was a fault

that leant to virtue's side, but the careless destruction of the missing records was fraud on the exchequer—a very grave crime indeed.

4. Treatment by Richard.—Richard, probably, showed himself altogether averse from such riotous proceedings. He had lost his coronation presents through it, and the intermittent plundering which went on during his crusading expeditions, he must have reflected, was all a distinct and further loss to the treasury. On his return from captivity he put the whole thing on a legal footing. The Jews were registered as chattels of the Crown, and a special court in the king's exchequer was set apart for the management of Jewish matters. The amount of every Jew's property throughout the kingdom was ascertained as nearly as it was possible, was duly entered on the books, and then a scale of tolls and taxes was drawn up in accordance with this list, and an efficient staff of Jews and Christians appointed to act as responsible collectors. It was a hard system, but it was open and to-be-reckoned-upon robbery, and the Jews were infinitely the gainers by it. Richard was not cruel, nor capricious, nor persecuting. He constituted them 'his Jews,' and it was his interest, and it probably was his pleasure, to protect them, and to permit no extra nor unauthorised plunder at the hands of priests or barons or populace. It was unfortunate for the Jews of England that Richard only reigned ten years.

5. Under John.—The dissolute, unprincipled, and untrustworthy John of Anjou succeeded his brother in 1199. During Richard's frequent absence from England, John had plotted for the crown, and had found Jews very useful in supplying the wherewith for him to keep up the character he had assumed of a liberal, open-handed prince. He had been lavish in profession and in promises of good-will, and the grateful Jews had sought by good offices to keep and deserve the favour of their future sovereign. Lulled into a sense of security by his fair speeches, they had even persuaded many of their rich Continental co-religionists to come to England, and in the first years of John's reign, so encouraged, the Jews began to hide their money a little less, and to enjoy it a little more. It may be that in their security they were even a trifle ostentatious. And it is possible that the populace had grown irritated at the royal favour shown to the despised Jews, and somewhat jealous of the wealth they now displayed, and of which, for many years past, royalty alone had reaped the benefit. Or it may be that such favour as John had bestowed was wholly capricious, and that he had played with his victims as a cat with the mouse she means to devour. At any rate, his mood changed, and in 1210, quite suddenly, without warning or provocation of any sort, all the Jews in the kingdom were imprisoned, and their goods declared to be confiscated. Those who would not disclose the

whereabouts of their treasures were tortured, and John is said to have himself stood over a certain Jew in Bristol, seeing tooth after tooth extracted, till a ransom was agreed on for the victim's right to retain the two or three that were left in his head.

CHAPTER XXV.

JEWS IN ENGLAND (*continued*). (1216–1290.)

1. The Next Fifty Years.—Throughout the minority and during the long reign of Henry III. (1216–1272) things grew worse and worse for the Jews. The '*Hep, Hep*,' had not sounded so often for the last century without leaving echoes. Even when and where the connection of the cry with the crusades had grown somewhat faint, it kept its full and terrible significance for the Jews. Church, and State, and people, all seemed to unite in oppressing them, and each to have its own separate cause and justification for oppression. The Church, which had grown fierce in its fanaticism, hated Jews simply as Jews, and persecuted them religiously. The State regarded them as a gold mine, to be worked as profitably, and with as little personal or familiar

contact, as was possible. The populace, who were necessarily brought into closer relations with Jews than were either the priests or the barons, looked on them with a curious mixture of unwilling admiration and superstitious dislike. They could not but recognise that the superior intelligence and thrift of the despised Jews were at least among the causes which contributed to their greater wealth. It is not pleasant to have to acknowledge that one's social inferiors are morally and intellectually superior to one's self. The Jews of England at this period were very different from the Jews of Spain, but there are degrees of difference; low as they had fallen from the level of what Jews should be, they were yet far less ignorant and superstitious than were most of their neighbours. They prayed to God instead of invoking saints, and they trusted in temperance and cleanliness, rather than in doubtful 'relics,' to ward off physical ills. Their knowledge, however, like their religion, was often another danger to the Jews. If they tried to teach the child of some Christian neighbour, or succeeded in healing a sick person, or in helping a poor one, any such kindly ministration was more likely to be looked on with suspicion than with gratitude. Jews were compelled, too, in this reign to wear a distinctive dress, and how could the wearers of a white badge[27] move about among their fellows without a sense of aloofness which must have made any familiar and wholesome intercourse impossible? And often, in order

that the royal treasury might be kept well filled, and the 'protection' of the king secured, the Jews were forced to prey upon the people. Their neighbours could not have liked them if they would, and thus, Jews were quite alone in the kingdom, left to themselves, without the chance of making a friend among the populace, or the priests, or the nobles.

2. The Caorsini.—Besides enmity and prejudice from Church and state, Jews had, what might be called, professional enemies in a class of money-lenders called the Caorsini. The Caorsini were originally bankers and collectors of the Pope's revenue, and lived in the town of Cahors, in Italy. Then some of them came to England, and gradually developed into a regular and recognised craft of dealers in money. This, in a sense, was poaching on Jewish ground, and it was hard upon the Jews, because the Caorsini were not fair rivals in an equal and open competition. The Caorsini had the advantage in position, being, as it were, licensed dealers in money; and they had, further, no unpopularity of race to handicap them. Jews, to cover the grave risks to which their property was always exposed, had often to ask a higher rate of interest than contented the Caorsini. This angered the customers of both, and the competition introduced an unhealthy trade jealousy and distrust between the rival money dealers, which state of things pressed, of course, most heavily on those who were already

burdened and weakened with the weight of prejudice.

3. The First Jewish M.P.s.—The constant quarrels between Henry and his barons exhausted the treasury, and new means of raising money had to be hit upon. The old accusation of crucifying Christian children was revived, and little Hugh of Lincoln served as pretext for a pretty extensive robbery. But this well-worn device was not wholly satisfactory, being necessarily confined to one locality at a time. In 1240 an entirely new mode was found of raising supplies. A Jewish Parliament was summoned. Writs were issued in due form, no reasons being given for the extraordinary proceeding. The larger towns were to return six Jewish representatives, and the smaller, two. When the newly elected members met, they were bluntly told their business, which was to collect, without the smallest delay, 20,000 marks[28] from among their co-religionists to replenish the royal treasury. The Parliament was then dissolved. These members, of the date 1240, are the very first Jewish M.P.'s in England.

4. Another Device for raising Money.—The supply of Jewish wealth still proved unequal to the constant demand for it, and a little later, Henry, who must have had a really original mind, thought out an entirely new scheme. The Jews, we must remember, were, by constitutional law, 'his Jews.' He

had got money out of his property by every conceivable way known to conscienceless holders of property; now, why should he not sell it? Profits might be turned over afresh in fresh hands. So actually King Henry III. sold his Jews to his brother Richard, receiving 5,000 marks as their price, and, by the terms of this remarkable bargain, Richard, Earl of Cornwall, became the legal owner, with 'all rights reserved,' of all the Jews in the kingdom. The terms of the sale would seem, however, to have considered the property rather as leasehold than as freehold in its nature, for presently we find the king reclaiming 'his Jews,' and subsequently selling them again to the Caorsini.

5. Under Edward I.—In 1272 the long, cruel reign of Henry ended; and if, like Herod, he had desired that the sound of Jewish weeping should be heard at his funeral, he could hardly have devised surer means of securing that satisfaction than his latest statute afforded. By this statute it was decreed that all real property possessed by Jews, in the form of land or houses, was to be wrested from them, and any mortgages held by them on securities of this sort were to be formally given up and confiscated to the Crown. Edward I. confirmed the unrighteous statute, and to show some aptitude for persecution beyond that of imitation, he made an order that the distinctive badge worn by the Jews, and hitherto white in colour, should

henceforward be yellow.

6. Some Ironical Legislation.—The State at this period showed also some care, although it must be confessed of a somewhat unpractical kind, for the moral condition of the Jewish portion of its property. The Jewish habit of 'usury' is gravely condemned by the statute-book of this date, and advice offered that manufacturing and agricultural arts should be followed by Jews instead of, or besides, their all but universal pursuit of retail trade. At the same time new taxes were imposed, and the old statute, which forbade Jews to hold 'real' property of any sort, remained unrepealed. So the good advice was somewhat ironical, and the concern expressed for outraged morality sounds a trifle hypocritical. For how were men who might not hold an inch of land to feel any interest in sowing and in planting it? and how could artisans or labourers, working at a small wage, earn a tithe of the tolls and the taxes which alone gained for Jews the right of existing at all? Whilst legislation compelled men to dwell apart and to dress apart, and claimed, at its own caprice, an unjust share of their earnings, it forced such men into mean occupations, and made it difficult to them to follow even these in an upright and honourable fashion.

7. Dishonest Jews.—In truth, the terrible pressure put on the Jews for money, drove many of them into dishonest ways of

obtaining it. The vast sums continually demanded could not possibly be raised in any legitimate way. In their dreadful straits, Jews clipped and adulterated the coin of the realm. Although, in strict equity, those who called for money, which they knew quite well could not be honestly come by, really caused this crime, and were as guilty in some respects as those who perpetrated it, still, two wrongs never yet made one right, and no amount of poverty is any justification whatever for dishonesty. It is better to starve than to steal, to be shunned than to cheat. There is, therefore, no cause for complaint in the fact that fraudulent practices, whenever discovered, were punished in the severest manner. In November 1279, all the Jews in the kingdom were arrested, on a tolerably substantial charge against some of them, of having clipped and adulterated the coin. Many non-Jews were likewise arrested, but their punishments, when found guilty, were of a much less severe sort than were pronounced upon the Jews. On this occasion, eighty Jews were executed in London alone.

8. Efforts at Conversion.—Although their wealth was the chief interest which Jews possessed for those in authority, yet their conversion was always a secondary object, and was never quite lost sight of. It served sometimes as the excuse, and sometimes as the occasion, for a little extra persecution. During the reign of Edward I.,

Pope Honorius IV. issued a bull denouncing usury and fraud, which, all men would agree with him, are practices quite justly to be denounced. But Pope Honorius went further; he denounced them as *Jewish* practices, and took the occasion to speak strongly against the Jewish religion generally and the Talmud in particular. This bull of his was issued especially for the guidance of the Archbishop of Canterbury and of the English clergy, and it was supplemented by an English statute of about the same date, which compelled Jews, under penalties, to attend places where Dominican friars preached proselytising sermons. Whether these sermons checked usury or promoted conversion may be doubted, but such compulsory attendances must in any case have provoked bad feeling, and, further, put the Jews into a false position with the priests and the populace.

9. Expulsion of Jews from England.—At last the wrongs and miseries of the Jews in England reached their climax. Heavy pressure from his clergy was brought to bear upon King Edward, and towards the end of the year 1290, he signed an edict which ordered every Jew in his kingdom, under penalty of being hanged if he remained, to leave England on November 1. All debts owing to Jews were cancelled, and only strictly portable property was to be carried away by them. Homes had to be broken up; old folks, sick folks, little children, to all of whom roughness and

shifts and changes might mean agony or death, were not considered. The decree was absolute and unconditional, and none were exempt from it. King Edward was not wholly responsible for the barbarous act, nor personally vindictive in its execution, yet it seems to have been carried out with circumstances of peculiar cruelty. The safe-conducts granted by the king were not always respected. One party of refugees was left stranded on a desolate part of the coast at the mercy of the incoming tide, whilst the master of the vessel they had chartered sailed away with their poor belongings. Of the 15,000 or 16,000 Jews (accounts vary as to the exact numbers) who were expelled from England in 1290, very many perished on their outward bound journey, some by accident and illness, some, it may be feared, by more or less of direct cruelty. The survivors were deposited at the nearest foreign ports. Thence, they made their way inland to such places in Central Europe as still permitted Jews to lead sad lives under State ‘protection.’

BOOK III.

100–1500.

STARLIGHT.

לְךָ יוֹם אַף לְךָ לָיְלָה

PSALM lxxiv. 16.

'*Then stars arise, and the night is holy.*'

CHAPTER XXVI.

CONCERNING JEWISH LITERATURE AND LITERARY MEN.

1. Starlight.—The darkness which closed in upon the Jews when Jerusalem fell, in the year 70, lasted for 1,500 years. Through all those long centuries the clouds of prejudice and of persecution hung low and lowering over all the countries in which Jews dwelt, and it was only in Spain, and for a comparatively short interval, that there was any break in the gloom. Through all those centuries, the race was outcast and alien, under the lash of the Church and under the ban of the State. Church and State changed faiths and names, old dynasties and old beliefs gave place to new, boundaries were shifted, and civilisation took fresh forms, but the darkness that had fallen on the Jews when Titus ruled over pagan Rome, never lifted in all those centuries, save for that brief period during the Mahomedan occupation of Spain. In the dense gloom, the word of God was, to His 'witnesses,' in literal truth what David had declared it should be, 'a lamp unto their feet.' It did not keep them from stumbling, but it saved them from being utterly lost and cast away in the terrible thick darkness.

Burdens were heavy, and a ‘lamp unto the feet’ was sorely needed, for men stooped under their loads, and their eyes looked mostly earthwards. But also, from time to time, through that long night of sorrow, stars, as it were, rose on the black background, giving, to those who could look up, some trembling and uncertain light on their weary way. Good men, and wise men, and successful men, at different periods, and in different countries, stood out from the ranks, and made the name of Jew a name of honour, and not of reproach. Some of these men were like shooting stars, just raising a bright swift track of light, and dying down as quickly, having lit up only their own pathway. And some gave forth but tiny rays, yet, grouped together in patient scholarship, these unnamed units gradually grew into useful constellations. And just a few, in their great gift of shining, were like fixed stars, and the wide white light of their wisdom endures even unto these days.

2. How the Stars shone.—But every star has its own especial orbit. The men who made starlight in the long night of Jewish history were not of the sort who mostly make epochs in national history. It has been well said that there are some great men, who are not doers nor speakers, but influences. Among a dispersed people there was small room for doers or for speakers. For warriors or for statesmen there was no place, and but little opportunity for ‘heroes’

in any generally received sense of the word, and thus, the names of eminent Jews, from the fifth to the fifteenth century, include no doers of startling deeds. But if there be heroism in endurance, in patient fulfilment of duty when desire is altogether unsatisfied, in earnest endeavour for good, with evil rampant all round, then these Jewish men lived heroic lives, although it was life lived from within rather than from without. They worked on without hurry and without rest, and in trust when hope failed. Their outward action on passing events was small, but the impression they made on the spirit and intellect of their time was great, and on the liturgy and the literature of their people they have left enduring marks. And truly, as the Bible says, 'the light is sweet.' The mere light cast on dark places by the sight of men living clean, and wholesome, and scholarly lives, must have been doubly 'sweet' in those dark days when all refining and ennobling influences were so sadly needed.

3. Piyutim.—Apart from the work of the schools, which found its outcome in the Talmud,[29] the earliest Jewish literature of post-Biblical times comes to us in the form of *Piyutim*. *Piyut* is derived from a Greek word which is rendered poet.[30] A large number of *Piyutim* are in existence, which range in dates of composition over some thousand years, and represent contributions from all parts of Europe. They are chiefly found in the *Machzor* (prayer-book for

festivals—literally cycle) of the various *minhagim*, or rituals. In this store there is a whole section of what are called *Selichoth*, or penitential poems. The word *Selichoth* comes from the Hebrew סְלִיחָה meaning forgiveness, and the theme of most of these singers of the synagogue is of hope for divine forgiveness, founded on the memory of human sorrow. The *Selichoth*, and many of the *Piyutim*, tell a never-ceasing tale of persecution and oppression. They take the form sometimes of dirge and sometimes of elegy, and now and again the recital of an actual experience becomes poetic through its very literalness. 'We are abused,' says one *Selichah*, 'spat upon, treated like mire in the street.' 'We are trampled upon like mire, seethed in the caldron, threshed like straw, and crushed as in a winepress,' begins another. Sometimes the suffering teaches strength, and a poet protests in all his pain, 'Because I fear the one Lord God, I fear amongst the many—none,'[31] or counsels his companions in misery to 'endure dispraise for fearing Him whose name is One. And never be through idols raised to power and might.'[32] But sometimes the undoubting belief in God which is breathed forth in these productions, takes, as is hardly unnatural under the terrible circumstances, an expression of passionate appeal to Him for active interference, or even of a more distinct cry for divine vengeance on the 'tyrants and their race.'

The earlier of the *Piyutim* are quite rugged and rhymeless, and about many of

them there is considerably more suggestion of martyrdom than of minstrelsy. It must have been difficult for the *Chazan* of the synagogue to make this so-called poetry form any musical part of the service. And here it is as well to note that the familiar title *Chazan* is derived from the Hebrew word חָזָהto see, and was used in the same sense as *Episcopus*, bishop, which means literally inspector, or superintendent. The חַזָּן of the synagogue, in addition to other duties, read or intoned the prayers, and in course of time the reader or singer became, and was called, the minister of his congregation. And hence the word *Chazanuth*, a word which is only applied to the melody, and not to the poetry of the synagogue, and which may be rendered sacred minstrelsy. In actual fact, till about the tenth century the *Piyutim*, which up to this date are mostly anonymous, have little claim to any musical or rhythmical charm. They are more or less articulate cries of exile, uttered by patient generations of men, who told of miseries past singing, almost past praying about. Towards the second half of the tenth century, the French and Spanish Jews, who were more cultivated and more happy than the rest of their European brethren, begin to add their share to the store of national religious poetry, and at once a change comes over the style. It grows more polished in form, and less uniformly mournful in subject. In these *Piyutim*, God resumes His place as Creator and Father, as well as Protector and

Avenger of mankind, and His glories and His powers, and man's hopes and man's duties, and the relations of the human spirit to the divine, are said and sung in more metrical language. 'Let me make the ballads of a nation, and I care not who makes its laws,' was once acutely remarked, and the saying is often quoted to show how much influence national songs have upon national character. In this sense it is very interesting to find what was the general tone and tendency of Jewish 'minstrelsy' through all those long centuries of darkness and of degradation. And first we notice that it was mainly of a religious sort—that the intellectual wealth of the Jewish nation flowed chiefly into the channels of the synagogue. In all the unutterable misery of the Middle Ages, the national poetry of the Jews never ceased to be religious, and it never, under all that cruel provocation, became revolutionary. The tone of some of the *Piyutim* is fierce and vengeful, but it is never cowardly even in its hate. The writers recount openly, and often passionately enough, the wrongs suffered by their race, but for all redress they 'lift up their eyes to the hills, whence cometh their help.' To the credit of these patient poets of the *Selichah* be it said that they never used their power of national song to rouse their people to any secret plotting, nor to any working of harm against their oppressors. But to keep up a feeling of pride and hope in the poor Ghetto folks old tales of ancient glories are recited over and over again. It is somewhat curious

to see how, through all the sad and often despondent strains of the *Piyutim*, there sounds every now and then a note of self-satisfied trustfulness, that seems, at first, almost like a sign of national arrogance or conceit.

'A race that has been tested,
And tried through fire and water,
Is surely prized by Thee,
And purified from sin,'

is an instance of the kind. But it was probably just this sure sense that God never would desert His people that saved them from utter degradation. And so, if the *Piyutim* occasionally insist a little strongly on God's especial and peculiar love for Israel, under Israel's especial and peculiar need for it in those days, the slight exclusiveness of their religious aspirations may well be forgiven to them.

4. A Specimen Planet.—Astronomers, before they begin to study the orbit of any particular star, like to be familiar with the general aspect of the heavens; and students of history, who wish to learn about any special period or personage, have to follow much the same course, in order that they may be able to fill in for themselves the background to any prominent figure. The general condition of the Jewish people in the chief countries of Europe during the Middle Ages is now, perhaps, sufficiently familiar to us for this plan to be possible,

and, as each star peeps out from its own particular corner of the dark sky, we can picture somewhat accurately the nature of the surrounding darkness which it illumined. Thus, the end of the ninth century, and the country Egypt, recalls to memory the tempestuous close of a long period of literary activity. The labours of the Gaonim were becoming, by that date, intermittent and interrupted, and Jehuda the Blind, one of the most active of them all, was already nearly a hundred years dead, when in 849 the Sultan Mutavakel[33] imposed those intolerant and degrading disabilities on the Jews of the East which were the beginning of the end. Oppressed from without, and divided by jealousies from within, the schools of Babylon gradually closed, one after the other, and the scholars migrated to Egypt and to Spain. In 892, to one of these settlers in Upper Egypt there was born a child who grew up and grew famous under the name and title of Gaon Saadia.[34] He became head of the college at Sora, and was a great authority on all theological matters. He translated the Bible into Arabic, which language was growing to be a second mother-tongue to the transplanted Eastern Jews. Saadia fought a good fight against Karaism and its principles, which seemed so wide and were so narrow.[35] His arguments in many forms were directed against the plausible and impracticable doctrines which, about the middle of the eighth century, Anan ben David had done his best to spread. But

Saadia's chief original work was called אֱמוּנָה וְדֵעוֹת, Faith and Morals. This book battles against unbelief, and sums up the arguments in favour of holding by 'tradition' under seven excellent and pithy heads. It shows that there is ignorant denial quite as often as ignorant belief, and that doubting comes more often from knowing too little than from knowing too much. But Saadia was no bigot. He taught that religion has no cause to fear research, and that if research is only carried far enough it confirms revelation. He wrote, all these centuries ago, in the same spirit as the Poet Laureate in these days,—

'Let knowledge grow from more to
more,
But more of reverence in thee dwell.'

And Saadia led an active life apart from his books. Like Mordecai, 'he sought the prosperity of his brethren, and the peace of all his seed.' But in these efforts our Rabbi was not successful, or only very partially so. The spirit which asks, 'Who made thee a leader over us?' was as active in the days of Saadia as in the days of Moses, and the Jews of Babylon were just as impatient as the Jews of the wilderness of wise direction and control. However, if Saadia's moderate counsels did not always prevail among his people in his lifetime, the influence of his written words remains to them, and are a fine record of fifty years of useful life. He had a great deal of trouble, in consequence of communal disputes with the רֵישׁ גְּלוּתָא,

David ben Sakkai. A reconciliation, after many years' discord, was effected between David ben Sakkai and the community, and David's grandson, who was the last רֵישׁ גְּלוּתָא, was brought up in Saadia's house. Rabbi Saadia ben Joseph died in 942.

CHAPTER XXVII.

SOME FIXED STARS.

1. Solomon ibn Gabirol (1021–1070).—This poet and philosopher, who was born at Malaga in 1021, is a very good example of what tolerant Mahomedan Spain produced among her Jews. The truest lives, it has been said, are those which have been cut rose-diamond fashion, that is to say, many-sided, and each side answering to some useful aspect of the life around them. This many-sidedness is perhaps a distinctive feature of Jewish genius, and due as much to circumstances as to nature. Solomon ibn Gabirol is an instance in point. He was poet, patriot, astronomer, and philosopher in one, and equally distinguished all round. Of his

own life-history we unfortunately know almost as little as we do of Shakespeare's, for biographies and autobiographies were not so much in fashion in those days as in these. But sonnets and poems with Gabirol, as with the great Englishman, take often a personal turn, and from these we learn that the Spanish poet was early left an orphan, and that he found a friend and protector in a certain Jekuthiel ibn-Hassan, the chief minister of the reigning kaliph. There are verses in existence which tell us of the friendship, and verses, too, of a sadder sort, which tell us of that friendship's ending. Jekuthiel died when the boy he loved, and who loved him back again as only boys and poets can, was but eighteen, and the sorrow that came thus early into Gabirol's life shadowed it henceforth. He seems always to have been of a somewhat sombre temperament, and it is possible that the loss of his parents when he was a child, and then the loss of this good friend just as he was entering manhood, may have made him more inclined than even he was naturally, to take sad views of things. He wrote a really wonderful elegy for so young a poet, on the death of Jekuthiel, and for the rest of his life he seems to have turned to work as a cure for heart-break. The most valuable of his writings is called 'The Fountain of Life,' and its philosophy was so wise and so original that the book grew more celebrated than the author. It was translated about 1150, from the Arabic language in which it was written, into Latin, and under its name

of *Fons Vitæ* it was greatly prized by learned schoolmen of the period, and in time it became a puzzle to identify the writer. 'Avicebron' was received as the name of the author, but who Avicebron might be was only conclusively solved in these days, when the French *savant* Munk proved, to the satisfaction of all who knew most about the facts, that the unknown and celebrated 'Avicebron' of general fame, and the known and loved Gabirol of Jewish fame, were identical. To Jewish literature his chief contributions were numerous *Piyutim*, to be found in the various rituals, and the כֶּתֶר מַלְכוּת , or Kingly Crown, which forms part of the New Year service in the Prayer-books of the Spanish and Portuguese and the British Jews. This is a most beautiful religious poem, beginning 'Heavenly and earthly creatures bear witness that they decay, and that Thou alone dost endure.' The German astronomer and philosopher, Humboldt, said of this composition of Gabirol's that it was a worthy and noble echo of ancient Hebrew poetry. It has a certain scientific as well as a theological value, for the first part of the prayerful poem gives a scholar's rendering of the truth that 'the heavens declare the glory of God,' by presenting to the reader a faithful picture of what was the astronomical knowledge of the period in which the author lived. The כֶּתֶר מַלְכוּת has been translated into almost every European language. Another work of this many-sided man was the composition of a Hebrew

grammar in verse, and a more interesting one was a small collection of wise and witty saws and sayings. This little book was called a ‘Choice of Pearls,’ and here are a few sample jewels:—

‘Questioning is halfway to wisdom.’

‘Courtesy is halfway to cleverness.’

‘Thrift is halfway to wealth.’

‘He who soweth hatred soweth regret.’

‘Man’s friend is his reason, and ignorance is his enemy.’

‘Who is wise? He who seeketh wisdom.’

‘A body without wisdom is like a house without foundation.’

‘Kings rule the land, wisdom rules kings.’

‘Forbearance is the best counsellor, courtesy the best companion.’

‘What is a test of good manners? Being able to bear patiently with bad ones.’

The string on which these pearls, and such as these, were strung, was a neat system of headings, such as ‘Friendship,’ ‘Patience,’ ‘Wisdom,’ and so on, under each of which headings the maxims were arranged. Gabirol did not live to be an old man; he died at Valencia before he was quite fifty years old, but, as Ben Jonson says,—

‘It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make man better be,
Or standing long an oak, three hundred

year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere.'

It is not the number of our years, but the things done in them, that will be counted to us in eternity. Ibn Gabirol lived his life to the full, although it was twenty years short of the allotted sum.

2. 'Rashi' (1040–1105).—Something more of a scholar, and something less of a poet, was Rabbi Solomon Isaaci, a French contemporary of Ibn Gabirol, who was born at Troyes in the year 1040. Though accusations against the Jews of France had grown frequent, and their position ever more and more insecure since the death of Charles the Bald in 877, yet their schools, particularly in the south and south-east of the country, were still flourishing and uninterfered with at the date of the little Solomon's birth. His father and his uncle were both learned men, and the child was a student almost from his cradle. He was born, in fact, into a community of scholars, and something of the simplicity, and something too of the poverty which belongs to the scholarly life clung to him all his days. His means were small, but his wants were few, and he seemed always extremely content with his portion of 'plain living and high thinking.' He married at eighteen, which is, perhaps, some explanation both of the poverty and of the content. But happiness did not quench his thirst for knowledge. So eager was he to learn all he

could possibly be taught, that, like Akiba before him, he did not hesitate to leave his wife and children in the pursuit of study. He went to the then celebrated theological colleges of Mainz and Worms, and worked there to such good purpose that his fellow-students dubbed him פַּרְשְׁנְדָתָא is a Chaldaic equivalent for 'Explainer of the Law.' He is said to have made פְּשַׁט of the Talmud, which means to have arrived at a clear and simple rendering of the text—a great feat if we are to accept it literally. He made also a commentary on the Bible, which gives evidence of wide research and clear thought, but his Talmud commentary is considered, by competent judges, to be the more valuable of the two. With all his learning, Rabbi Solomon Isaaci would seem to have been one of those delightfully genial people who naturally earn nicknames among their companions, or, at least, get long-sounding titles affectionately shortened. In the very little we know of the inner lives of these long dead heroes, it is often necessary to add inferences to facts, and it is very suggestive that many of the greatest of these scholars used what Dean Swift calls the 'little language' among each other. The famous Maimonides was familiar Rambam in his own circle. Ibn Ezra was known as Raba, and something of the modest, happy nature of the wise Rabbi Solomon Isaaci seems to be revealed to us when we hear that this learned scholar and distinguished commentator on Bible and Talmud is seldom called by his grand full

names, but only by the initials ר ש י, (רַבִּי שְׁלֹמֹה יִצְחָקִי) and it is as 'Rashi' he is famous.

3. Abraham Ibn Ezra[36] (1092–1167).— Ibn Ezra, who was born at Toledo in 1092, was a star that shone in many different ways. He was a man of vigorous intellect, and as active in body as in mind. For those quiet days he was a famous traveller, and we find him enjoying a visit to London when he was in his sixty-seventh year (1159). He was just sixteen years old when the fanatic outburst against the Jews in his native town was put down by King Alfonso of Castile,[37] and possibly it was the sense of impending troubles in Spain which first set him thinking of seeking his fortunes abroad. His 'fortunes' he never seems to have found, but failures in that direction did not trouble him much. He would laugh at his own disappointments, and say, 'If I were to take to shroud-making, I do believe men would leave off dying, or if I adopted candle-making as a trade, I am certain the sun would take to shining by night as well as by day till I gave it up.' Ibn Ezra's travels were rather the result of a restless and inquiring spirit than of a settled and sustained object. He would learn for a while, and then teach for a while, and do both equally thoroughly, and to the delight of either masters or pupils. And then he would travel again, and prove the most charming and entertaining of companions to any one whom he might chance to meet. He stayed once for a long

time in Italy, and his influence amongst scholars there caused quite a revival to take place in grammatical and analytical study. He was an excellent critic, and his philosophic and scientific commentaries on the Pentateuch, and on some other parts of the Bible, are very valuable. Astronomy, also, was a favourite pursuit of his, and he was a first-rate mathematician. Ibn Ezra must have been, as the phrase goes, a very able man. Yet all qualities have their corresponding defects, and the charm of many-sidedness, when undirected by any high aim, has a tendency to run into indistinctness of outline. Ibn Ezra, it must be confessed, was all his life just a little of a rolling stone, and mere restlessness appears to have had a good deal to do with his frequent change of place and pursuit. His intellect seems to have been more active than his emotions, and it looks almost as if he had more mind than heart. And so the light this star gave forth, though brilliant, was of a somewhat wavery and uncertain sort.

4. A Great Traveller.—Rabbi Benjamin of Tudela was a Spanish merchant, who, between the years 1165 and 1173, visited the Jewish communities then existing in Europe, in Asia, and in Africa, and has left the most valuable record extant of the general condition of the Jews at that period throughout the three continents. It is quite likely that commercial pursuits shared with the pursuit of knowledge the motive of

Rabbi Benjamin's wanderings. For, in the modern sense, he certainly did not 'make a book' of his travels. The Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela is the plainest and most unvarnished record of experiences, and, on the face of it, the work of a man who had no great literary ability. There is a lack both of detail and of polish in these rather rough notes of twelfth-century travel, and some critics have gone so far as to account for this meagreness by suggesting that Rabbi Benjamin might, in strict truth, have dated some of his despatches from Tudela. But more charitable and better informed commentators do not accuse our traveller of this bad faith, but explain his baldness of description and his occasional omissions by the much more likely suggestion that parts of the diary may have been altogether lost. The text which we now possess is considered by competent judges to be an abridgment of the original, and if this be the case, it would account for many otherwise unaccountable omissions. For instance, there is very little space indeed given to the Jews of Germany, who were numerous enough in the twelfth century to have afforded plenty of material to a traveller bent on recording his impressions. There would seem to be no cause for any wilful omission of this sort on the part of Benjamin, but the accidental loss of the German descriptions would easily explain it. With all its drawbacks, the book is extremely valuable. It gives us a glimpse of Jews, 'toiling, rejoicing, sorrowing,' in the

midst of alien peoples, and it enables us to see how they looked to the eyes of a very keen-sighted and very plain-speaking traveller, who spent eight years in visiting all the chief cities of the world in the second half of the twelfth century. Rabbi Benjamin wrote his journals in Rabbinic Hebrew. They have been translated into Latin, French, Dutch, and English, but, strange to say, never into German. Possibly the Germans considered a book of travels, which did not say much about them and their country, to be too trivial for the trouble of translation.[38]

5. Jehudah Halevi (1085–1140).—When the cry of *Hep! Hep!* was ringing in all its first fierce frenzy over Europe, there were just one or two quiet corners in the Continent where the sound was forbidden. Peter of Arragon and Alfonso VI. of Castile were the Caleb and Joshua of their age, who stood steadfast, refusing to join in a 'false report,' and follow a multitude to do evil. Within the century that had just closed, France, Italy, Germany, Bohemia, and Greece had each been, at different times, the scene of terrible persecutions of the Jews. In Spain alone, under the mild sway of the Ommeyade kaliphs, Jews found peaceable homes. By the beginning of the twelfth century the Catholic kings were fast winning back Spain from the Moors, but the tolerant policy of the Mahomedans was yet, for a while, maintained. Space and liberty were still accorded to Jewish subjects, and

it was on the safe soil of Old Castile, whilst Alfonso VI. reigned, that the poet, Jehudah Halevi, of whom a sober historian[39] gravely writes that the words ‘created in the image of God,’ when applied to him, read like the most simple and literal of descriptions, passed his childhood. As Jehudah grew up he became the very centre and chief of the group of tuneful and unworldly sages who, whilst the world was hurrying after vain shadows, and forgetting all about such beautiful realities as learning and humanity, remind us, by their calm and studious and religious lives, that such things did exist even in the dark ages. The quiet, uneventful histories of such men have been almost covered up from sight in the din and dust raised by recurring crowds of ‘chivalrous’ crusaders. Even in the age in which they lived, these gentle old scholars were not very visible, nor very prominent figures. They seem to stand a little apart, writing their poetry and philosophy, studying among the wise, teaching among the ignorant, and rarely eager for fame, and never for reward. Like the scholars of an older period, these, whom we find behind the scenes of the Middle Ages, used ‘the Law’ neither as a spade to dig with, nor as a crown to shine with. A modest livelihood was contentedly dug out of some handicraft or profession, and as to shining, they never thought about it at all.

Jehudah Halevi, physician and poet, was the highest type of this old-fashioned class of authors, and in his lifetime was far wider

known as a doctor than as a poet. Even his doctoring was done on old-fashioned lines. As he stands in his laboratory he writes:

'This draught that I myself combine,
What is it? Only Thou dost know
If well or ill, if swift or slow,
Its parts shall work upon my pain.
Ay, of these things, alone is Thine
The knowledge. All my faith I place
Not in my craft, but in Thy grace.'

His 'faith' was perfect; it never failed him.

'When I remove from Thee, O God,
I die whilst I live; but when I cleave to
Thee
I live in death,'

is another saying of his, and so beautiful a one that it has found a worthy setting in the יוֹם כִּפּוּר service. But, intensely religious as was Halevi, and perhaps because he was so religious, he was of an extremely happy nature, and he seems to have had, in addition to his other doctoring gifts, the 'cheerful heart which doeth good like a medicine.' This cheerfulness is very apparent in all his compositions, and a great many of his poems seem actually to be bubbling over with joyousness. Though, like most of the Jewish authors of his age, Halevi was an Arabian scholar, and thoroughly well read in Greek literature, he wrote mostly in Hebrew, and, as it seems, by preference as well as from principle,

used his genius on Jewish subjects. He drank at the classic well, he recognised to the full its charm and its use, but he was too thoroughly Jewish for it ever to be to him as ‘the fount of living waters.’ He warned his people, indeed, against the fascinating influences of ‘Grecian wisdom.’ ‘It bears not fruit, but only blossom,’ he says in his charming poetic fashion. There could be to Halevi but one ‘tree of life.’ His chief prose work is founded on the somewhat doubtful history of that Bulan, the Jewish king who is said to have reigned over the Khozars in the eighth century. The legend—it is hardly history—tells that Bulan, startled into religious self-questionings by a vision of the night, summoned, next day, Jewish, Christian, and Mahomedan divines to talk to him of their faiths, in order that, open-eyed, he might choose from among them the most satisfying. The arguments of the Jewish doctors, it is said, proved the most convincing to Bulan, and the legend concludes with his conversion to Judaism, and the founding in his person of a Jewish dynasty which lasted some two hundred years.[40] This was a tale after Halevi’s own heart. He saw it all as it might have been, and made it not only into a stirring story, but into an interesting discourse concerning Judaism; and, that it might have the more readers, he wrote it in Arabic. Halevi’s love for his race and his religion was enthusiastic. ‘Israel among the nations,’ he says, ‘is as the heart among the limbs.’ But he was practical as well as poetic, and loyal

as well as loving. He never neglected a patient for the sake of a poem, nor was he the less a faithful citizen of Spain because Jerusalem was to him, as he expresses it, 'the city of the world.' He had always a great desire to visit the lost land of his fathers. 'Oh! had I eagles' wings, I'd fly to thee,' he writes in his beautiful poem on Jerusalem. But as he had not eagles' wings, but only the plodding feet of a steadfast and God-fearing man, he set himself to do the work that lay straight before him, and made of his unsatisfied longings no excuse for sloth, but a spur to endeavour. It is said by some writers that he did at last go to Jerusalem, and died there; and others assert that he was murdered by Arabs on the road thither; and yet others, that he never had even the happiness to start on the long-desired journey. In truth, of the actual facts of Halevi's life we know, as absolute certainty, but few, and we have to build up his character, and guess at his circumstances, from his writings. These are fortunately plentiful, and there is no difficulty at arriving at some settled conclusions. From the love poems, which are 800 in number, we gather some knowledge of a happy home, and of a wife of 'rarest worth and sweet exceedingly.' Then there are quantities of letters to prove to us that Halevi was as faithful in friendship as in love. One of these epistles, written to a companion while absent on his travels, after regretting the loss of his society, adds, prettily and poetically

enough, ‘Within our hearts thou ne’er art out of sight.’ Another, which is addressed to Moses Ibn Ezra, begins, ‘How can I rest whilst we are absent one from another? Were it not for the glad hope of thy return, the day which tore thee from me would tear me from all the world.’ An elegy, which Halevi wrote in 1138 on the occasion of Moses Ibn Ezra’s death, is one of his best known and best liked compositions. Moses Ibn Ezra was a relative of the witty, wandering Abraham Ibn Ezra, and one of that brotherhood of poetic philosophers. But the most characteristic of Halevi’s writings are his religious poems, and these show us our poet in the truest aspect of his short but many-sided life. ‘For Thy songs, O Lord, my heart is a harp,’ he says in one place; and here is a specimen of the melody of his heart-strings:

‘Lord! where art Thou to be found?
Hidden and high is Thy home.
And where shall we find Thee not?
Thy glory fills the world.
Thou art found in my heart,
And at the uttermost ends of the earth.
A refuge for the near,
For the far, a trust.

‘The universe cannot contain Thee;
How then a temple’s shrine?
Though Thou art raised above men
On Thy high and lofty throne,
Yet art Thou near unto them
In their spirit and in their flesh.
Who can say he has not seen Thee?

When, lo! the heavens and their host
Make, silently, Thy presence manifest.

'I sought to draw near to Thee.
With my whole heart I sought Thee,
And when I went out to meet Thee,
To meet me, Thou wast ready.
In the wonders of Thy might
And in Thy holiness I have beheld
Thee.
Who is there that should not fear Thee?
The yoke of Thy kingdom is the yoke of
all.
Who is there that should not call upon
Thee?
Thou givest unto all their food.'

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE GREATEST OF THE FIXED STARS. MAIMONIDES. (1135–1204.)

1. Early Days in Spain.—At Cordova, in Spain, on March 30, 1135, there was born, in the family of a certain Rabbi Maimon, a little boy, who was named Moses. The mother died soon after the baby came, and so, in very early days, the little Moses did not get quite his fair share of petting. And soon his father married again, and besides some older brothers and sisters, there were presently several younger ones, to claim the new mother's care, and between them all Moses seems to have been, at first, just a little neglected and misunderstood. It is possible that his own mother, if she had lived, would have found him somewhat slow and sensitive, for other folks, more hastily judging, pronounced him to be a

rather sulky and stupid little boy. Among the family circle, in his childhood, Moses ben Maimon held somewhat the position of Hans Andersen's Ugly Duckling, and like this famous little farmyard hero, he was fated, as he grew up, to astonish them all. His capabilities were soon recognised by his teachers in the schools, where, as we have seen, the Law and the Talmud were the text-books. The study of these included a wide range of subjects, but the education of Moses ben Maimon was not gained only from books. He had in his youth the advantages which extended travel confers, and not travelling of the sort which has idleness for its motive and pleasure for its aim, but journeying undertaken from a cause, and with an object, which must have greatly roused the enthusiasm of an intelligent and high-minded boy. Cordova, his native place, had been, for the four centuries during which the Ommeyade kaliphs ruled in Spain, the centre of civilisation in Europe. In 1148, when Moses ben Maimon was a boy of thirteen, Cordova was taken by the Almohades, and under their fierce and bigoted government an era of persecution set in for Spanish Jews and Christians. The Almohades gave only the choice of 'death or exile' to such of their subjects as would not be converted to the faith of Islam. Some, hard pressed, took upon themselves the disguise of an alien religion, and, loyal in secret, and so far as circumstances permitted, to their own faith, remained as professed Mahomedans in their

old homes. Others were brave enough to follow truth at all costs, and amongst those who emigrated with this object, were Rabbi Maimon and his family.

2. Life in Exile.—Moses ben Maimon was old enough and cultivated enough to take in new impressions, and to benefit by new experiences. For years the family moved about from place to place, since safe 'cities of refuge' for Jews at that date were but few and far between. They finally settled down at Fostat, in Egypt, where an elder brother, David, seems to have been the chief bread-winner in the family. David ben Maimon was a dealer in precious stones, and Moses is said by some historians to have helped his brother for a while in the cutting and polishing of these gems. Although other historians vehemently deny that Moses had ever anything to do with trade, yet, knowing the respect in which manual labour is always held by Jews, and how often literary men of the race have been handicraftsmen, there seems, on the face of it, no improbability in the story, and rather a reason for giving credence to it, since all agree that at one period in their lives David ben Maimon took upon himself the care and support of his young brother. But whether Moses ever helped in the workshop or not, it is quite certain that he was no idler. He read and wrote most industriously, and before he was twenty-three he had published a treatise on the Jewish calendar, which shows some

considerable knowledge of mathematics, and for years he worked away steadily at the production of a learned commentary on the Mishnah. When the time came for choosing a profession—for again, of course, the Law could not be 'used as a spade'—Maimonides decided to become a physician. That even did not promise to be a very profitable pursuit, for his services were always at the disposal of the class who could not pay fees, but he took the keenest interest in all his patients, and it was not very long before his skill attracted the notice of influential outsiders.

3. Becomes a Court Physician.—In the middle of the twelfth century, Saladin, titular sovereign of Syria, was virtual Sultan of Egypt, and was proving himself, in every action, a hero fit for reality as well as for romance. Saladin had many kingly qualities, and not least among them was his aptitude for finding out good men, and honouring them when found. Saladin seems to have heard of Maimonides through his vizier, Alfadhel, who, first knowing the Jewish doctor professionally, had come, as he knew him more intimately, to regard him with great admiration as a friend. The introduction to the Sultan proved very fortunate, in a worldly sense, for Maimonides. He was put on the roll of physicians, which gave him a recognised position in the profession, and, in return for certain fixed hours of attendance at court, a pension was allotted to him. The

appointment was made about 1186, when Maimonides was more than fifty years of age, and the most valuable thing about it was the freedom it gave him from money anxieties, which especial worry is quite fatal to the production of good original work.

4. Court and other Employment.—But the court appointment gave him no freedom from work, nor any license to be idle. And still less did Maimonides let his successes in the outer world make him indifferent to the wants and the welfare of his own community. It is possible that the physician of Saladin, whose services, report said, had even been solicited by Richard of England, became, by degrees, a little more in request among his own congregation than had he remained only the congregational doctor. But as he grew famous, Maimonides was far too generous to recall whether his fame had come first from without or first from within, and his talents and his services were always at the disposal of all who needed him, poor or rich, Jew or Mahomedan, without much thought of self in the matter. Maimonides was a famous correspondent, and an extract from one of his letters to a friend at this stage in his life will give some idea of what work meant to a popular physician in the Middle Ages.[41]

'With respect to your wish to come here to me, I cannot but say how greatly your visit would delight me, for I truly long to communicate with you, and would anticipate our meeting with even greater

joy than you. Yet I must advise you not to expose yourself to the perils of the voyage, for beyond seeing me, and my doing all I could to honour you, you would not derive any advantage from your visit. Do not expect to be able to confer with me on any scientific subject for even one hour, either by day or night, for the following is my daily occupation:—I dwell in Mizr [Fostat], and the Sultan resides at Kahira [Cairo]; these two places are two Sabbath days' journeys (about one mile and a half) distant from each other. My duties to the Sultan are very heavy. I am obliged to visit him every day, early in the morning; and when he, or any of his children, or any of the inmates of his harem, are indisposed, I dare not quit Kahira, but must stay during the greater part of the day in the palace. It also frequently happens that one or two of the officers fall sick, and I must attend to their healing. Hence, as a rule, I repair to Kahira very early in the day, and even if nothing unusual happens, I do not return to Mizr until the afternoon. Then I am almost dying with hunger; I find the antechambers filled with people, both Jews and Gentiles, nobles and common people, judges and bailiffs, friends and foes—a mixed multitude, who await the time of my return. I dismount from my animal, wash my hands, go forth to my patients, and entreat them to bear with me while I partake of some slight refreshment, the only meal I take in the twenty-four hours. Then I go forth to attend to my patients, write prescriptions and

directions for their several ailments. Patients go in and out until nightfall, and sometimes even, I solemnly assure you, until two hours and more in the night. I converse with them, and prescribe for them while lying down from sheer fatigue; and when night falls I am so exhausted that I can scarcely speak. In consequence of this, no Israelite can have any private interview with me, except on the Sabbath. On that day the whole congregation, or, at least, the majority of the members, come unto me after the morning service, when I instruct them as to their proceedings during the whole week; we study together a little until noon, when they depart. Some of them return and read with me after the afternoon service until evening prayers. In this manner I spend that day. I have here related to you only a part of what you would see if you were to visit me.'

5. His Writings.—Busy as he was, yet, like most very busy people, Maimonides always found plenty of time for everything, and he continued to write and to study and to prescribe, in a way that seemed wonderful to those who were not in the secret of how good work gets done. To say he was 'a genius' does not quite explain it. Maimonides' genius was of the steady sort, that has industry for its roots, and grudges neither years of labour nor daily efforts of self-denial. The precious leisure of ten whole years was spent by Maimonides in the production of a single book, and this

'leisure' of early manhood must have included very many monotonous hours, which might have been given to personal pleasure or to active enjoyment. And even odd minutes were utilised by Maimonides. In the intervals of his great works he would write a treatise on medicine or mathematics, or throw off a poem, or indulge in an epigram.

The title of the ten-years book is הַיָּד הַחֲזָקָה , 'The Strong Hand.' It consists of an introduction and fourteen sections or books. In the introduction he describes the chain of tradition from the time of Moses till his own days, and the rest is a religious code, containing the Jewish laws—written and oral—systematically arranged and presented to the reader without discussion or argument. This work was published in 1180, when Maimonides was forty-five years old, and it was well received by most of the people who were wise enough to understand it. In 1191 a very important book was brought out by Maimonides, which, under the name of מוֹרֶה נְבוּכִים , 'a Guide to the Perplexed,' attracted an immense amount of attention, but not altogether of a favourable sort, to the author. The book deals with the perplexities of religious belief, and tries to solve some of the many puzzles in life and in religion to which God Himself gives and withholds the key, when He says to the children of men, 'My ways are not your ways, neither are your thoughts My thoughts.' Maimonides, in a reverent but still in a philosophising spirit,

tried to reconcile these ‘thoughts and ways,’ and to lift the lower to a comprehension of the higher. His efforts were not always, nor altogether, understood. In the then debased state of the Jews, the pressing need of a God who should be ‘near’ to them, had led, in many instances, to an ideal of divinity something a little different from, something a little lower than, what ‘the Lord, the Spirit of all flesh,’ should mean. There was a tendency, here and there, to materialise God, to localise His favours, and to dogmatise concerning His doings. Against all this, Maimonides patiently and persistently strove. To take as an instance a very famous chapter in this book, which has excited much controversy. The theme is the Jewish code concerning sacrifice. Maimonides argues that the blood of ‘cattle on a thousand hills’ could never have been, at any time, a desirable, or even an acceptable, offering to a loving and merciful God. He ‘guides the perplexed’ to the conclusion that the sacrificial system of the Jews was designed as an education, with the object of weaning a people living in the midst of idolatrous nations from worse, and of leading them to better, things. He considered the laws on sacrifice as designed against idolatry. But, in his view, the value of sacrifice, like the value of prayer, lay in the fact that it was a means to an end, and not an end in itself. He held that ‘sacrifice’ was designed to teach self-denial and practical repentance, and that the especial form, through which, in the world’s early

history, such lessons were taught, was suited to the conditions under which it was given. Such reasoning sounded to many, not the loving argument it really was in favour of a spiritual idea of God, but a reasoning away of old received and literal renderings of time-honoured texts.

And even this much-resented chapter on sacrifice did not produce so much discussion and bitter feeling as did some chapters on prophecy, in which Maimonides appeared to represent the power of prophecy as, in degree, a *natural* development of man's intellect. The conflict between faith and philosophy was waxing strong among Christians. There was a growing tendency to call names on both sides, to denounce science as paganism, and to sneer at religion as superstition. The sounds of this conflict between philosophers and theologians, in the larger world around them, found echoes among the Jews. We must remember that, except in Spain, the poor Jews of Europe, for centuries, had had no healthy interest whatever outside of their religion. Their Law was their 'light,' and their Talmud was the only window through which that light was let in upon their lives. Oftentimes they 'darkened with counsel' the rays of Law and Talmud both. The endeavour of Moses Maimonides was to clear away the gathering mists, and to broaden the window-panes, that the knowledge of the Lord might shine out on all the multitude. But the poor persecuted Jews clung to their Law and their Talmud,

to every line of Mishnah and Gemara, with a love that was so personal and passionate, that any sort of criticism on such prized possessions was suspected and resented. Maimonides' views on God and angels and prophets were based on Greek philosophy, and these views did not seem to his opponents any better than their own notions, which were drawn from the national sources of *Midrash* and *Hagadah*. Hence it is hardly surprising that some Rabbis forbade the study of מוֹרֶה נְבוּכִים , and called its author a heretic. When the opinion of the Rabbis became known to the Dominicans, these latter had copies of the book burnt in the market-place of Paris.

6. His Character.—In the writings of Maimonides we discover the talent of the man, but it is in his attitude under the response which these writings met with that we find out his character. He never grew angry at the mistaken zeal of his co-religionists. He understood the circumstances, and could make allowance for injustice, and pass over personal annoyance. And yet he was by no means a patient man. He did not like stupid nor ignorant criticism concerning essential principles of Judaism, and he could express himself in no very gentle language when he or his writings met with opposition of that sort. Still, he showed every respect to his opponents. He saw that there was a good as well as a bad side to the clamour and the seeming narrow-mindedness; and to

enthusiastic, earnest natures like Maimonides', intolerance is easier to bear than indifference. At this crisis in his life, Maimonides showed that he had 'staying' power. He could wait as well as he could work. He let his faith—

> 'Rest large in time, and
> That which shapes it to some perfect
> end.'

And his trust was justified. Called 'heretic' by some faithful, fearful co-religionists whilst he lived, posterity has deliberately and unanimously reversed their sentence. Among the great men of Israel, Maimonides has long been accorded a place in the foremost rank. 'From Moses unto Moses,' says one Jewish proverb, 'there has been none like unto Moses.'[42] His books, once condemned, forbidden, and burnt in the open market-place, are now among the works which no orthodox Jewish theologian's library may be without. Some of his doctrines, certainly, still leave room for amicable discussion, but the important hymns of אֲדוֹן עוֹלָם and יִגְדַּלwhich are founded on his teachings have an honoured home in the Jewish prayer-book.

7. The End of his Life.—In 1204, when not quite seventy years old, Maimonides died, rich in 'honour, fame, and troops of friends.' He was happy in his domestic relations, and his honest, earnest belief that the good of all creeds and of all nations

have a share in the life to come, made him in full sympathy with 'all sorts and conditions of men' in this life. An upright and consistent Jew, he lived on the pleasantest terms with the large Mahomedan circle of which he was a prominent and distinct figure. He was courteous without undue concession, helpful without unnecessary interference, and thus self-respecting, was universally respected. Maimonides had to bear the sorrow of the death of several children, but a good and clever son survived, to follow the great Jewish philosopher to his honoured grave in Tiberias.

CHAPTER XXIX.

DARKNESS BEFORE THE DAWN.

1. The Stars die out.—Maimonides was not only the greatest of the fixed stars in the Jewish literary firmament of the Middle Ages, but he was also the last star that found a chance of shining through the ever-

gathering gloom. Denser and denser grew the thick clouds, and, one by one, the stars waned and died out. Even had stars continued to arise, brilliant enough and near enough to pierce that terrible thick darkness, life to the Jewish nation was fast becoming so mere a hurrying from death, that the frantic, stumbling struggle would have left little opportunity or inclination for stargazing. There was no leisure to look up. Jews had to 'take heed to their ways' in the saddest and most sordid sense. And even the heedfulness was hopeless of result. The brute force, and the bigoted faith, of the age were both arrayed against the Jews, and oppressions culminated in edicts of expulsion. In 1290 the race was exiled from England, in 1394 from France, and in 1492 from Spain.

2. Whither the Exiles went.—The English exiles had little choice of asylum. The 'sea-girt isle' pushed them from her shores, and the nearest ports must have seemed to promise least misery in the way of transit, and most chance of safe landing somewhere. As the opposite coast of France came in view, it must have looked to those poor sea-sick and heart-sick fugitives as if the worst of their troubles were over. They disembarked at any and all of the French ports which would take them in, and journeyed hither and thither inland, eager and grateful to share the comparative security of their French brethren. They did not stay to think how unsafe it all was; they

did not look back to see how, but sixteen years before, under a decree of Philip the Fair, the Jews of France had been in like evil case with themselves, nor did they look forward through a gloomy hundred years to see all this dreary drama of exile acted over again, with added details of hardship. It was, perhaps, well for them that they could only see a little way at a time.

3. Life in Germany.—The English Jews who went further, and found a refuge in the German states, like the Continental Jews who joined them there, when exiled a century later, were certainly no better off. Germany, so called, extended from Russia in the east to the Netherlands in the west; and Jewish settlements existed in all the principal states and provinces. In the flourishing cities on the banks of the Danube or the Elbe, on the Maine or the Rhine, the Jews were all nominally 'serfs of the Imperial Chamber,' and avowedly under the protection of the Emperor. This 'protection' consisted in the Emperor, for the time being, possessing the first, and, in theory, the sole right of plunder. German Jews were the Emperor's Jews—his absolutely. He might sell them, or pawn them, or make presents or legacies of them. And, as a rule, the Emperors did protect this property of theirs from other depredators. If the vassal princes of the various states desired to plunder the Jews, they had to do it after a fashion that should not be found out. For this 'protection,' the Jews, of

course, had to pay a tax to their protector. On some occasions it was raised so high as a third of each man's ascertainable property. To regular, or irregular, taxation the Jews generally submitted, for any outbreak of resistance only made matters worse.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century, with the new influx of French exiles, things altogether looked so desperate in the German states, that a large number of Jews, principally from the Rhenish provinces, determined on emigrating to Palestine. Rudolph of Hapsburg, the then reigning Emperor, was very angry at this prospect of losing so large a slice out of his revenue. He at once confiscated all the Jewish goods on which he could lay his hands, and, as a speculation, seized on the chief Rabbi of Germany, and held him as a prisoner in one of his castles in Alsace. Rudolph calculated on getting a large ransom for his Rabbi, and the Jews would gladly enough have paid generously for his release. But the Rabbi refused to be ransomed. He would not play into his enemies' hands in that way. It was too easy a mode of raising money, and one that, if he yielded to it, would most certainly become a precedent. So the Rabbi declined his liberty on such terms, and he died a prisoner.

Unlike England and France and Spain, Germany never went to the length of expelling her Jews altogether, but she would hunt them, now and again, from place to place in her dominions, and the

hospitality she extended to them was, at best, the hospitality of a sponging-house. There is not a state, nor a province, nor a city of now united Germany which has not, at some time or other, taken its evil share in ill-treatment of the Jews. Prague, in Bohemia, could, perhaps, tell the most sensational tales of all, if it were well or wise to write out such sad stories in sober pen and ink. But the good old rule is best: 'Write kindnesses in marble, and *injuries in dust*.' It is sufficient to say emphatically that things did not improve. Towards the end of the fifteenth century the poor persecuted Jews of Germany made another effort at emigration, but not to Palestine this time, for the feeling which inspired the crusades had done its work, and the site of the 'Holy Sepulchre' was considered, at this date, too holy for Jewish feet to profane with their tread. By order of the Popes, the masters of vessels, bound for any parts connected with Palestine as a destination, were forbidden to carry Jewish freight or Jewish passengers. Their own land was denied to outcast Jews. Emigration, however, of some sort was growing imminent. Poland and Turkey, in their undeveloped civilisation, were found to be tolerant of aliens, and in these countries Jewish settlements began to be made. There was no general desertion of the German states, but the Jewish element in many of the cities perceptibly dwindled, and, by degrees, only Frankfort, Worms, and Ratisbon continued to be important centres of Jewish life.

4. A New Crusade.—At the beginning of the sixteenth century there was a new sort of crusade got up against the Jews, and what might be called a paper warfare opened upon them in Germany. It was mostly the fault of one man, a wretched apostate named Joseph Pfefferkorn, who, from the same vulgar love of profit and notoriety which had induced him to change his faith, published a silly and offensive pamphlet, ridiculing and abusing the habits and customs of his former co-religionists. Such a crusade as this wretched convert inaugurated was sure of supporters. His chief point for malicious attack was the Talmud, which he represented as the stronghold and storehouse for Jewish crime, stupidity, and superstition. He invented his examples to prove his rule. And the Talmud, for such an object, was well chosen. It is extremely easy to make assertions against a book which very few people can read. Those who were ignorant of the real contents of the Talmud naturally did not like to confess to their ignorance. Jews were an unpopular subject, and it looked so wise and dignified to agree in a condemnation which was apparently founded on much learned research. The Emperor Maximilian listened to Pfefferkorn's lying revelations, and we may be sure that the priests pricked up their ears. It was all but decided that the 'horrible book' which Pfefferkorn denounced should be burnt wholesale. But a saviour was at hand for 'Rabbi Talmud,' as some of the most ignorant of all called it,

actually believing, in their hot haste, that all this wickedness which they were called on to shudder at was contained in a man, and not in a book! There was living at the time a sensible and learned Christian scholar named Reuchlin. He was heartily ashamed of all the stupid malignity, the spite, and the folly. He made a spirited appeal, and not in vain, to the Senate of Frankfort and to the Elector of Mayence. 'Read the book,' he bravely urged, 'before you burn it. The best way to fight Judaism is to try and understand something about it. Burning is no argument.' The Dominican monks were very angry with Reuchlin, but he gained his point, and the Talmud was not burnt that time.[43]

5. What became of the Spanish and Portuguese Exiles.—The Jews who were expelled from the Peninsula underwent awful experiences. There were so many of them seeking new homes, that governments, not cruelly disposed, yet hesitated in their own interests from offering asylum to such crowds. In Italy, to which many turned in the hope of a genial climate and congenial pursuits, scant hospitality was experienced. Genoa distinctly closed her gates against the fugitives; Venice received them, but shut them up in a *ghetto* (1516); and Rome, even the Jews of Rome, were very doubtful as to the expediency of extending a welcome. Naples was more generous, but the result was hardly more fortunate for the Jews. In deference, perhaps, to Abarbanel, who led a

party of refugees to his kingdom, Ferdinand of Naples received them graciously, and took Abarbanel into his own service. But hardly were they settled in their new homes, when the Black Pestilence broke out in Ferdinand's State, and for a whole year made ravages among his subjects. Great numbers of the Jewish exiles crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, and made settlements on the northern coast of Africa, and in Egypt. A painful difference, at best, such rough colonising must have proved to the cultured grandees of Spain, and worse than roughnesses were in store for them. The resources of civilisation, in those parts of the world, were not equal to such a sudden influx of strangers needing to be fed, and, delicately nurtured and luxuriously brought up as these Jews had been, they had to suffer the horrors of actual famine. Of those who managed to survive, many were seized by captains of privateering vessels, and sold into slavery, and some lingered on, to meet a worse fate at the hands of the natives. The barbarous tribes of Africa had not arrived at the civilised pitch of persecuting Jews for religion's sake, but they had mastered the elementary reasons for persecution. They had got so far as to believe that Jews, however poor they looked, were potential mines of wealth, made and designed for plunder. On this belief they acted in a shockingly literal manner. Numbers of Jews who fell into the hands of these savages were actually ripped open by them, in the hope that gold was the ordinary lining of

Jewish bodies.

Some eighty thousand of the exiles travelled no further than Portugal, and there, for three or four years, they seemed tolerably secure. But in 1496 dynastic considerations induced King Manuel of Portugal, contrary to his own convictions, to follow the lead of his parents-in-law, Ferdinand and Isabella. An edict of expulsion against 'Jews and Moors' was pronounced. Ten months were granted for preparation, and then the Jews of Portugal were dispersed, as their Spanish brethren had been, over Italy, Africa, and Western Turkey, and gradually, and by degrees, a small contingent found a safe asylum in the Netherlands.

From 1497 till 1808, when Napoleon put an end to the 'holy court' of the Inquisition, no declared Jews were to be found in the Spanish Peninsula. Plenty of secret Jews remained, who, under their name of Marannos, or New Christians, continued, generation after generation, to fill high offices in Church and State. The Marannos were true at heart, and by stealth, to Judaism, and not seldom at the tribunal of the Inquisition they had to pay the penalty of the suspicions which their deceit excited. The Marannos preferred, when they could, to marry among themselves, but there were, of necessity, frequent alliances, prompted by love or by ambition, between the highly placed New Christians and the grandest and most orthodox Catholic families of Spain. In

course of time there were very few Catholic nobles who could not trace back to at least one Jew or Jewess amongst their ancestors. In the middle of last century, Joseph, King of Portugal, wishing to make a distinction between his subjects of pure, and those of mixed, descent, asked his minister Pombal if he could arrange for a peculiar hat to be recommended to the wear of New Christians. The next day Pombal brought his master three of such hats. 'For whom are these?' asked the king. 'One is for your Majesty, one is for me, and one is for the Inquisitor-General,' answered Pombal. The minister's genealogical researches, we may suppose, rather disconcerted the king, but as they went to show that the new hats would have to be pretty generally worn, King Joseph gave up the idea of distinguishing the Jewish descended grandees of his kingdom.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE DARKNESS VISIBLE.

1. Deterioration of Character.—The effects of all the evil treatment which we have traced, began to be clearly manifest in the Jewish character. The ravages on Jewish life and on Jewish property were not the worst results of these ages of persecution. The real injury done to the Jews went far deeper than any amount of outrage or wrong might inflict on an individual. 'Few natures,' writes the Laureate, 'are of such fine mould, that if you sow therein the seed of hate, it blossoms charity.' Jewish nature is of 'fine mould,' or under such a course of manuring, and such a season of neglect, it might well have become altogether overrun with rank weeds. Seeds once planted can, nevertheless, only follow the law of nature, and blossom and bear fruit according to their kind. Forced into secret and sordid ways, denied hope, aim, or ambition of any worthy sort, contemptuously shunned when they were not actively hunted, 'protected' by princes and persecuted by priests, what wonder if Jews at last became 'degraded,' never indeed to the level of what they were thought, but something undoubtedly below the level of what they should have been? Agur's prayer was a wise one. 'Give me, O Lord,' he says, 'neither poverty nor riches: lest I be full, and deny Thee; or lest I be poor, and steal.' Jews, for generations, were subject to the extreme of both the temptations which Agur prayed against. The cultivated Marannos of Spain yielded to the one; they were 'full,' and for continued wealth and ease they denied their God. The

ignorant clippers of coin in England yielded to the other temptation; they were poor, and stole.

The higher ideals which keep men straight were sometimes lost sight of in the gloom. Honour and honesty came often to be regarded as impossible virtues. Life was so uncertain that it grew unduly dear, and men and women, in their terror, became, not unseldom, selfish and cowardly. Instances crop up in contemporary records, though they are happily rare, of Jews being denounced and betrayed by Jews. The carefully guarded secret of a co-religionist's hidden hoards would now and again be disclosed to the enemy, as a means of averting the 'evil eye' from a too close scrutiny into the traitor's own concerns. Men were even found capable of owning to untrue accusations, and of inventing stories of never-designed plots, with the object of gaining favour and 'protection' for themselves and their families. Under the terrible conditions of their life, the very virtues of the Jews turned to vices. The old Jewish characteristics of steadfastness, and prudence, and intelligence, seemed to take new and lower forms; for bare life's sake, the loyal, large-minded Jew learnt to be narrow, and secret, and cunning. There was such awful need to be rich. Rich Jews could gain at best a lofty tolerance, and for poor Jews there must have seemed no cause nor excuse for living at all. Money-getting became the one absorbing pursuit of the race, the one ambition of life, the one

possible protection against cruel and tortured death. And the money got, it brought no leisure, no gracious possibilities with it of refinement or of culture. To toil for wealth which they might not openly enjoy, and to passionately believe in a religion which they might not openly profess, was the portion of the Jews for centuries. It was a sort of suffering which sapped at the very roots of self-respect, and which inevitably resulted in defects of bearing and of conduct. The outcast Jew learnt to stoop where he should have stood upright, and to swagger and to push when standing room was grudgingly allotted him. He came by degrees to merit, in his outward aspect, some of the contempt which he had never earned, and in this sadly changed aspect of the heirs of the prophets, the darkness of the 'dark ages' was made visible.

2. Atmospheric Conditions.—Nothing, again, perhaps shows more plainly the density of the darkness than the extraordinary light which was cast upon it in the seventeenth century by a baleful shooting star, which rose like a rocket in the East, just as the dawn was beginning to break in the Western world. The miserable condition of the Jews had by this time a little shaken their faith. They had been martyrs, and mute inglorious martyrs, for so long. They suffered, among other things, from suppressed religion. Their faith in God was as fervent as ever, but the fervour,

denied any honoured and open expression, had come to be of a dangerous and an emotional sort. This spiritual weakness, such as it was, did not lead them, however, in the direction of doubt, but of credulity. They did not think that the Lord's 'hand was shortened,' that it could not 'save,' but they grew over-eager to see it stretched out on their behalf, and far too ready to welcome any sorry impostor by way of Saviour. As had happened before the fall of Jerusalem, and again before the coming of Barcochba, the very air that was breathed by unhappy Jews seemed full of portent and prophecy, and a 'Messiah' was almost bound to appear in response to the wild and superstitious hopes in which they indulged. And when, at length, such a one came forward, he found he had marvellously little to do to keep up the character.

3. A Shooting Star: Sabbatai Zevi (1626–1676).—Smyrna, in Turkey, was the birthplace of the wretched impostor who, for some three years in the latter half of the seventeenth century, 'made,' as an old chronicler expresses it, 'a madness among the Jews.' The father of Sabbatai Zevi was a merchant, and in no wise remarkable. The son was something of a scholar, and gained a certain amount of unwelcome prominence in his youth by propounding some rather startling religious theories, an exploit which led to his being banished from the city by order of the authorities of the synagogue. Before his exile he was twice married and

twice divorced. We do not know what effect these domestic experiences may have had on his character, but we hear of him next (1664) at Jerusalem, interesting himself greatly in all Jewish questions, and finding in a certain Jew of the place, named Nathan, an enthusiastic listener to all his wild plans. Whether the sight of the fallen city may have inspired Sabbatai with a genuine and passionate desire to help in its restoration, or whether he was a conscious impostor from the very first, and only influenced by the desire of revenge on the Smyrna synagogue, it is difficult to decide. It is not easy to think that, within the very walls of Jerusalem, a Jew could plan a deliberate imposture on his nation. In his actions, however, it is certain, Sabbatai was never honest. Quite suddenly he proclaimed himself the Messiah of the Jews, appointed Nathan his prophet, and proceeded to predict the very date when he, Sabbatai Zevi, should be acknowledged sole monarch of the universe, with the capital and head-quarters of his kingdom fixed in a restored and beautified Jerusalem.

4. How the News was received.—The news of a Messiah having arisen spread like wildfire through all the cities of Turkey. Business of every sort was suspended, and men and women abandoned their ordinary occupations, and gave themselves up entirely to what they called good works. Believing that they were about ‘to inherit all things,’ rich and poor alike refused to

labour. Those who had led self-indulgent lives now fasted and scourged themselves, and became so lavish in their charity, and were so urgent to make amends, that the beggars had an extremely good time. There must have been something very persuasive about Sabbatai Zevi, for a certain Samuel Pennia who began by making a strenuous stand against all this folly, ended by becoming a violent convert to it. Sabbatai presently went to his birthplace, Smyrna. In that city early recollections stirred some of the people to just sufficient doubt to make them ask their old townsman to perform a miracle in proof of his Messiahship. Sabbatai, says the same old chronicle, 'was horribly puzzled for a miracle,' but his effrontery was equal to the credulity of his dupes. In an audience before the cadi or judge of the city, Sabbatai suddenly and gravely exclaimed, 'See you not a pillar of fire?' Many of the crowd, in the hysterical excitement of the moment, really believed that they saw something of the sort, and those who did not see were silent, hardly liking to proclaim their want of faith or their defective sight. Sabbatai was triumphant, and men who refused to acknowledge him were actually, in some cases, excommunicated by the synagogues.

5. The Sultan interferes.—But an end was coming to this extraordinary imposture. The Sultan of Turkey, Mahomed IV., thought it time to put a stop to the tumult and confusion which the man was creating

in his dominions. So when Sabbatai, shortly after the visit to Smyrna, made a mission, as he would have called it, to Constantinople, he was seized by order of the sultan upon his arrival, and imprisoned in a dungeon. It was an unpleasant experience for Sabbatai, and it made a very great difference in his way of looking at things, but on his infatuated followers, strange to say, his reverse of fortune made little or no impression. In a dungeon or in a palace, as martyr or as prince, they believed in their Messiah. Poor deluded people, there is something very pathetic about their enthusiasm; it seems to suggest so plainly how few objects in life they must have had worthy of belief or of reverence.

6. Sabbatai resigns his Pretensions.—The sultan was quite determined to make an end of all this madness. At the end of two months he demanded a miracle of Sabbatai as the price of his release from prison. But it was to be a miracle of the sultan's own choosing this time. Sabbatai was to be stripped naked, archers were to shoot at him, and his 'divine' flesh was to remain proof against their arrows. Now, two months in an uncomfortable dungeon had considerably sobered Sabbatai Zevi. He was not the sort of stuff of which heroes are made, and he had not the slightest ambition to be a martyr. All his audacity ebbed away from him, and he, of course, refused the test. Then, like the coward he was, seeing the game was up, and tired perhaps of the

whole thing, he owned that he was nothing but a very commonplace charlatan, who had traded on the credulity of his countrymen.

7. Becomes a Convert to Mahomedanism.—The confession, humiliating as it was to Sabbatai, did not altogether satisfy the wise sultan. He wanted to make an example of the cheat, and to show his dupes what a poor creature they had believed in. So the sultan said that as Sabbatai had proved himself so bad a Jew, he must try if he could do better as a Mahomedan. Quite cheerfully Sabbatai consented to conversion, and had the effrontery to add that to be a Turk had long been his ambition! And as a Turk, and a rather popular one, this impostor continued to live, and it was in the rather mixed character of a 'Jew-Turk' that, some ten years later (1676), he died.

BOOK IV.

1591–1885.

DAWN.

עַד שֶׁיָּפוּחַ הַיּוֹם וְנָסוּ הַצְּלָלִים

SONG OF SOL.
ii. 17.

'*Who counts the billows, when the shore is won?*'

CHAPTER XXXI.

DAWN.

1. Beginning of Better Days in Holland.—At last, after the thick darkness and the waning stars, some faint streaks of dawn began slowly to appear. It was on ugly, flat, Dutch marshes that the new light of liberty first tremblingly broke, and its unaccustomed rays touched the sluggish canals and solid bridges of the ancient city of Amsterdam into a beauty that had been lacking to the picturesque minarets of Spain, and gave to the respectable Dutch burghers a dignity that is somehow absent from the stateliest of Spanish grandees. It was in 1591 that the first small settlement of Jews was made in Holland, and these earliest settlers were Marannos from Spain. Religious intolerance in the Peninsula had grown no less fierce since the days of Torquemada, and under the gloomy fanatic Philip II., the widower of our poor, merciless Queen Mary, all the worst terrors and persecutions of the Inquisition had been revived. The New Christians, or Marannos, as the disguised Jews of Spain and Portugal were called, felt, under Philip's sway, less secure than ever from suspicion and its terrible consequences. Emigration seemed their only chance of safety, but, as of old,

there was small choice of safe asylum. England and France were still closed against declared Jews; the Popes and princes of Italy were hostile to them; Germany was cruelly inhospitable; and Turkey sounded very foreign and very far off to these cultivated and somewhat self-indulgent Marannos. At last in their straits they bethought themselves of brave little Holland, whose people had fought as sturdily to guard their shores from the inroads of Inquisitors as from the inroads of the ocean, and had made of their enemy, the sea, an ally against the Spaniards.[44] In the States which had revolted from the cruel supremacy of Spain, and had struggled so heroically for national and religious independence, there seemed to be a certainty of freedom of conscience being accorded to all citizens. The Marannos had come to be very tired and very impatient of their masks, worn though they were amid the palms and the orange groves. And so it came to pass that, at the end of the sixteenth century, a little party of Spanish Jewish refugees made this fresh experiment for life, and were most kindly and generously received by the Protestant inhabitants of the new republic of the Netherlands.

2. The New Jerusalem.—The emigrants who thus sought the hospitality of the States were, in truth, of a sort to make the Dutchmen very satisfied with their own unfashionable virtue of religious tolerance.

It was no hungry, pushing crowd of traders, eager only for bare livelihood, who made their way to this new country. Spain, for all the fetters she had laid for centuries on the consciences of her subjects, had also for centuries given full opportunity for every energy which they might possess to develop in the service of the state. Jews do not restrict themselves to commerce when they have chance and choice of other pursuits. As open and declared Jews so long as they could, and then, when they could not, as Marannos, the Jews of the Peninsula, since the occupation by the Moors, had held office as statesmen and as finance ministers, and had been distinguished among the physicians and scholars and poets of their country, as well as among its landowners and its merchants. It was thus a highly intelligent, and cultivated, and fairly well-off little community which threw off its disguise of New Christians, and hastened to settle down as self-respecting Jews in Amsterdam. They lost no time in building themselves a synagogue, and in establishing schools. Their first synagogue was built in 1598, and seventy years later there were several prosperous places of worship. The old scholarly instinct of Judaism, which had asserted itself in so many epochs, and in so many parts of the world, at Jamnia and at Sora, at Alexandria and at Cordova, revived again, and Amsterdam grew into a quaint Dutch likeness of them all. The men of light and leading in Holland gave a glad welcome to these congenial spirits from Spain, and

Amsterdam, with its happy, honoured, and rapidly increasing Jewish colony, came to be called the New Jerusalem. In 1619, sufficiently full legal rights were secured to the immigrants, and the Jews of Holland gradually became no inconsiderable addition to the commerce and the culture of the country.

3. Sephardim and Ashkenazim.—Many delightful qualities have their corresponding defects. The refugees from Spain had some drawbacks to their cultivated minds and their refined manners. They were very superior, but they were also, on occasion, not a little selfish. They valued much their training in the old country, and the consideration which it gained for them in the new. They valued it, in fact, so much, that they desired to keep it wholly to themselves, and not to risk any loss of social standing by contact with less creditable co-religionists. Naturally enough, when the poor downtrodden Jews of Germany heard of this happy little settlement in Amsterdam, many journeyed thither, hoping to find toleration from strangers and a welcome from their brethren in faith. In this latter hope they were disappointed. The Spanish and Portuguese Jews kept themselves proudly and distinctly aloof from the German Jews, refusing even to intermarry with them. The Sephardim and Ashkenazim[45] Jews of Holland were, from the very first, entirely separate communities, worshipping in

different synagogues, learning in different schools, supporting each their own charities, and using each their own prayer-books, with not even the pronunciation of the ancient language in common. The German Jews, as a body, were, it is undeniable, of a distinctly lower tone, in regard to occupation and education and refinement, to these others. It was impossible, from the widely different antecedents and experiences of both communities, that things should have been otherwise, and many of the differences between them were quite inevitable. Still, that resolute aloofness from the unattractive Ashkenazim was not a nice attitude on the part of the prosperous and respected Sephardim. Excuses may be found for them; their own position was certainly not very secure. Still the fact remains that the Sephardim, under pressure of circumstances, did what the prophet Isaiah warns us all from doing—they 'hid themselves from their own flesh.'

4. Spanish Jews in Holland.—Quite as surely, if not quite as conspicuously, as the Ashkenazim showed signs of the treatment to which they had been subject in Germany, did the Sephardim bear traces of the experiences which they had undergone in Spain. The defects which persecution had developed in the one case were the more disagreeable and more apparent, but they were hardly as harmful as some tendencies which a long course of religious hypocrisy

had created in the other. The German Jew had worn the yellow badge for centuries, and something of the look, and something of the habits, of an outcast disfigured him still; the Spanish Jew, to escape the fate of the persecuted, had taken upon him the disguise of the persecutors, and some remnants of the fierce, intolerant Catholicism of Spain unhappily clung to him for a long while after his close-fitting mask of New Christian had been flung aside.

5. Their Acquired Intolerance.—It is a sad thing to find that Jews, who had so suffered from the terrors of the Inquisition, should have set up a little tribunal of their own, and invested it with similar powers over religious offences; and very strange that those who had experienced the horrors of penance and excommunication should have imitated the proceedings of those persecutors in the treatment of members of their own faith, whom they considered heretical in religious matters. But this actually happened. The effects of persecution have now and again made Jews a little ‘mixed’ in their morals as well as in their manners. The Jews of Holland, with that long-denied gift of religions freedom at last in their hands, grasped it somewhat over-tight, and in their delight at holding their Judaism fast and firm in the sight of all men, they were not always quite as careful as they might have been to do unto others as they were so very thankful to be at

last done unto.

6. An Instance in Point: Uriel da Costa.—Amongst those disguised Jews of Spain who, the better to conceal their Judaism, went even to the length of taking the office and performing the rites of Catholic priests, was a certain Uriel da Costa. When the Amsterdam settlement gave its chance to Jews of living true lives, da Costa gladly enough left Spain, threw off his disguise, and joined his brethren in faith. But he had been for too many years dwelling as a Catholic among Catholics to be able to become all at once a strict and orthodox Jew. He had grown used to ceremonial of one sort, ceremonial of another sort, perhaps even, for a while, of any sort, was irksome to him. He neglected Jewish observances, and, what was less pardonable, he spoke and wrote against many cherished Jewish practices, denouncing and ridiculing them as relics of formalism and superstition. It was something more than imprudent. His own long failure in courageous profession of his faith should have led da Costa to consider himself quite unfitted to give any opinion whatever as to the correct forms of its observance. He had expressed his Judaism throughout the best part of his life by entire silence: silence would better have become him still. He had submitted to circumstances, and lived a life of active religious deceit: it could have been no great strain on such a seasoned conscience to

conform to what the bulk of his people were content to accept. Little sympathy can be felt with the hasty attitude of opposition in which da Costa conceitedly placed himself to the congregation of Amsterdam, but still less for the unfortunate spirit in which his opposition was resisted. He was first excommunicated by theological authority, and a little later, when he had published an attack upon the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, he was sentenced by the Dutch civic authority, which the congregation most unwisely invoked, to a term of imprisonment. So closed the first act in this discreditable affair.

Some years later, da Costa, grown older and perhaps wiser, wished to be reconciled with his co-religionists, and made formal application for the ban of excommunication to be lifted from him. Here was an excellent opportunity for burying the hatchet, and for the authorities to accept da Costa's overtures as a sufficient acknowledgment on his part that he had been in the wrong. Unluckily, old associations with that dreadful Inquisition were deeply implanted in the members of the Amsterdam congregation. They were no longer New Christians, but they were also not quite yet true Jews. It was resolved that Uriel da Costa should be pardoned, but there was a horrible and grotesque imitation of Torquemada's barbarous programme when the penitent was received back into the synagogue. A special service was held, a 'confession' of his sins was required to be

read aloud by the suppliant, a sermon was preached at him, stripes to the number of nine-and-thirty were laid upon him with no gentle hand, and one after another, over his prostrate body, the elders of the congregation solemnly stepped. Then the curse, which no human being has any shadow of right to pronounce, was declared to be removed from him. It was altogether a terribly unjewish and mistaken proceeding. Every society or community has, undoubtedly, the right to lay down certain rules by which they will receive new members, or expel old ones, just as every father has a right, and even a duty, to keep from his house persons whose influence he fears as dangerous to the morals of his children. But to punish is another matter. No opinions, however mischievous, could justify such treatment as da Costa received at the hands of the Amsterdam community, and his next act put these bigoted interpreters of a bad system yet more hopelessly in the wrong. Two days after that humiliating scene in the synagogue (in April 1640), da Costa shot himself, and thus aroused a sympathy which on the merits of the case, had it been properly dealt with, would have been given neither to him nor to any one of his actions.

CHAPTER XXXII.

MANASSEH BEN ISRAEL.

1. His Early Life.—The Amsterdam settlement increased and prospered. Its members were distinguished in learning and in commerce, and by degrees their presence and their influence were not confined to the Dutch capital. Early in the seventeenth century an important branch colony of Spanish and Portuguese immigrants was formed at Hamburg, and, a little later on, another at Copenhagen. But Amsterdam continued to be the centre of the revival, and new refugees from the Peninsula were always arriving in Holland, to take the place of the younger and more adventurous spirits who sought their fortunes further afield.

Under Philip III. of Spain there was a fresh outbreak of activity on the part of the Inquisition. In January 1605 an *auto-da-fé* was held at Lisbon, in which 150 Jews and Jewesses literally walked 'in the shadow of death,' and were only set free from that fearful procession, at the last moment, on payment of an enormous fine. Their ransom money paid, these poor souls hastened to leave the land which bigotry had made

intolerable to them, and, broken in health and ruined in fortune, they made for the friendly shores of Holland. Among these refugees was a certain Joseph ben Israel and his family, the youngest member of which was a year-old baby named Manasseh. Joseph ben Israel received the kindest of welcomes from his old friends, who were now no longer professing Catholics, but very earnestly practising Jews. The Rabbi of the Amsterdam congregation, Isaac Uziel, in due time became tutor to the little Manasseh, and by the year 1622, when Manasseh was barely eighteen, the office of Rabbi having become vacant through Uziel's death, the appointment was given to the promising son of Joseph ben Israel. So, from the early age of eighteen, Manasseh preached and taught with great satisfaction to himself and his congregation, and to the benefit also of many learned Christian scholars, who, interested in the Jewish community in their midst, would often pay a visit to the synagogue or the school. It was an honoured and an honourable position which Manasseh held, but it was not a well-paid one, and, like the older Rabbis, Manasseh had to supplement head work by hand work. He set up a printing press, and in 1627 he issued a prayer-book, which prayer-book was the first Hebrew publication that ever appeared in Holland. Perhaps the opportunity of being able to publish whatever he might like to write had something to do with making an author of Manasseh, for, without any great original

talent, he became a prolific writer. In 1632 he brought out a book called the 'Conciliator,' the object of which was to reconcile conflicting passages in the Pentateuch. There are no valuable independent ideas in the 'Conciliator,' and, perhaps, what it shows most clearly is how indefatigably Manasseh read before he began to write. There were five years spent on the composition or compilation of this work, and it contains quotations from, or references to, over two hundred Hebrew, and fifty Latin, Greek, and Spanish authors. It was written in Spanish, though it might as readily have been written in Hebrew or Latin or English, for Manasseh was a most accomplished linguist. The research of the book, and the industry and talent of the author, gained it fame. The 'Conciliator' was speedily translated into Latin and Italian, and attracted to Manasseh a great deal of complimentary attention from the scholars of the day. Money, however, was still lacking, and began to prove a somewhat serious difficulty, for Manasseh had married young, and his wife, though a great-granddaughter of Abarbanel,[46] and bringing him delightfully patriotic memories as her portion, had brought him no solid dowry. And, of course, there were children to make the ideal of 'plain living and high thinking' somewhat of a practical puzzle. By 1640 Manasseh began to seriously face the necessity of turning to mercantile pursuits, and of emigrating to the Brazils. His congregation, which seems to have been a

little slow to recognise his talents till the outer world pointed them out, and not very quick or very liberal in rewarding them even then, would have let him go, and only regretted him as a printer of prayer-books, but, luckily, two brothers named Pereira were wiser than the rest of the Amsterdam community. These brothers, who were wealthy men, came forward very liberally, endowed a college, and made Manasseh the head of it. Thus set free from pecuniary cares, Manasseh ben Israel, at the age of thirty-six, was able to give himself up to his books, and to his duties in the pulpit and at the schools.

2. His Writings and his Friends.—The exceptional position which the Jews held in Holland gave to any distinguished member of their community a quite exceptional prominence. The Amsterdam Rabbi, as Manasseh ben Israel was called, came to be quite a celebrated personage. He was looked on as an encyclopædia of knowledge, and scholars of both sexes came from far and near to consult with him on learned subjects, and Hebrew came to be quite a fashionable study, even among Jews and Jewesses. There is no doubt that Manasseh's character had as much to do with his popularity as his attainments. He was a thoroughly upright man, and most courteous in his manners. He was, moreover, never sparing of time or trouble when the results of his really wide and varied reading were in request. Grotius, the

author of the 'Law of Nations,'[47] Caspar Barlæus, who has been called the Virgil of his age, the whole of the learned family of Vossius, father and sons, all came to know and to esteem Manasseh, though neither one of them was naturally fond of Jews. And as Isaac Vossius was not only a distinguished scholar, but also chamberlain to Christina, Queen of Sweden, his friendship proved, by-and-by, a very useful one to Manasseh. Not useful in the vulgar sense of gaining for the Jewish Rabbi the right of rising in influential Christian society, but useful for the patriotic end, the טוֹב לְעַמּוֹ—the good of his people, which Manasseh, like Mordecai, was always seeking. Manasseh was no great author, as we have seen, yet even in his authorship he had a patriotic ideal. He was always meaning to write a 'Heroic History,' as he called it, by which he meant a history of the Jews, who were his heroes. He never did it, and possibly our libraries are not the poorer for the lack, whilst our lives are certainly the richer. For Manasseh was destined to make an altogether new chapter in Jewish history, instead of expending his energies in compiling many prosy ones. In truth, the works which he did publish add but little to his reputation. There were a great many theological treatises, some translations, and some compilations, all alike showing signs of industry and of reading, but none affording much trace of critical or original thought. Perhaps the most widely read of his works at this time was a little book

called 'The Hope of Israel,' which tried to prove that some aborigines in America were lineal descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel. The 'Hope' seems to have rested on no more solid foundation than a traveller's tale of savages met with in the wilds, who included something that sounded like the שְׁמַע in their vernacular. The story was quickly translated into several languages, but it was almost as quickly disproved, and Manasseh's illusions, which were founded on the 'Hope,' were somewhat roughly dealt with.

3. Manasseh finds his Vocation.—Till the age of fifty, Manasseh continued to lead his honourable, useful life in Amsterdam, 'doing with all his might whatsoever his hand found to do,' and making of the things that lay close to him his nearest duties. But alike in the happy home life, and in the pleasant social intercourse; as he preached his helpful discourses, and as he compiled his rather dull books; when he was teaching or when he was printing, Manasseh seems to have been always, and all the while, conscious of a certain purpose in life, which his life, busy and useful as it was, had not as yet fulfilled. *He* was happy and honoured, and in any country he might have chosen to visit would have been welcomed by the wisest and the best, but his people were still outcasts, and that, to our Amsterdam Rabbi, spoilt it all. Manasseh valued the position he had won chiefly for his people's sake, and by the time he was fifty years old he

had come to a definite determination of how to use it for their benefit.

4. Negotiations begun for the Return of the Jews to England.—The Amsterdam Rabbi wanted to insure for the Jews another such welcome as Holland had given to them. He wanted to find for the proscribed and exiled race a home as free citizens among a free people. His relations with Grotius and with Vossius made his thoughts turn, in the first place, to Sweden, with whose queen, Christina, he had had, too, some literary correspondence. But before the Swedish project came to any practical issue, the course of events happily made him direct his energies towards England, where the struggle for a nation's 'rights' had but lately been won at the cost of a king's life. In 1649 Charles I. had expiated his hateful, harmful weakness on the scaffold, and though John Hampden's brave voice, which had aroused the English conscience like a trumpet call, was, since June 1643, stilled in death, his cousin, Oliver Cromwell, was at the helm, and sternly and uncompromisingly directing it to good ends. The first demand of the victorious army of Independents, who had fought not for place, but for principle, was liberty of conscience, and equality before the law for all religious denominations. In this new attitude of Puritan England, and in the earnest character of its new and uncrowned ruler, Manasseh ben Israel saw and seized his opportunity. In the year 1650 he forwarded

to Cromwell his 'Hope of Israel,' and, by the help of influential friends, he caused petitions for the re-admission of Jews to England, with rights secured to them of worship, of commerce, and of burial, to be laid before the Long and the Rump Parliaments. He busied himself also in the composition of a pamphlet, called *Vindiciæ Judæorum* (Defence of the Jews), which proved, on its completion, the most powerful and the least pedantic of his writings. It was not, however, finished when, in 1655, the way having been now, as he considered, sufficiently prepared by correspondence, he resolved on trying the effect of personal intercession with the Protector. To quote his own subsequent and simple words on the subject, 'I could not be quiet in my mind until I had made my humble addresses to the Lord Protector, whom God preserve. And finding that my coming over would not be altogether unwelcome to him, with those great hopes which I conceived, I joyfully took leave of my house, my friends, my kindred, all my advantages there, and the country wherein I have lived all my lifetime under the benign protection and favour of the lords, the States-General, and magistrates of Amsterdam. In fine, I say, I parted from them all, and took my voyage to England.'

CHAPTER XXXIII.[48]

THE RETURN OF THE JEWS TO ENGLAND.

1. Manasseh presents his Petition.—In October 1655, Manasseh ben Israel, with his only son Samuel, and two or three eminent Amsterdam Jews who had accompanied them, were safely arrived in London and settled in lodgings in the Strand. The first thing that was done was to personally present an address to the Protector, and a declaration to the Commonwealth, setting forth the objects of the Jewish visit to England, was published at the same time. Both these documents are very remarkable. Although humble petitions from an outcast people, who had been ignominiously thrust forth into exile 365 years before, Manasseh's appeals have not the smallest trace of reproach nor of servility, into either of which mistakes it would have been so easy to fall. The Jewish case is stated with dignity, and on its merits, it is pleaded without passion, and on the grounds of justice rather than of favour. The 'clemency' and 'high-mindedness' of Cromwell are certainly taken for granted, but equally is assumed the worthiness of the clients who appeal. Manasseh, with a certain

shrewdness, makes a point of the 'profit' which the Jews are likely to prove to their hosts. 'Where the Jewes are once kindly receaved,' he urges, 'they make a firm resolution never to depart from thence, seeing they have no proper place of their own; and so they are always with their goods in the cities where they live a perpetual benefit to all payments.'[49] 'Profit,' proceeds Manasseh, 'is a most powerful motive,' and, therefore, he 'deals with that point first.' He dwells on the 'ability' and 'industry and naturall instinct of the Jews for merchandizing,' and on the fact that 'wheresoever they go to dwell, there presently the traficq begins to flourish.' And then, urging his claim on higher grounds, Manasseh dwells on the loyalty of the Jews, which he shows is a religious duty with the race, and cannot fail to make of them law-abiding, and law-defending, citizens of their adopted states. He shows from history that Jeremiah's injunction to 'pray for the peace' and to 'seek the peace' of the cities to which they are 'led captive,' has been literally, and over and over again, fulfilled by Jews. In a few well-chosen and dignified words he refers to the slanderous and superstitious statements of which Jews have been the subject. He disposes with brief and distinct denial of the simply silly accusations, such as the killing of Christian children for the manufacture of passover cakes, only with quiet emphasis recalling that in the early days, when the Church was struggling against paganism, 'the self-same ancient

scandalls were cast upon innocent Christians.' The more serious, because less entirely untrue, charges of 'usury,' which have been brought against Jews, Manasseh meets as boldly. Whenever, wherever, the practice exists, he frankly denounces it as 'infamous.' But he will not admit that 'usury' is in any sense a *Jewish* principle, nor in any but a cruelly acquired one a *Jewish* practice. 'The sacred Scriptures,' says Manasseh, 'forbid absolutely the robbing of all men, whatsoever religion they be of. In our Law it is a greater sinne to rob or defraud a stranger than if I did it to one of my owne profession. A Jew is bound to shew his charity to all men: he hath a precept not to abhor an Idumean or an Egyptian; and yet another, "Love the stranger, for ye know the heart of a stranger." If, notwithstanding, there be some that do contrary to this, *they do it not as Jews, but as wicked Jews*.' This petition, helped as it was by the fine presence and the fine character of the pleader, made a profound impression, and some five weeks after Manasseh's arrival in England the question of the re-admission of the Jews was submitted to public discussion, and an assembly composed of the majority of the ministers, a commission of clergymen, the Lord Mayor, two sheriffs, and some selected merchants, was convened to take Manasseh's petition into formal consideration.

2. A Christian Advocate.—A powerful

'friend at court' was found in one Edward Nicholas, who, under Charles Stuart and now under Cromwell, held the office of Secretary or Clerk to the Parliament. This gentleman had published in 1648 a little work entitled 'An Apology for the Honourable Nation of the Jews and all the Sons of Israel,' which work warmly espoused their cause, speaking of them as a 'people chosen by God and protected by God,' and insisting that 'unless, as Englishmen, we all show ourselves compassionate and helpers of the afflicted Jews, ... and repeal the severe laws made against them, ... God will charge their suffering upon us, and will avenge them on their persecutors.' Nicholas expressly stated in his little pamphlet that he alone was responsible for it, that he was publishing only his own views on the subject, unprompted and unsolicited by any one. And this was, in all probability, the exact truth. But the official position which Nicholas held under Cromwell made it seem hardly likely that he would have ventured to express such decided opinions had the Protector been entirely averse from them, and, naturally, such a pamphlet, from such a quarter, aroused a great deal of interest, and provoked a great deal of discussion. Published as it was, at the very time when Manasseh had begun to think in earnest of his mission, the pamphlet was also most useful in enabling him, before coming to England, to judge a little of the state of public feeling on the question, and to draw

his own conclusions as to the attitude which Cromwell was likely to take up. On this latter point there was, from the first, very little room for doubt.

3. What People said.—When Edward Nicholas presented that brave, bold brief of his on behalf of proscribed and unpopular clients, the whispers had been many that he held it by the grace, or even, said some, at the secret instigation of Cromwell, but when Manasseh arrived in London, the marked favour with which the Protector received his Jewish petitioner set the wildest rumours in circulation. Cromwell was declared to be of Jewish descent, and it was further alleged that his Jewish kinsfolk beyond the seas had recognised in him their Messiah. St. Paul's Cathedral, on the same authority, was to be converted into a synagogue, and an actual sum was named as the price the Jews had offered for it. These absurd tales were actually believed in by many ignorant people, for those most incapable of faith are often the most credulous of folly. The solution of Cromwell's favourable reception of the Jews was simple enough. Those who went so far to seek for reasons could have found them close at hand. But there are people, says Carlyle, who 'can look into the great soul of a man, radiant with the splendours of very heaven, and see nothing there but the shadow of their own mean darkness.'[50] In Cromwell's support of Jewish claims the 'great soul' was only consistent with itself.

The character of Cromwell in all things was an index to his conduct in this one thing. Liberty of conscience, religions rights secured to all men, was the Puritan battle cry. The principle had been fought for at Naseby, it would be upheld at Whitehall, and, though Cromwell could not know it, it would never more be abandoned by the England which he, in his stern rectitude, lifted out of the meretricious mists of greatness, into the 'fine air, the pale severity of light'—a national ideal of goodness.

4. How the Petition was received.—Cromwell presided over the assembly which met to consider Manasseh's petition. Two points were submitted for decision: 1, whether it was lawful to re-admit the Jews; and 2, under what conditions such re-admission should take place. The law officers ruled that if it should be decided that such re-admission was for the welfare of the State, it could not be by law opposed. That settled the legal aspect of the question. Then came the commercial. The merchants feared for the effects of Jewish competition on English industries. 'Can you really think,' asked Cromwell, 'that so despised a people should be able to secure the upper hand in trade and credit over the merchants of England—the most honoured in the world?' These adroit words allayed for the moment the mercantile jealousies that blocked the way, and left room for the religious difficulty to be debated. The clergy did not limit themselves to argument; an old

chronicler declares the majority present ‘raged like fanatics,’ quoting Scripture, too, in their arrogant ignorance, against ‘the people of the Book.’ And after much debate, Cromwell roused himself to reply on the whole question. His speech has only come down to us in fragments, but these fragments justify the opinion expressed by one of the audience, who says, ‘I have never heard a man speak so splendidly in all my life.’ The man who, as Carlyle says, ‘grappled like a giant, face to face, heart to heart, with the naked truth of things,’[51] tore that mask of ‘English prosperity in danger’ from the merchants, and, dubbing their doubts ‘trade jealousy,’ flung their pretences at them. Then, turning to the clergy, he stripped off the rags of rhetoric in which they had clothed their personal prejudices, and held forth their action, bare, in all its hideousness, as persecution. He spoke sternly as the champion of justice, gently as the advocate of compassion. He did not succeed, but neither did he speak altogether in vain. Manasseh’s appeal was not granted; when put to the council, the majority voted against it, yet nevertheless Cromwell’s eloquence had done its silent work; the known favour of the Protector ensured no active steps being taken to prevent Jews coming to England, and quietly, and without much notice being taken of them, Jews gradually did come, and settled themselves in London. By 1657 they were numerous enough and felt secure enough to ask for, and to obtain, the loan of a piece of

ground in the parish of Stepney for a בֵּית חַיִּים .

5. End of Manasseh's Story.—Manasseh, after the disappointing decision of the Council of State, waited on month after month, hoping that the informal permission of the Protector might become the law of the land. His companions grew tired, and went back to their homes in Amsterdam, but Manasseh stayed on, patient and steadfast in his purpose, and longing to complete his work. Early in 1656 he published his *Vindiciæ Judæorum*, a triumphant answer to the slanders which were uttered against his people. And that was his last effort in the cause. His mission never fulfilled itself in the grand, complete way which he had hoped. He sowed his seed, and it is we, his descendants, who, 'rejoicing, bear the sheaves.' He would have been content that it should be so. In the autumn of 1657, when his book was launched and he could do no more, he set out for home. And, at home, in Amsterdam, before he reached it, they made ready his grave. For illness overtook him on the way, and on November 20, 1657, at Middleburg, in the house of Ephraim Abarbanel, his brother-in-law, Manasseh ben Israel died.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SPINOZA.

1. Clouds obscure the Dawn.—The dawn which had arisen on the Jews in Holland had now fairly spread to England. But so long and so stormy had been the night, that the dawn was dark and tempestuous, and the light of perfect day was still very far off. Dense clouds swept ever and anon across the Jewish horizon, and one such heavy mist hung over the community in Amsterdam even as Manasseh was so manfully striving to disperse the fogs in London. And these mists and clouds and fogs, which rose up obscuring the dawn, were due sometimes as much to Jewish as to Christian atmospheric conditions. It is a strange fact to record, that at the very time when Manasseh was earnestly pleading to the English nation for religious liberty and freedom of conscience to be granted to the Jews, the elders of his own congregation in Amsterdam seemed to be as seriously

engaged in denying these rights to one of their body, a young man of four-and-twenty, who, now known to the world as Benedict Spinoza, is accounted ‘great among the greatest as a thinker.’[52]

2. The Amsterdam Jews at the Time of Spinoza.—In November 1632, when the Amsterdam synagogue had been built just four-and-thirty years, there was born to one of the Spanish Jewish families there resident, called d’Espinoza, a son who received the name of Baruch. To understand at all his sad and wonderful story, it is necessary, first of all, to see in what ways their residence in Holland had affected the refugees from Spain and Portugal. Though, at the date of Spinoza’s birth, nearly forty years had passed since Jews from the Peninsula had settled in Holland, the community in Amsterdam were far from being good Dutch Jews, in any complete sense of either word. They were good according to their lights, but their lights had come to burn low and false, through the long, fierce glare of the Inquisition. They were Dutch in any practical ordinary interpretation of grateful loyalty, but in language, in manners, and in modes of thought, they were still Spanish. And as Jews, these emancipated Marannos fell also distinctly short of the standard. Their very earnestness was in some sort against them. They were not content to be ‘witnesses,’ they would be judges. Their consciousness of their own long neglect of all the forms of

Judaism was so keen, that they sought relief from this self-reproach in hunting out cause for reproach in others, and they were, in truth, terror-stricken when any member of the community questioned any doctrine or abandoned any practice of Judaism. They did not seem to realise that to be Jewish in every minute observance, is not quite the same thing as to fulfil the Jewish Law in the sense in which the prophet Micah exhorted us—to 'do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with God.'

And in their studies, also, a defect from this same feverish fervour of long-repressed religion became manifest. They were so delighted to be able again to openly read their Law and their Talmud, that even in these sober pursuits they grew immoderate. Law and Talmud were not enough for them in their restless mood of repentant energy. Many scholars began eagerly to adopt and to accept the wildest and most fanciful 'extensions' in religion and in philosophy. There is a whole branch of Jewish doctrinal study which is called the Kabbala. Grätz describes the Kabbala as a fungous growth which, since the thirteenth century, crept over the body of the Law and of tradition. This Kabbala is a weed of Eastern planting, but amongst Western scholars, in waste places, it got some space to grow. It is a strange combination of faith and philosophy, and its mystical character facilitated the introduction of all sorts of un-Jewish beliefs and superstitions under the name of Kabbala. Thus we have a quantity

of so-called Kabbalistic literature, containing a superstitious agglomeration of signs and wonders, which would lead its students to credulous musings on evil spirits, and false prophets, and spurious Messiahs, instead of to earnest belief in the one true God and His servant Moses. It was only minds which had become weakened and debased by Kabbalistic studies that could have believed in such a Messiah as Sabbatai Zevi. That episode in 1666—some ten years later than the date of Spinoza's banishment and excommunication from the Amsterdam synagogue—is an extreme instance of the tendency of the zeal of superstition. The incident of Uriel da Costa, which had its place in Amsterdam some sixteen years earlier, when Spinoza was a boy of eight, is an instance of the lengths to which even good and cultivated men may be carried by the zeal of intolerance.

3. Spinoza's Student Days.—It was in a community shaped by such influences and such experiences, among passionately observant and rigorously conforming Jews, that Baruch Spinoza was brought up. And to make the misunderstanding which came about between him and his congregation more utterly hopeless, Spinoza was a born genius, an original, creative thinker, whilst his masters, and teachers, and elders were only cultivated, and clever, and commonplace. A wide gulf separates knowledge, however great, from genius. The Amsterdam congregation had acquired

the one, and Spinoza possessed the other, and this exceptional gift of his was not known, nor guessed at till it was too late.

Little is known of the social position of Baruch Spinoza's parents, nor can much be inferred from the fact that he received an excellent education, since in all classes, and at all periods, Jews have made an effort to secure for their children the best that was obtainable in the way of knowledge. The course of instruction in Jewish schools was almost entirely confined to the Hebrew language and literature, but this course, as in the ancient *Kallahs*,[53] was made to include a very wide range of subjects. In the more advanced classes analysis and mathematics were taught, and Maimonides and Ibn Ezra were the text-books for philosophy and theology. The students, too, were kept well abreast of the physical and natural science of the age. Manasseh ben Israel was one of Spinoza's teachers, and the Rabbi Saul Morteira was another. Latin and German he seems to have studied outside of the community, under a physician named Van den Ende. The French and Italian languages also he mastered, and he gained something more than a rudimentary knowledge of Greek. Spanish was more or less to him, as to all of the Maranno-descended Jews, a native tongue. He was clever, too, at drawing, but this long list of his acquirements gives no accurate idea of his powers, for much scholarship is not in itself a guarantee of ability. A mind may be filled full as a storehouse with facts, and yet

be empty of ideas, and feeble in intellectual grasp. Spinoza not only learnt, but he thought. He not only acquired information, but be propounded theories. The community was a little distrustful of originality, and rather liked knowledge to run into ready-made moulds. This young man, too, was unobservant of forms, and imprudently free-spoken in his opinions. Though not above making use, as his subsequent philosophical writings show, of ideas and principles and arguments contained in Jewish works, he yet felt some contempt for the tendency of current Jewish scholarship, and would express himself very openly concerning Bible and Talmud and everything that was dear and holy to Jews. On many grounds the Amsterdam Jews were afraid of nonconforming members. They dreaded a relapse into nominal Judaism. They felt it a duty to keep dangerous elements at arm's length, from a not unworthy fear that another Judaism might be set up before this hardly regained Judaism of theirs was firmly established in hearts and homes. And besides, not only for the sake of the synagogue had they to be careful to guard themselves from disunion, but the new and uncertain toleration which Jews enjoyed among Christians might easily be imperilled by unseemly religious differences in the congregation. So much or so little must justly be said in explanation of the attitude of the Amsterdam community towards Spinoza. Not as much can be urged in defence of their subsequent action.

4. Things come to a Climax.—Even in his student days, and by his fellow-students, Spinoza had begun to be looked upon as dangerous, and by the time he was twenty-three, matters came to their regrettable climax. His speculative and independent opinions grew to be a subject for serious discussion among the elders of the synagogue, and, of course, to them he was only a young man, whose genius, even if guessed at, was as yet quite unproved. They were acting, it must be borne in mind, only on their knowledge of him, not on ours, and, from their point of view, for the good of the community. They would have brought back their wandering sheep to the fold, if it could be done; but if not, it was thought well to drive such a one definitely outside of it altogether, and so be rid of the responsibility of him. The Spanish-descended Jews, it must be confessed, were always consistent in their policy of prudent aloofness from any embarrassing contact with brethren either of unsafe morals or of unpleasant manners. In this case they did not want to argue with the young man, nor yet to punish him, if it could be avoided; they wished, with simple selfishness, to be free of a member who was likely to bring them into trouble. An offer was made to Spinoza of an annuity of a thousand florins, if he would, so far as utterance and observance were concerned, conform to the rules and rites of the synagogue. The offer showed singularly little knowledge of Spinoza's character. It was, without a

moment's hesitation, promptly and peremptorily declined. The elders grew angrier. He was summoned before them, censured, and put 'without the camp' for thirty days, and a little later, his firm and calm attitude incensing them yet more, and it also being reported that young men were being misled by him, these comparatively mild measures were followed up by a distinct sentence of excommunication. The text of the excommunication is painful to read. In solemn terms he was cursed with 'all the curses that are written in the Law,' both in the mass, and in pretty separate detail, and any and every form of communication with members of his own faith was categorically denied to him. It was a terrible document, and the only shadow of excuse that can be made for it lies in the fact that it was a strong-spoken age, an age that hated heresy, and was much given to the burning of heretics. Curse and anathema were in the air. Readers of history will remember the terms in which Martin Luther spoke and wrote of Erasmus, and how, in dealing with his religious adversaries generally, the brave monk 'hurled words like rocks and boulders on their heads.' Martin Luther's work was more than a century old at the time of Spinoza's excommunication, but it is curious to trace how the fierce struggles of the Reformation, like the deadly tactics of the Inquisition, made their mark and left their influence on Jewish action.

5. How Spinoza took his Sentence: his Mode of Life.—

‘Vulgar
minds
Refuse or crouch beneath their load;
the brave
Bear theirs without repining,’

says an English poet.[54] Spinoza was a very different sort of man from Uriel da Costa. He neither raged, nor protested, nor recanted. He accepted the sentence passed upon him, recognising the cruel injustice of it, but recognising also the force of circumstances, and what had been his own share in bringing it about. He removed to a little distance from Amsterdam, and altering his name to its Latin equivalent, Benedict Spinoza, he faced his life under its new conditions. His first necessity was to secure the means of living; and here the Jewish instinct we have so often noted asserted itself at once, and the hands made ready to help the head. He worked as an optician, and it is characteristic of this great man that the lenses and glasses which he cut were as much appreciated by opticians as are his books by scholars. And he wrote and he taught, and in the latter occupation found some compensations from the utter loneliness to which he had been condemned. His pupils conceived an immense affection for him, and one named De Vries, who knew himself doomed to an early death, earnestly desired to make Spinoza his heir. But the young man had a

brother living, and Spinoza would not permit his pupil to put aside the righteous claim of his own kindred. When De Vries died, the brother who came into his fortune would have settled an annual income on Spinoza, but even this he refused, taking only at last, after much persuasion, the half of what was pressed upon him. A man's conduct in money matters is a very tolerable test of the stuff he is made of, and in another instance, where a legacy was in question, Spinoza acted in precisely the same serenely just and unimpulsive fashion. When his father died, there was a small inheritance left for the family, which, besides this banished son, consisted of two daughters. On the ground of his having been expelled from the community of Israel, the sisters disputed Spinoza's right to his share of the property. Spinoza did not yield to this injustice; he considered it a duty of every citizen to resist any form of wrong-doing, whether his own advantage was concerned in the event or no. He knew he had not forfeited his right to his fair share in the division of their father's property, and he would not waive his right. But when his claim was established and allowed, he declined to profit by it. Justice was satisfied, generosity might be indulged. He gave up to his sisters every bit of his portion, save only one bed! He cared very little about money, and even, which is rarer, very little for most of the pleasures which money ensures. His mode of living was most frugal. In his effort to make both ends meet,

he once jestingly compared himself to a snake, which has to wriggle to get its tail in its mouth. Still he was not, in the very least, miserly or misanthropical. He enjoyed social intercourse with people of the ordinary as well as of the clever sort, and indulged his liking by means of correspondence when he could not get talk. In the later years of his life he took up his abode in the Hague, with a family by the name of Van der Spyck, kind, good, uncultivated people, who grew to have the sincerest affection and esteem for their gentle, scholarly lodger. Perhaps it was in return for the interest and pleasure which Spinoza took in the kind woman's children, that she one day anxiously asked him—for of course they all knew that he was not of the same religion as his hosts—whether his form of belief or theirs was the better. 'All religions are good,' he answered, 'that lead one to a good life; you need not seek further.' The truth of this axiom was demonstrated in his own life.

Spinoza never renounced his religion, but it shines out more perhaps in his life than in his philosophy. Spinoza showed himself a Jew, in despite, as it were, of himself. He was a faithful, patriotic citizen, trustworthy always, and trusted greatly in a time of panic and danger, which the Netherlands experienced in 1672, when the King of France (Louis XIV.) 'came down to Utrecht like a land flood.' He never had much longing for fame, and it was characteristic that when, after the publication of his *Tractatus Theologico-*

Politicus, the chair of philosophy at Heidelberg was offered to him, he declined it, fearing that in that responsible position he might feel fettered, and be unable to speak out all the truth that was in him, and thus be less really useful to his fellow-men.

6. Unto this Last.—He went on, year after year, with the work that lay close to his hand, using his loneliness and his trials not as weapons, but as tools. He continued day by day to write, and to teach, and to make his spectacles, doing each different duty with all his might, and each in as perfect fashion as was possible to him. He was of a cheerful spirit, though never of robust health. And, with no wife or child to whom his health was of supreme importance, he died, almost unexpectedly, of consumption, when he was only forty-five years old (Feb. 27, 1677).

7. His Writings.—Of these, the most celebrated are the treatise, partly political and partly theological, called *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, which was published in 1670, and the 'Ethics,' his great philosophical work, which was not published till after his death. As it would be impossible to convey, to one who had never read his plays, any intellectual idea of Shakespeare by merely saying that he wrote 'Hamlet,' so is it hopeless to get at any notion of Spinoza as an author by a bald statement of his works. Spinoza's writings are strong meat, and need a trained

digestion. ‘His mind,’ says Auerbach, ‘has fed the thought of two centuries;’ and this picturesque statement must serve as the only indication that can be here given of the fare so provided.

8. Results.—To the world, the value of Spinoza is as a thinker; to his people, a small section of whom in mistaken zeal cast him off, his chief worth seems to lie in his mode of life. Among the more temperate charges which have been brought against Jews, it has been often urged that, whilst the race has produced good learners and clever adapters, among the world’s teachers there have been no Jews in the foremost rank. Jews need not be greatly concerned to deny whatever there may be of truth in this impeachment. Their mission is not to be pioneers in any particular path, but to be witnesses in the way of life. And it is in so far as they fail in this, that as Jews they fail altogether. Therefore that Spinoza, in the character of his genius, was an exceptional Jew may be granted with all equanimity. Genius is always exceptional in its nature, and of no especial nationality. But putting his genius altogether on one side, we claim that in his steadfast, lovable nature, in his temperate, frugal, hard-working life, and in his sober, but humorous acceptance of the circumstances of his lot, Spinoza was a typical Jew, and, moreover, a Jew of no uncommon type. Not an easy-going, nor even a willing ‘witness’ often to the beauties of Judaism was Spinoza, but always, and for

all time, a powerful one, and perhaps the more powerful because, to some extent, unconscious. Most of the incidents of his biography have come down to us through a Lutheran clergyman named Colerus, to whom all Spinoza's philosophical theories were detestable. Thus there can be no suspicion of undue praise about these records of 'M. Spinoza of blessed memory,' as he was called by a poor tradesman who knew the man, but had never read a line of the author.

CHAPTER XXXV.

IN NORTHERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE, BEFORE THE DAWN.

1. A Long Night.—Whilst the Jews of Holland were growing in wealth and in importance, and the branch which Manasseh ben Israel had grafted on England was there, though slowly, attaining to a healthy and independent existence, the

position of the Jews in the rest of Europe was still deplorable. The dawn was far, as yet, from rising on the Jews in Northern and Central Europe. In the south, in Italy, there was a sort of twilight; a comparatively peaceful and uneventful existence under the intermittently humane rule of the Popes. In Spain and Portugal, the Inquisition, we know, had ended in expulsion, and in France, the edict which banished the race from its shores in 1394 was still in operation. The state of things which, in the east, had ensured a welcome for a Sabbatai Zevi was at work in the west, and produced different, but, as we shall see, quite as harmful results. The standard was lowered throughout Europe. And yet, though deprived of the wealth, and glory, and position which they had so long enjoyed in the Peninsula, though in differing degrees oppressed and degraded in Germany and other countries, the Jews were still, though blindly, 'toiling upward in the night,' and taking their share in the slow progress of civilisation.

'There is a Providence that shapes our
ends,
Rough hew them how we may.'

Good results from sorrowful causes showed themselves often in unexpected ways and in unforeseen directions; for instance, the frequent theological disputations between Jews and Jews, and Christians and Christians, the very charges now and again brought against Jews and Jewish literature,

turned the attention of Christian scholars to the study of Hebrew. Johann Reuchlin, one of the most important fore-runners of the German reformation, had a Hebrew teacher, one Jacob Loans, physician to the Emperor Frederic III. This Loans remained in favour with the Emperor, and also with his successor, Maximilian I., and it was probably owing to Jacob Loans' influence that another member of the same family, Joseph Loans of Rosheim (born 1480, died 1555), was appointed as representative of the Jews at the Imperial Court. Joseph Loans defended his brethren whenever accusations were made against them, and became surety for them whenever that was required. The Jews called him their 'great defender,' though his efforts on their behalf were not always successful; the Emperor Maximilian being of a somewhat fickle turn of mind, and apt to take 'full easily all impressions from below.'

2. Reuchlin and the Talmud.—It was in Reuchlin's time that the Dominican monks, under the leadership of a man named Pfefferkorn, and in their hatred of the Jews, brought charges against the Talmud, and tried hard to induce the Emperor Maximilian to have all copies of it confiscated and burnt. Reuchlin, who was at the head of the Anti-Dominicans, defended the Talmud most energetically and successfully. 'I confess,' he said on one occasion, 'that I know very little of the contents of the Talmud, but the opposite

party know just as much. How could one presume to give a judgment on mathematics if he knew nothing of the science? The Talmud ought not to be burnt, for so long as it exists a harmless subject is supplied for theological discussion. Destroy the Talmud, and Christian divines will take to disputing about their own religion, whether Paul was married, or if "Saint" Augustine was a monk!' Thus, curiously enough, the Talmud divided the Christian camp into two parties, Humanists and Obscurants, as they were called, and in their disputes the Talmud found its safety. We have seen that it was not burnt that time.[55]

3. Another Jewish Influence, Elias Levitas.—Another successful Jewish teacher among Christian scholars of this period was Elias Levitas. He was born in 1468 at Neustadt, near Nuremburg. In 1504 we find him at Padua, teaching Hebrew. In 1509, when Padua was suffering from the effects of war and conquest, Levitas came to Rome. Here he taught the Cardinal Egidio de Viterbo, in whose house he lived ten years. George de Selve, Bishop of Lavour, was also one of his pupils, and it was probably in consequence of the bishop's recommendation that Levitas was invited to come to France as professor of Hebrew. He must have felt himself greatly honoured when thus begged to come into a country in which no Jew was allowed to reside. And it is pleasant to know that he did not accept the invitation, but refused a distinction at

the hand that dishonoured his race. In 1527, when Rome was abandoned to disorder and plunder, Elias Levitas went to Venice. In 1540 we find him employed as corrector in the printing office of one Fagius, and in 1549 he died. His literary career commenced with a copious editing of some grammatical works of the old masters, but he went on to write books himself on every topic connected with Hebrew grammar and lexicography. Many of these works were translated into Latin. Scholars find a treatise which he wrote on the Massorah, and on the origin of the vowel points, most interesting as well as valuable. He supplied his Jewish brethren also with a German translation of the Pentateuch, Megilloth, and Haphtaroth.

4. Some Jewish Results from the Invention of Printing.—The great zeal expended at this period on the study of Hebrew was soon noticeable in the extensive use made of the newly invented art of printing for the multiplying of copies of Hebrew works. The printing firm of Daniel Bomberg at Venice published the edition of the Biblia Rabbinica (i.e. Hebrew text with Chaldaic version called Targum, Massoretic notes, and various Hebrew commentaries) in 1516–17, and of the Talmud in 1520–26. And these were by no means the first Hebrew works that were printed. A commentary of Rashi's[56] on the Pentateuch was published at Reggio in 1475, and in the same year the larger work,

'Arba-Turim' (Code of Laws), in Pieve di Sacco. The first Hebrew printing establishment in Germany was founded by Gerson Soncino in Prague, 1513. The family of Soncino contributed much to the spread of printing among the Jews. Hebrew printing presses were soon set up at Fano, Pesaro, Mantua, and other places. The Jews showed from the first both zeal and skill in promoting the printing of Hebrew literature. Their rejoicing at the new invention was soon, however, damped by the introduction of a censorship for Jewish books, and Jewish authors and compilers had to see their pet works mutilated by priests and laymen who often were incapable of getting at the sense of what they examined. Renegade Jews occasionally officiated as censors, and added malice to ignorance. Printers and editors by degrees, foreseeing the passages which would meet with adverse censorship, would carefully prepare their text for examination by omissions. And so, after all, not very much harm was done. Complete copies could generally be found in States which were free from censorship, and scholars with good memories were often at hand to supply the missing links. In the present day books printed in Russia or imported into Russia are subject to censorship, and passages which to the censors appear objectionable are made illegible.

5. Influence of Printing on Kabbalistic Literature.—Through the art of printing,

mystic works of a kabbalistic character were also multiplied and made accessible to the multitude. Reuchlin, in studying Hebrew, aimed especially at gaining a knowledge of the Kabbala, believing, in common with many Christians of that time, that in Kabbala might be discovered many hidden mysteries of their own religion. The most important work of the kind is the 'Zohar' (Splendour), a volume of notes and reflections in the form of a running commentary on the Pentateuch. Tradition gives the honour of authorship of the Zohar to Rabbi Simeon ben Jochai (second century). Modern criticism, however, declares it to be the work of the Middle Ages, at least as regards certain parts of it. The Zohar contains many moral lessons, interspersed with Hagadic legends and philosophical theories. It has its attractions for contemplative minds, which like to indulge in imaginative and speculative thought. A certain Isaac Luria, born at Jerusalem, 1534, went into seclusion, and devoted his whole life to the study of the Zohar, and to fasting and praying. In this way he hoped to arrive at the right understanding of hidden truths. His labours, at any rate, seem to have resulted in no injury to his moral nature, since before his death he made solemn declaration of forgiveness to all and any who may have cheated him, and desired that full compensation might be made to all or any out of whom he may have made undue profit. Luria died of the plague in 1572. The

Kabbala of Luria was introduced into Germany chiefly through a certain Rabbi Jesaja Hurwitz (born 1570). He wrote a book for his own children, called ‘The Two Tables of the Covenant’ (abridged Hebrew name שְׁלָה but it was soon printed and published, and proved very popular. Besides containing a sort of commentary on each of the Haphtarahs, and many mystic and Midrashic expositions on Biblical and Talmudic passages, the book gives rules for conduct on all occasions, and recommends mastery over passions and the regulation of appetites, in a frequently apt and happy fashion. Rabbi Hurwitz emigrated to Jerusalem, where, like many others, he met with cruel treatment at the hands of Mahomedan tyrants. He eventually went to Tiberias, where, in 1630, he died.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

IN NORTHERN AND CENTRAL EUROPE, BEFORE THE DAWN (*continued*).

1. A Group of Stars.—Through the dull clouds which so rarely lifted, little literary stars managed now and again to peep out, and to emit a small pale radiance. Their rays were not very brilliant, but they did what they could, and deserve an honourable mention. We will take them chronologically, though this will make a lady and a poetess last on our list.

In Spain, in 1488, was born a certain Joseph Caro. Whilst he was quite a child his parents left Spain, and taking Joseph with them, wandered about from place to place, till they finally settled in Nikopolis in Turkey. The boy was taught Bible and Talmud by his father, and showed from the

first great industry and some talent. Presently he went to Adrianople, where he wrote his first work, which was a commentary on the אַרְבַּע טוּרִים. Subsequently he wrote the שֻׁלְחָן עָרוּךְ (A table prepared), which was an amplification of his first work, and, like it, had its inspiration in the Code of Laws formulated by a long dead and gone Rabbi Jacob, the son of Rabbenu Asher. The שֻׁלְחָן עָרוּךְ has become the standard authority for Jewish ritual and ceremonial Law. It is divided into four parts:

1. אוֹרַח חַיִּים (Path of life). On Prayer, Sabbaths, festivals, and fasts.

2. יוֹרֶה דֵּעָה (Teaching knowledge). Dietary and other domestic laws.

3. אֶבֶן הָעֶזֶר (Stone of help). Marriage laws.

4. חשֶׁן מִשְׁפָּט (Breastplate of judgment). Civil laws.

Notes were added to the שֻׁלְחָן עָרוּךְ of Rabbi Joseph Caro by a Polish Talmudical authority, named Rabbi Moses Isserles. He was an author himself, and his decisions had great weight with his Polish and German co-religionists, but were not accepted by the Portuguese Jews. Joseph Caro, before his death in 1575, had an attack from the Kabbala fever which was so prevalent in those days. Under its influence he emigrated to Palestine, and joined the sect of Kabbalists. He was elected Rabbi of Saphed, and in possession of that dignity he

died.

A contemporary of Caro's, who lived in Saphed, was the author of the beautiful Friday night song, לְכָה דוֹדִי: 'Come, my beloved, to meet the Bride, the approaching Sabbath we will receive.' His name was Solomon Alkabez.

Azariah de Rossi, born at Mantua in 1511, was one of the great Jewish-Italian scholars of the sixteenth century. He was learned in all branches of literature and science. His wide knowledge and his critical powers are apparent in his work מְאוֹר עֵינִים (Light of the Eyes), a collection of critical essays on various topics of Jewish archæology and history. He freely and fearlessly compared statements in Talmud and Midrash with those found in other works, Jewish and un-Jewish. Among other subjects De Rossi discussed the Jewish chronology, and did not hesitate to declare it faulty. Among his Jewish contemporaries he did not find many admirers, but his works long after his death (1578) received at last that place in Hebrew literature which they richly deserve.

David Gans, who was born in Westphalia in 1541, and died in Prague in 1613, was a great scholar and writer. He began his studies at Cracow, in a Rabbinical seminary, but after a while he gave up the learning of the Talmud, and devoted himself to the study of astronomy and history and geography. He wrote, in Hebrew, a chronological History, עֶמֶק דָּוִד , in two parts,

consisting of Jewish history and general history. His chief works besides were מָגֵן דָּוִד (Shield of David), an arithmetic guide; מִגְדַּל דָּוִד (Tower of David), a geometrical work; and נֶחְמָד וְנָעִים (Pleasant and Desirable), an astronomical volume. In the introduction to the last, Gans gives a short account of astronomy up to his own time, including a sketch of the astronomer Copernicus, with whom he was personally acquainted.

David Oppenheim, Rabbi of Prague (born 1664, died 1736), is famous as the owner of a valuable Hebrew library. The history of the books which he collected is, perhaps, more interesting than a summary of the contents of them might be. The nucleus of the collection was made by a certain Samuel Oppenheim, who, an agent at the court of Vienna, asked and received, as a reward for some financial transaction, a number of valuable Hebrew books, which Prince Eugene had looted during the Turkish war. These were left by will to Rabbi David Oppenheim, who largely added to the collection. He made out a list of missing and desirable volumes, and sent it in all directions, with orders to buy for him. In this way he raised his number of printed books to 7,000, and of MSS. to 1,000. Being afraid that the censor in Prague might mutilate or confiscate some of the books, Rabbi Oppenheim kept his beloved library at Hanover, in the house of his father-in-law, Lipman Cohen. After Rabbi David Oppenheim's death, his son, Herschel Isaac Oppenheim, Rabbi at Hildesheim, got the

collection. After his death (1770) it was sent to Hamburg, and pledged to a senator there for 50,000 marks. It subsequently came into the hands of a certain Isaac Cohen in Hamburg, and was valued by Moses Mendelssohn as worth 50,000 thalers.[57] After some negotiations with Jewish merchants and German princes, the library was bought by the Bodleian Library at Oxford, in 1829, for 9,000 thalers, and there it is at the present time.

Sarah Copia Sullam, our poetess, was an enthusiastic Jewess. The first literary effort which is recorded of her was an unsigned letter, bearing date of the year 1618, which she sent to an Italian priest, Ceba by name, who had written a poem on the Jewish subject of Queen Esther. Our poetess was so delighted to see a Jewish heroine praised, that her letter to the priest was full of gratitude and enthusiasm. The priest found out the name of his correspondent, and did his best to convert her. Sarah, however, was firm in her faith, and her replies give full reasons for her firmness. Recognising at last that his arguments had failed, the priest wrote to her again, begging permission to pray for the salvation of her soul. To this she responded, granting him his request on the condition that he would allow her to pray for his conversion to Judaism. We do not hear of any further correspondence between the priest and the poetess. Later on, she was accused by another Christian priest of denying the immortality of the soul. She indignantly defended herself from

this charge in an eloquent manifesto. She seems to have applied herself with great zeal not only to literature, but to science, and she had a tragedy dedicated to her.

Deborah Ascarelli, another Jewish poetess, translated many Hebrew hymns into Italian, and composed also original poems in Italian.

2. Polish Jews.—It was at the northern extremity of Europe, in Poland, that the most dull and dismal night prevailed. Refugees of the very poor and hunted sort had found their way to Poland from the date of the eleventh century, and had met and mingled there with members of the Karaite sect, and, perhaps, with some remnants of that once powerful, converted nation of the Khozars, who flourished on the shores of the Caspian Sea in the eighth and ninth centuries.[58] One hears little concerning the Jews in Poland till the fourteenth century, when, under Casimir the Great, and possibly owing to the influence of a Jewess of whom the king was very fond, a certain legal status was accorded to them. It was not a very elevated one, and mostly of a 'protective' nature. Their lives and property were secured to them, and their synagogues and burial-grounds were defended from pillage and desecration. Rights of trading were granted, but public or state employment was withheld. This tolerable, but somewhat sordid condition of things continued till towards the middle of the seventeenth

century, by which time the Jews of Poland, who were mostly German by descent and by language, formed a very large proportion of the middle-class population of the country. They were not, at any time, a very high class of Jews. The original settlement had consisted of cruelly hunted and persecuted small traders, and reinforcements had come from the like stock. It was a community in which Judaism struck deep roots, but the soil was poor to begin with, and was always terribly in want of modern methods of manuring. In theory and practice, in manners, outward appearance, language, views, and opinions, these Polish Jews were most conservative, some might even say stagnant or retrogressive. There came to be among their students many who inclined more to Kabbala than to Talmud, and to Talmud than to Torah; and then, towards the middle of the seventeenth century, fierce oppressions arose, with the effect of yet more completely lowering the standard. At this date, a Cossack chief, with the help of Tartars and Russians, overran Poland, and perpetrated unspeakable atrocities on the Jewish and Catholic inhabitants of the country. And when the Cossacks had finished their work, the Russians began theirs. Between 1648 and 1651, more than 200,000 Jews were slaughtered in the Polish dominions. Those who survived were not of the heroic stuff to rise superior to such terrible circumstances. They sank under them, both morally and physically. The small industries were given up, or

pursued in a shambling way, and many schools were closed, and those that were kept open degenerated in aim and method. Crowds of Polish Rabbis were reduced to actual beggary, and emigrated in starving batches to Holland and Germany, or even so far as Italy and England. Those who remained in Poland relapsed into something, to superficial gaze, not very unlike barbarism.

3. French Jews.—From France, in consequence of the edict of Charles VI., the Jewish race was exiled in 1394. This edict remained in force for nearly four centuries —till, in fact, the year 1784, when, during the reign of the good though weak Louis XVI., royal letters patent were issued which authorised Jews to live in any part of the French dominions. During this long interval, France, through conquest and by treaty, had extended her boundaries, and in the newer portions of her territory the rule of expulsion was not always strictly enforced. Gradually in the course of these centuries, and without any formal permission being granted them, Jews had returned to French soil, and in most cases the authorities had shut their eyes to these illegal infringements of an unrepealed law. Whenever legislation, however, was directed to the fact, it proved equal to the occasion, and generally recognised the presence of Jews in the spirit of Louis XIII., who in 1615 issued a solemn edict forbidding his subjects, under the severest

penalties, to hold any converse with Jews, or to receive them in their houses. Still, though always socially banned, and often plundered and persecuted, these Jews in their French ghettos managed to exist and to hold their own. By the middle of the eighteenth century there were small communities of Jews established in various parts of France, and a settlement of some 500 in Paris itself. In Bordeaux there had existed an influential community of Marannos from the year 1552, when the first contingent of refugees arrived from Portugal. These Bordeaux settlers were much superior to the rest of the Jews in France, both in position and in cultivation. They did not, however, diffuse much of their superior sweetness and light; on the contrary, they were so very anxious to preserve both from any possible deterioration, that when, during the reign of Louis XIV. (1761), fugitives from less fortunate parts of France sought asylum in Bordeaux, they received no sort of welcome from their co-religionists, who gave a chilling support to the State order to move on. The most numerous section of French Jews was to be found in Alsace, which province, from the date of the treaty of Westphalia (1648) till the termination of the Franco-German war (1871), was French. The nationality of the Government, however, made very little difference to the Jews who lived under it. Their position in the Rhenish provinces was most miserable. They were limited to the lowest forms of

trading, reviled for pursuing such, and then taxed far beyond any honest possibilities of payment. It was not till Mendelssohn's efforts, towards the close of the eighteenth century, had begun to bring about a change in the general position of the Continental Jews that these Alsace Jews, among the rest, began to share in the result.

4. Social Life in Germany.—In the Austrian and German principalities, although wholesale massacre, and conversion by means of fire and rack, were slowly passing away with other miserable customs of the Middle Ages, yet expulsions, and exactions, and disabilities of all kinds were still in full force against the Jews. Throughout the many separate states which in these days constitute the great united Empire of Germany, the race, as we have seen,[59] were reckoned as serfs of the Imperial Chamber, and were thus under the nominal protection of the Emperor. A typical instance of the sort of 'protection' which the German Jews enjoyed is afforded to us by the ancient Jewish charter of Frankfort. By the terms of this document we find that it was only on the most humiliating terms that Jews gained the privilege of living there at all, and that this official permission had, in every case, to be renewed on petition every three years. The inhabitants of the Jewish quarter might not leave it, except within rigidly fixed hours; nor could they receive a guest, nor even remove a sick person, without a special

magistrate's licence. Worse hardships were not unusual, and irritating and petty restrictions of this Frankfort charter type were general in all the cities of Germany where Jews settled.

In Bohemia and its capital, Prague, Jews suffered unspeakable miseries. The more sensational sort may be omitted, but one instance will give an idea of the perfectly matter-of-course injustice with which Jews were treated in the concerns of everyday life. There died in Prague, in 1601, a certain Mordecai Meisel, a very rich man and an upright one, who had used his money in his lifetime most generously and justly. He died childless, and left his property to a nephew. The Emperor Rudolf, without the shadow of an excuse, or the smallest claim of any kind, set aside this will, and took the dead man's property for himself.

In Vienna, the Austrian capital, the Jews, in spite of disabilities, enjoyed for some time comparative prosperity. This happier state of things came to an abrupt close in 1670, when, under the Emperor Leopold I., the community was heavily fined, the tombs of their dead were burst open, half in hopes of pillage, half in wanton desecration, and their schools and synagogues first despoiled, and then turned into churches. In 1745 there was a revival of the older and more wholesale way of doing things. In midwinter of that year, by order of the Empress Maria Theresa, 20,000 Jews were suddenly expelled from Bohemia

and Moravia.

5. Moral and Material Effects upon the Jews.—Walled off from the high roads of life, and shunned for shambling along its bypaths, the Jews of Germany, in these cruel circumstances, were slowly deteriorating in their manners and in their modes of living. Hemmed in by the ghetto, they were growing content with the ghetto. Meeting with contempt and hatred all round, they were beginning to hate back again, and to feel, in their turn, as bitter and as unreasoning a contempt for everything belonging to their persecutors. Spinoza once wrote, 'The heaviest burden that men can lay upon us is not that they persecute us with their hatred and scorn, but it is by the planting of hatred and scorn in our souls. We cannot breathe freely, we cannot see clearly.' This subtlest effect of the poison of persecution seemed to have entered into the Jewish system. They would not speak the language of their enemies, they would not read their books. They huddled in their own close quarters, carrying on mean trades, or hawking petty wares, and speaking, with bated breath, a barbarous dialect, half Hebrew, half German, *Judisch Deutsch*, as it was called, and as different from the old grand Hebrew tongue as were they themselves from Palestinian or even from Spanish Jews. The love of religion and of race was as strong among them as ever, but the love had come to be of a jealous and a sullen sort. They

dreaded progress or prominence of any kind. Long and miserable experience seemed to show that safety for themselves and tolerance for their faith lay, if anywhere, in being by the outside world altogether unnoticed and unheeded. The culture of the Christians they hated, with a hate born half of repulsion at its palpable effects in persecution, half of fear for its possible tendency to conversion. And so by degrees they locked, from the inside also, those closed gates which led out on the open roads to use, and name, and fame. Intelligent men were content to limit all intellectual occupation to the study of the Law, and to find sufficient interest and entertainment in the endless discussion of its more intricate passages. 'Talmudical mountebanks,' one old chronicler somewhat unkindly calls these grim and unattractive students of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It seems a harsh phrase. The long-winded, hair-splitting arguments over trivial, abstruse points were rather a forced than a voluntary kind of mental gymnastics; and if such discussions were not interesting to outsiders, they were never meant for them. Learned philologists, before and since, have indulged in discussions, quite as long, over the meaning and form of a single particle in Homer! The Jewish Rabbis never forgot the moral education of their disciples; and the longest and weariest of these dismal dissertations of theirs seldom wound up without some popular moral lesson. At any rate, these crowds of Jewish

'unemployed,' oppressed and distressed as they were, did not meet to talk sedition or to plot revenge. And in their attitude of resolute aloofness from the interests of the hard outside world, there was at least no trace of self-seeking. Perhaps, in the cruel circumstances of their lot, they were not altogether so mistaken as, at the first look, they seem. One may hardly dare to blame them, these ringleted, gaberdined, bigoted heroes, who, for generations, turned their faces to the wall, and seemed, to superficial gaze, to hug their chains. They were quite sharp enough to know that, in shutting themselves in, they were also shutting themselves out, but it was so they made their dogged, miserable choice between the chances and the prizes of conversion, and the blanks—the weary, hopeless, certain blanks of a rigid loyalty to their race and their religion.

As we read the story of the wise and liberal philosopher, who broke through the barriers and let in the light of learning, and of social countenance, on mediæval benighted Judaism, we shall see that the very children of the emancipator were dazzled by the unaccustomed rays, that his sons wavered and his daughters apostatised, and that in the third generation—only the third—the fetters which degraded were called degrading, and were altogether cast off, and the grandchildren of Moses Mendelssohn, the typical Jew, were Jews no longer.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

MOSES MENDELSSOHN.

1. Early Days in Dessau.—Under a very humble roof, in a very poor little street in Dessau, there was born, on September 29, 1729, to a certain Mendel and his wife, a weakly boy, who was destined to work a wonderful change in the position and circumstances of the Jews of Germany. Not much fit for such a task did this ghetto baby seem, for, delicate from the first, his poor little body soon grew both stunted and deformed. The father was a סוֹפֵר scribe, getting his modest living by transcribing portions of the Law on parchment for *Mezuzoth* and *Tephilin*, and this professional connection with the fount of learning made him perhaps more eagerly anxious even than were Jewish parents generally that their children should 'get wisdom and get understanding.' לֶחֶם לְפִי הַטָּף, food for the little ones, in its literal sense, was often hard to get, but food for their minds was always at hand, and free to the poorest Jewish parent. So by the time little Moses Mendel—or Mendelssohn, as he came to be called—was five years old, it was taken as a matter of course that he should attend the

Talmud Torah School. But the mornings were bleak, and the tiny student was weak and frail, so the mother would wrap him up first in an old cloak of her own, and the father, before he began his day's work, would carry the bright-eyed and not very heavy bundle to the neighbouring class-room. The little lad was diligent and sweet-tempered, and high hopes soon began to be entertained of his powers and abilities. He soon got his remove from the lower school to the higher class, which was taught by the distinguished scholar Rabbi Frankel, and very early began to indulge the desire that when he grew up, he, in his turn, might become a learned Rabbi like his dear master. The parents did not very heartily second this ambition on the part of their little son. Times were hard in the ghetto, and Rabbis were many. Though a greatly respected, it was a poorly paid profession, whereas as a hawker, or a pedlar, a boy might begin to pick up a living by the time he was בַּר מִצְוָה. In 1742, before Moses was thirteen, Rabbi Frankel received the appointment of Chief Rabbi of Berlin, and went to take up his residence in Berlin. With Frankel's departure from Dessau a stop was put to the boy's learning, and, as it seemed, to his hopes, for now that his master was gone, again and more strongly his parents urged upon him to use his books only as a holiday task, and to make trading the serious business of his life. But it was of no use. The boy was bent upon becoming a scholar. Day after day, and often far on into

the night, he would be with his beloved books, forgetting, in their company, all aches and pains or hunger, and desiring no other interest or amusement. His favourite volume was Maimonides' מוֹרֶה נְבוּכִים , Guide to the Perplexed,[60] which he patiently puzzled out, and read and re-read, till something of the spirit of the large and liberal-minded author seemed to have entered into the delicate deformed body of the patient little student. Long years after, he would often laughingly call his hump a legacy from Maimonides. 'Maimonides,' he would say, 'spoilt my figure in my youth, and ruined my digestion; but still,' he would add more seriously, 'I dote upon him; for if those long hours spent with him, instead of at play, weakened my body, they at the same time gave strength to my soul. Maimonides may have stunted my stature, but he developed my mind.' And so, in the narrow little room, he would sit and read and think, till his pale cheeks grew hot, and his whole frame thrilled with dreams and longings—he too would live to become a Guide to the Perplexed among his people.

2. Goes to Berlin.—As Frankel passed out of Dessau, he saw his young pupil standing on a little hill just outside the town, watching, with streaming eyes, for a last glimpse of him. The kind-hearted master caught up the little fellow in his arms, said good-bye once more, and soothed him with hopes of meeting again in Berlin. The boy resolved to make that hope a

reality, and the poor parents, when they saw how earnest was their child's desire, ceased at last to oppose it. They gave him their blessing, and put what they could—it was very little—in his pocket, and, with a very slender wallet slung on his crooked shoulders, some six months after Frankel had left Dessau, Moses Mendelssohn set out for Berlin.

3. How he fares there.—There were no railways in those days, and if there had been, Moses Mendelssohn had no money to pay even third-class fare. He walked the many and weary miles which lay between Dessau and Berlin, and it was a very tired and foot-sore little lad who, at the close of the fifth day's tramp, presented himself for admission at the Jews' gate of the city. The porter at the gate, used as he was to shabby figures, looked doubtfully at the poor, dusty, crippled boy, and it was only when Mendelssohn said that he knew Rabbi Frankel, and wanted to see him, that the man let him through. And when Frankel saw the penniless little student, whom he had inspired with such difficult devotion, the kind-hearted scholar was touched and puzzled too, but he quickly resolved that, so far as in him lay, the uphill path of knowledge should be made smooth to those determined little feet. Meanwhile the bread-and-butter question was very pressing. Moses explained enthusiastically and sincerely enough that he wanted nothing beyond bread and water, and a straw pallet

to sleep on, and the master responded a little drily that even such small luxuries as these were not to be had for any length of time out of the three silver groschen, about equal to ninepence of our money, which were left at the bottom of his wallet. However, the difficulty got solved, as difficulties mostly do when boys are thoroughly in earnest, and for a good object. Frankel settled to give him his dinner on Sabbaths and festivals, and a kind-hearted Jewish gentleman, Bamberger by name, promised to supply two everyday meals, and to let the boy sleep in an attic in his house. That was three dinners a week provided for, and on the remaining four days, by dint of economy and imagination, he supplied himself with quite a series of satisfying meals. He would earn a trifle by doing copying work, then he would buy a big loaf, and notch the bread at once into divisions, so much, or rather so little, for each dinner and each breakfast, so as to prevent the possibility of his appetite, and means of satisfying it, outrunning his purse. It often resulted in a close race. Poverty and poor feeding, however, were fortunately no new experiences to him. Still, poverty encountered all by himself in a great city full of strangers, was a harder thing than poverty as his kind loving mother had let him feel it. But he met it bravely and uncomplainingly, and, best of all, with unfailing good humour. He never took a kindness as his due, nor thought that his talents gave him a right to claim toll from

his richer brethren. ‘Because I want to drink at the well,’ he would say, in his pretty poetic fashion, ‘am I to expect every one to hurry to fill my cup from his pitcher? No; I must draw the water for myself, or else I must go thirsty.’ And in this way he preserved his self-respect, and those who had the great pleasure of helping him, received, in the boy’s cheerful, grateful use of his opportunities, quite as much benefit as they gave.

4. Seed-time.—He worked very hard, and the first thing he set himself to thoroughly learn was the German language. Germany had shown herself but a harsh stepmother to her adopted Jewish children; but he wisely thought if the children would cease to whimper in exasperating and half-understood dialect, if they would plead, or even on occasion scold back again, in the same good guttural German as their neighbours used, there was a better chance of their gaining for themselves a respectful hearing. It was scarcely a safe branch of learning, for the poor oppressed Jews of that period were so afraid of any encroachment on their Judaism, that not only was the study of the Law their favourite study, but any other was looked upon with jealous fear, and even in some cases prohibited by authority. But Moses Mendelssohn had no selfish object in his overmastering desire for knowledge. He meant to be a good Jew and a good German citizen at one and the same time, and to

show his people how that could be done. The first writing work he did was translating parts of the Bible and the Prayers into good German. He might have made translations which would have found a ready sale among scholars, but he chose to do unpaid work, which would at best find but a very limited market, in order that his people might get to know the language of the country in which they lived, through the only books which there was any likelihood of their studying. He never lost sight of the one set purpose of his life—to be a guide to the perplexed, to help the people from darkness into light. There *is* a royal road to learning, and they are kings who tread it disinterestedly, desiring to minister to the needs of their fellow-men. Some such kings carry burdens, and some bear lamps, and most are unrecognised as they trudge along, but nevertheless that road to learning is always *royal*. Moses Mendelssohn, poor and deformed as he was, and hemmed in by prejudice, found books to read and teachers to instruct him, and by the time he was one-and-twenty, was not only a good Hebrew scholar, which was a matter of course to a self-respecting Jew in those days, but an excellent mathematician and a fair classic, with an accurate and grammatical knowledge of the language and literature of his native country, and a tolerable mastery of French and of English.

5. Harvest.—He had given lessons for some time in the family of a Mr. Bernhardt,

a prominent member of the Berlin synagogue, and in 1750 this gentleman proposed to the learned young man to become resident tutor to his children. This Mr. Bernhardt was a kind man as well as a rich and a cultured one, and as tutor in his house Mendelssohn found both congenial occupation and welcome leisure. He was teacher by day, student by night, and author at odd half-hours. At the end of three or four years of this work, Mr. Bernhardt offered Mendelssohn the position of bookkeeper in his silk manufactory, with some especial emoluments and responsibilities attached to the office. It was a splendid opening, and Mendelssohn gladly and gratefully accepted it. It gave him leisure and independence, and in due time wealth, for as the years went on he came to be a manager, and finally a partner in the house. He did not sink into a mere business man, but the money gave him the means wherewith to indulge his taste for books, to enjoy the society of clever and cultivated people, and to send, too, many a welcome gift to the old home in Dessau.

6. Nathan der Weise.—Mendelssohn's tastes had very early drawn him into the outer literary circle of Berlin, which at this time had its head-quarters in a sort of club which met to play chess, and to discuss politics and philosophy. His good manners soon overcame any lingering social prejudices, and he was already quite a popular member, when the poet Lessing,

coming to Berlin in 1754, was welcomed to these gatherings as an honoured guest. Very soon an intimacy grew up between the author, whose reputation was already high, and the struggling young Jewish student. The intimacy ripened into a lifelong friendship. Lessing was on the road to become a great author, and Mendelssohn was the first Jew he had ever known. The German author and the German Jew grew very soon to be real friends, and by-and-by Lessing wrote a play, which is now the most celebrated of his works. It is called 'Nathan the Wise.' The hero, Nathan, is a Jew, and Mendelssohn was Lessing's model for Nathan. 'Let me make a nation's ballads, and I care not who makes their laws,' once said a keen statesman; and the ballads, and the plays, and the literature of a country undoubtedly have an immense influence on its people's thought and action. A Jew of the Nathan der Weise type was an altogether new experience for the Germans, and the 'divine lessons'[61] which the drama teaches had been hitherto undreamt of in their philosophy. They put on their spectacles, as a matter of course, to commentate and to criticise the text, but by-and-by they took them off again, to study it in the original. Lessing had sketched his Jew from the life, and there were quantities of such hitherto neglected and misunderstood models on all sides about them. Other Lessings among Christians began to look for, and to find, other Mendelssohns among Jews.

7. Literary Successes.—And presently Mendelssohn grew famous. He wrote a great deal, and Lessing was godfather to his first book; and then they brought out together a little work called 'Pope as a Metaphysician.' A year or two later, Mendelssohn gained the prize which the Academy of Berlin offered for the best essay on the problem 'Are Metaphysics susceptible of Mathematical Demonstration?' Kant, the great German philosopher, was one of the competitors whom Mendelssohn distanced in this contest. Together with Lessing and one or two other friends, he brought out for some years a serial called 'Literatur-Briefe,' a sort of literature, science, and art review. The works, however, by which he is best known are his 'Jerusalem' and his 'Phædon.' 'Jerusalem,' published in 1783, is a sort of comprehensive survey of Judaism in its religious and its national aspect. 'Phædon,' published in 1767, is an eloquent summary of all that religion and reason and experience urge in support of our belief in the immortality of the soul. In less than two years 'Phædon' ran through three editions, and it was quickly translated into English, French, Dutch, Italian, Danish, and Hebrew. He paraphrased the whole of the Pentateuch into pure German, and made a metrical translation of the Psalms. He translated, too, Manasseh ben Israel's famous *Vindiciæ Judæorum* into German, and published it with a very eloquent preface in 1782. Another literary enterprise, which brought him more notice than he cared for, was a

correspondence with a too zealous Swiss minister named Lavater, who, with a keen eye to conversion, sought to draw Mendelssohn into a public religious discussion on the relative merits of Judaism and Christianity. Mendelssohn hated controversy, and, moreover, had a sincere conviction that no cause, and certainly no religious cause, is ever forwarded by it. 'It is by character, and not by controversy,' as he wrote, 'that Jews can shame the bad opinion that may be held of them.' Nevertheless, when the choice, between standing to his colours or sneaking behind them, was forced upon him, we may be sure that he did not take refuge in any comfortable compromise. Like the three who were not 'careful'[62] of their answer, even under fear of the fiery furnace, he too testified to the truth, and had no dread. The correspondence ended with a sincere apology from Lavater, and an added respect for Mendelssohn.

8. His Home Life.—At the age of thirty-three he had married. We do not know much of his wife beyond the facts that she was young and blue-eyed. The first few years of the marriage were very happy years, spent in a small house in the outskirts of Berlin—for by this time Mendelssohn's friends had procured for him the privilege, not at that time, nor for long after, generally accorded to Jews, of living in whatever part of the city he liked. It was a modest little house, with a garden. The

ornaments were perhaps rather out of proportion in size and number to the rest of the surroundings, but that was hardly the fault of the newly married couple, since one of the smaller vexations imposed on the Jews of that time was the obligation laid on every Jewish bridegroom to treat himself to a large quantity of china for the good of the king's manufactory. It was, of course, a sort of extra tax legally imposed upon Jews, but the most vexatious part of it was, that neither the tastes of the purchaser nor his wants were ever considered. He had to buy just what the manufactory wanted to sell. In this instance twenty life-sized china apes fell to Mendelssohn's lot. But the ugly ornaments notwithstanding, Mendelssohn and his wife were very happy. Happier perhaps as husband and wife than, when their children grew up, as father and mother. Parenthood was a very hard task in those days. It is never quite easy, but a century ago, when Jews could not walk the streets without being insulted, when all gates save the Jews' gate were closed against them, it was terribly difficult to bring up children to be good Jews and good citizens at the same time. Mendelssohn did not altogether succeed with his children. 'Who is best taught?' says the Talmud; and it answers, 'He who has learned first from his mother.' Mendelssohn's clever boys and girls never seem to have had that teaching, and this may account in part for the mistakes they made when they grew up. They became impatient of the obstacles and

the insults that beset the Jews' path, and when their turn came to marry and bring up children, they determined to save them all such humiliating experiences by bringing them up as Christians. Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, the great musician, was the grandson of Moses Mendelssohn, but he was not a Jew.

9. Last Years.—In 1780 Lessing died, and a friendship of nearly thirty years was thus dissolved. For Mendelssohn, the loss of his friend was a terrible blow, but for the world the work of that memorable friendship was accomplished. It had improved the position of the Jews throughout Europe, for it had made Jew known to Christian, and Christian known to Jew. The hero of Lessing's play 'Nathan the Wise' had come in those thirty years to be a well-known and famous personage, and he, Moses Mendelssohn, and not the shambling pedlar whom they passed contemptuously in the street, was talked of now among cultivated people as 'a Jew.' The individual Jew whom they happen to come across is generally accepted by outsiders as a representative of his race, and thus the work that Mendelssohn did by being scholarly and good-mannered and straightforward was, perhaps, even more valuable to his people than his literary services. Mendelssohn himself was an interpretation of Judaism for Christians in as true a sense as his translation of Pentateuch and Psalms was a revelation of

their adopted country to the Jews. His brave and sensible efforts for the study of secular subjects, and for the speaking and the writing of pure German, did much to banish the confusing, narrowing influence of a separate jargon among his people, but certainly no less did his loyal, beautiful character go far to silence that noisy, national expression of prejudice which, even to these days, debases the German tongue, making it a dialect among the languages of civilisation. Lessing's love for his Jewish friend, and the expression of that love in his drama, had smoothed the way and hastened the work which Mendelssohn in his boyhood had longed to accomplish. The work was done when Lessing died; and the remainder of the way which he who was left had to tread alone was fortunately not long. 'Spend in all things else,' says an American poet,[63]

'But of old friends be most miserly.
Each year to ancient friendships adds a ring,
As to an oak; and precious more and more,
Without deservingness or help of ours,
They grow....
'Tis good to set them early, for our faith
Pines as we age; and after wrinkles come,
Few plant, but water dead ones with vain tears.'

To Mendelssohn this poetic truth was very apparent. He had been liberal in intimacies,

but ‘miserly’ in friendships, and now at fifty years old he was bankrupt. Still, as befitted his steadfast Jewish nature, he did not let his keen sorrow for his old comrade express itself in selfish inaction. An opportunity soon presented itself for Mendelssohn to rouse himself on his friend’s behalf. Germany, as its greatest poet[64] once rather bitterly remarked, ‘needs time to be thankful.’ A year or two after Lessing’s death was too early for any anniversary celebrations of his genius, and some of his countrymen got up an agitation against his memory instead. In articles many and bitter, the dead poet was accused of want of principle and want of religion, and of a great many other bad qualities, which were summarised as ‘covert Spinozism.’ It was a fine phrase with which to cover up ignorant and jealous abuse. Mendelssohn, with grief and indignation, tore off the disguise, and in a brilliant pamphlet, full alike of pathos and of wit, he cleared the reputation and defended the character of his dead friend. This was his last literary work. It was his monument as well as Lessing’s. He took the manuscript to his publisher on one of the last days of the year 1785, and in the first week of the new year 1786, then only fifty-six years old, he quietly and painlessly died.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE NEXT HUNDRED YEARS.

(1780–1880.)

1. Light and Shadows.—The influence of Mendelssohn did not die out with his death. He had stirred the conscience of the Christians, he had roused the consciousness of the Jews. Things could never again be quite as they had been. But there was a danger in the difference, as there is in all sudden and violent changes of feeling, even when the changes are good and right. Cultivated Jews quickly became quite the fashion in the literary circles of Berlin, and the reception-rooms of Mendelssohn's daughters, and of Henrietta Herz, the charming wife of a Dr. Marcus Herz, and of several other pleasant, intelligent Jewish women were thronged by the leading men of the day. Christians seemed to find a certain delightful flavour, beyond the charm

which is common to all cultivated intercourse, in this new taste of what had been for so long forbidden fruit. And almost as quickly, ambitious Jews and Jewesses grew to be a little intoxicated with their success. Many restrictions, both social and political, were still in force against the race, and these people who were so well received amongst Christians thought that they were liked and admired in spite of their Judaism, whereas they owed to it those very qualities which gained for them this flattering notice. One by one, slowly and shyly at first, they dropped Jewish observances; then, more boldly, they dropped Jewish acquaintances; and lastly, and quite in logical sequence, they dropped their Judaism altogether. It was always, and in every case, from first to last, a sacrifice to selfishness and self-interest. And perhaps the first proud step of 'hiding themselves from their own flesh' in their fashionable wrappings of superior cultivation, was quite as wicked as that last distinctly separate step which many took of baptism. Mendelssohn's daughters were baptized, and his grandchildren; so was Heine the poet in 1825, and Börne the patriot in 1818, and so were a host of minor folks in the first forty years immediately succeeding Mendelssohn's death. These 'conversions' were the deep shadows thrown from the light which Mendelssohn had lovingly and loyally let in upon his people. Yet, nevertheless, the light was 'good,' and in time it lost its blinding, dazzling quality. If a prism is put in the way

of a ray of sunlight, we get a view of the most beautiful colours, but the experiment needs nice handling. If the prism be not of the right shape, and set at the right angle, instead of added colours we get our ray of light obscured. Some of the Jews of Germany managed with their pushing, self-adjusted prisms to hinder the effects of Mendelssohn's rays of light. When he himself stood as a prism in the beams, we got *Nathan der Weise* as a result.

2. Leopold Zunz.—Eight years after the death of Mendelssohn, in the person of Leopold Zunz another good, steadfast Jew and great scholar was born to Germany. Mendelssohn had done much to free his people from fetters, both external and internal; from the outward shackles of prejudice and oppression, and from the inward rust of ignorance and superstition. Zunz carried on this work, and, perhaps, in a safer, because in a more purely historic spirit. His aim was to build up, rather than to cast down or cast aside, and to make an ideal for Israel's future out of the actual of Israel's past. His knowledge of the national literature was wide and profound, and his memory was as remarkable as his scholarship. He began to write from a very early age, and his celebrated monograph on Rashi[65] was published before he was thirty years old. His most valuable work was an historical review of Jewish ethics,[66] which gives the whole account of the development of the spiritual life of Israel from Biblical

days to the present time. This book, which took nine years to write, shows forth the thought and the feeling of a nation of 'witnesses,' collecting and presenting their evidence of over a thousand years. Zunz wrote, too, standard works on Jewish literature, under the titles 'Contributions to History and Literature'[67] (1845), 'The Synagogue Poetry of the Middle Ages' (1855), 'The Rites of the Synagogue Service' (1859), and 'History of the Literature of Synagogue Poetry' (1865). In these works we find a history of the sorrows of the Jewish race, and a delightful account of the poets and the poetry of the Jews of the Middle Ages. Zunz's mind was as accurate and as full of facts as a dictionary, and yet as charming and as full of fancies as a poem. He lived till this year (1886), and up to the very last preserved his faculties, and added to his friends. Throughout his long life Zunz was faithful to his nation, to his religion, and to his national literature. His immense knowledge of Judaism made him its enthusiastic admirer, and it is as well, perhaps, for lesser scholars, who are greater critics, to recall this fact. Zunz was a cultivated man as well as a theologian and a Talmudist. He had received, and he was one of the first Jews in Germany who were permitted to receive, a university education. And his attitude towards the heroes of the past, at whose oddities it is so impertinently easy to smile, was consistently reverent. Zunz felt—

‘If these had not
walked
Their furlong, could we hope to walk
our mile?’

3. Progress of Events and of Legislation in Germany.—The frequent laxity of observance, and the occasional conversions among the higher class of Jews, had the natural reactionary consequence among the lower class. These became more rigidly, and even repellently, orthodox. The temptations to cultivated society, which hardly assailed them, they regarded with bitter hatred and contempt, and they clung to their own distinctive ways and customs and modes of dress and speech, with a fervour of anger as well as of religion. Thus it came to pass that the main body of the Jews in Germany continued to be almost as little as ever German citizens, and social prejudice against Jews remained at its old high-water mark till Napoleon’s wonderful series of conquests, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, made a change in the position. In Westphalia, which was then created a kingdom, with Jerome Bonaparte for its king, and in all the Rhenish provinces which were annexed to France, the liberal *Code Napoléon* took the place of that other written and unwritten code in which Jews were pariahs, liable to be condemned without evidence, and sentenced without appeal. Whether from dynastic reasons, or as a matter of conscience, the Corsican

conqueror confirmed the doctrine of full and free emancipation which the Revolution had introduced. All subjects of the French Empire were to be legally looked upon simply as French citizens, and it was henceforward no one's business to inquire whether such subjects professed the Jewish religion, or the Christian, or no religion at all. The humiliating *Leibzoll*, or body tax, which in Russia had been discontinued since 1790, was now definitely and altogether abolished, and, equally with Christians, office in the army and in all civil departments of the state was thrown open to Jews. Only positions directly under Government were still denied to them.

This happier condition of things, however, lasted but a very few years. With Napoleon's downfall in 1814 it was at an end, and in the subsequent German reaction against French supremacy the Jews of Germany fared worse than ever. The famous Treaty of Vienna (1815) secured to Jews only such rights as they had possessed before the French occupation. These 'rights,' as we know, were all wrongs, and the different States were quick to reassert, and even to add to them. Frankfort led the van. She shut them up again in their *Judengasse*, and ingeniously imposed some extra restrictions, limiting, among other matters, the number of marriages to be annually permitted. Other States celebrated their emancipation from French rule in an equally liberal and grateful spirit, reserving to their own co-religionists not only every

office in state, army, law, and university, but forbidding to Jews even the use of Christian names. And then, from legislating, German *savants* took to the composing of abstruse little pamphlets against the Jews; and, as befitted a nation who were developing into philosophers, they persecuted them pedantically instead of religiously. It came to much the same thing in results. In 1819 these attacks from professional pens culminated in serious riots at Heidelberg and Frankfort, and other towns, in all of which Jews were pillaged to the once again revived cry of '*Hep, Hep*.'

Things did not improve during the thirty years that Count Metternich was minister in Austria. But in 1848 the whirlwind of the Revolution brought its breath of liberty to the Jews, and most of the German states, in deference to the new strong tendency of public opinion, at last admitted their Jews to the rank of citizens. In 1850, Frederick William IV. of Prussia, brother of the present Emperor of Germany, although opposed by his ministers, removed all municipal and administrative disabilities from his Jewish subjects, and the new and united Empire of Germany, which was settled in 1866, and consolidated by the issue of the war in 1870, retains in its constitution no traces of any separate and restrictive legislation concerning Jews. Social prejudices, however, are tough, and often outlive legal disabilities. Nations, like individuals, have a predisposition to some especial ailments, and an old writer says

that Germany is periodically subject to the distemper of Judea-phobia. Some colour is given to this theory by the dull persistency in persecution which that country has always shown towards the race. It broke out yet once again in 1875, in a sort of violent rash of anti-Semitic essays, a literature which exhibited the fever in a very pronounced form, and which was treated, unfortunately, homœopathically, by as thick a rash of replies. This *Judenhetze*, however, died out by degrees, and in the enlightened views of their Crown Prince and Princess the Jews of Germany look confidently forward to a 'fair field and no favour' being by-and-by accorded to them.

4. Progress of Events and Legislation in France (1780–1880).—At the time when Moses Mendelssohn's efforts were producing a reform in feeling and in conduct among and towards the Jews of Germany, the Jews in France thought that his influence might be brought to bear upon their rulers. The Jews in Alsace accordingly, who, numbering by this date some 20,000, were the most numerous of the various French communities, forwarded an appeal to Mendelssohn, setting forth their wrongs and their hopes. In deference to this appeal a very famous memoir in favour of Jewish claims to fair treatment came to be written by a learned and enlightened Christian scholar named Dohm. Dohm was one of Mendelssohn's influential friends, and thought well of all Jews for Mendelssohn's

sake. When the Jews of Alsace begged Mendelssohn to speak up for them, he wisely thought that a Christian advocate might gain more hearers than a Jewish one; and so, at his friend's request, Dohm wrote and published in 1781 a book on the Political Reform of the Jews, which work had a great, though indirect, share in the bringing about of better times. Another friend for the French Jews was found in Count Mirabeau, who, before he came to be a power in the stirring events on which the eighteenth century closed in France, was, with Dohm and other noteworthy people, a frequent visitor in the salons of Henrietta Herz and of Mendelssohn's daughters at Berlin. The Abbé Grégoire was another personage who, having had the opportunity of intimate intercourse with Jews, used such knowledge to their benefit. Both Mirabeau and Grégoire wrote and spoke frequently and earnestly on the subject of Jewish emancipation, which was rapidly becoming one of the questions of the day. Whether French Jews should be admitted to the rights of French citizens, was over and over again debated in the French Assembly. Many ignorant arguments were brought against it. One speaker urged that Jews could not serve the state; that they could not be soldiers, since their laws forbade them to fight on their Sabbath; nor artisans, added another orator, nor agriculturists, for their holidays were too numerous for continuous labour. Such speakers must have forgotten all about the Land and the Book—

all about the oliveyards and the vineyards of Palestine, the 'borders set with precious stones,' and the battlefields drenched with more precious blood. The discussion went on. Their own friend Abbé Grégoire hurt their cause by remembering something of all this past, and pleading for them as a 'people.' This roused the stupid folks. Could a 'people,' dispersed among other 'peoples,' be patriots? they asked. And when that was answered out of history, and Jewish loyalty and law-abidingness taken as proved to demonstration, then a new doubt was raised on the score of the alleged money-lending proclivities of the race. Robespierre answered this. 'The vices of the Jews,' said he, 'are born of the abasement in which you have plunged them. Raise their condition, and they will speedily rise to it.'

After an immense amount of eloquence had been expended on the question, the Assembly, on September 27, 1791, passed the vote for the emancipation of the Jews, and mainly on the grounds that those who fought against the measure were actually fighting the Constitution, which proclaimed Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity, without reservation or exception, to all subjects of the French republic. By this vote, France gained for herself the distinction of being first among modern nations to give not only tolerance, but liberty, in its full social, legal, and political meaning, to her Jewish subjects. It remained for Napoleon Bonaparte to complete the work. When that extraordinary man came to be Emperor of

France, he showed an extreme interest in the history and the position of his Jewish subjects. He summoned an assembly of representative Jews, composed of Rabbis, merchants, and literary men, and calling it a Sanhedrin, he desired this assembly to report on the present religious and political status of their nation, and to define their duties towards God and their country. This so-called Sanhedrin did its difficult work very well. Starting with a quotation from one of the *Amoraim*,[68] that the law of the State is a binding law on the Jews of that State, the Assembly showed, by proof and by principle, that Judaism constrains Jews to be in every sense true and worthy sons of the soil. Passing from declaration to suggestion, the Assembly advised with great sagacity on many subjects, on that especially of mixed marriages, on the practice of 'usury,' and on the choice of trades and professions. Napoleon gave the sanction of authority to much of this counsel, and altogether the deliberations of this latter-day Sanhedrin greatly helped forward the progressive movement which had set in. The wave of liberty, which swept over France in such terribly tumultuous fashion at the end of the eighteenth century, has known no ebb tide. The many and various forms of government, which have changed much and effaced much since 1793 in the fair and fickle land of France, have, to their honour, left religious freedom at high-water mark. It has been well said that, from that date to this, one cannot accurately

speak of the 'Jews of France,' but only of French citizens professing the Jewish religion.[69] Rabbis of the Jewish Synagogue, since 1830, have been considered to hold the same relation towards the state as curés of the Catholic church, receiving, like them, their salaries from the Government. Not only in the army and in the learned professions, but also in every class of society, the Jews of France march, nowadays, shoulder to shoulder with their fellow-countrymen. The war of 1870, which made Alsace and Lorraine German, was a great blow to the loyal French-Jewish inhabitants of these provinces, but the loss to France of her Alsatian Jews was balanced by the gain of some 30,000 Algerian ones; for in 1870 the Jews of Algiers became, in a body, naturalised Frenchmen, and are proving themselves excellent and enlightened subjects of France.

5. In Italy.—In Italy, the Popes personally were, as a rule, mild in their treatment of the Jewish race. At the coronation of each new Pope the Jews of Rome had to offer the Holy Father a scroll of the Law, which the Pontiff would take in his hand, and sadly remarking, 'Your Law is good, but you understand it not,' would return to them, turning his back on the deputation as he did so. This old custom, somewhat humiliating in its form, and which can be traced back so far as the twelfth century, remained in force until our own times, as if to remind Jews that they

were accounted heretics; but with this exception, and with only a very occasional baptism effected by force or by stratagem, there was little done to bring home the fact to them. In the Middle Ages, as we have seen, the Popes had small need for robbing Jews in the name of religion. They had all Christendom to draw on for revenue, and when the period of paying for indulgences and dispensations had passed away, the period of licensed plundering and proselytising was passing too. And many of the later Popes were learned and enlightened men, who were humane by nature as well as by habit. The downfall of Napoleon caused, for a time, a cloud to spread over that dawn of wider liberty which had broken with the Revolution. Once more, and until the year 1848, the Jews in the Papal dominions were shut up in their ghetto, and in Rome, they were not altogether emancipated, till 1870. From 1848, however, their position throughout Italy steadily, if somewhat slowly, improved. Since 1859, the Jews in Tuscany and Lombardy have been emancipated; since 1861, in Naples and Sicily; since 1866, in Venice; and since 1870, in the capital. At the present time, in all the Italian dominions, Jews are in possession of civil and religious rights.

6. In Spain and Portugal.—In 1821, Portugal opened her gates again to her long-expelled Jews. At the consecration service of the first reopened synagogue in Lisbon

there was a curious sight. Members of what had always been accounted Catholic families hurried up from the interior of the country to take part in the ceremony. What could these Catholics want in a Jewish place of worship? thought the authorities. The mystery was soon explained. The strangers proved to be Marannos, who, from generation to generation for 300 years, had worn a disguise, and were now anxious to cast it off, and to take upon themselves once again the 'inheritance of Jacob.' Spain held longer than Portugal to the old bad policy, but in 1868 she, too, annulled the decree which kept Jews from her shores.

7. In Austrian Dominions.—The *Leibzoll* was abolished by Joseph II. of Austria in 1783. Other reforms followed, and slowly, and not without some occasional relapses into ancient barbaric ways, the Jewish inhabitants of Austria, Hungary, and Galicia were enfranchised. The capital of Austria was slowest at the good work, and in Vienna, until quite recent times, many humiliating restrictions were in force. The last legal disabilities which were in force in the Austrian Empire were, however, removed in 1867, and in Brody, the capital of Galicia, so numerous and so comfortable have the Jews become, that some of its grateful residents call it the 'Galician Jerusalem.' The Hungarian capital, Buda-Pesth, boasts an excellent Rabbinical college, and this modern seat of Jewish learning may serve as evidence that the old

Jewish spirit, which ever sought cultivated expression directly the barest chance of such expression was open to it, is as active in Europe as it used to be in Babylon.

8. In other European States.—In the Netherlands, from the date of the French Revolution (1793), the Jews were legally emancipated. Practically, however, they had been free, and had enjoyed all the advantages of emancipation, from the time when the Portuguese refugees first found an asylum in Holland. Some of the chief men of the Dutch Jewish communities were not entirely pleased with the decree which, at the close of the eighteenth century, made Jews 'citizens,' and substituted the authority of the 'States-General' for that of the 'Mahamad.'[70] This and other causes led to a secession from the more conservative members of the community, and to the establishment in 1796 of a separate synagogue in Amsterdam. The Jews of Holland continue to maintain their respectable and respected position.

Belgium emancipated her Jews in 1830, Sweden in 1848, Denmark and Greece in 1849. Switzerland delayed her claim to take rank among enlightened nations till 1874; and Norway, up to the present day, still only tolerates Jews, and very few are to be found in that country.

9. In Russia and Poland.—The two and a half million Jews who are to be found at the present day in these wide and but semi-

civilised territories, are still unhappily circumstanced. The ignorance and fanaticism of the native population, and the unintelligent policy of the governing classes, combine to make the position of the Jews a painful and a precarious one. Little progress has been made in the last hundred years. Many of the 'blunders worse than crimes' of the Middle Ages seem to lead a charmed life in Russia and in Russian Poland, and to be proof against the educating and humanising influences of these latter days. Jews are still confined to mean trades for their sole occupation, and are separate in dress and in social usage from their neighbours. Numberless legal restrictions are in force, which practically shut out Russian and Polish Jews from any worthy ambition, and condemn them to seek inglorious ends by sordid means. In spite, however, of 'ukase' after 'ukase' conceived in this 'Middle Age' spirit, the Jews are struggling upward in the old good fashion to the light, and a society for the promotion of education, which, since 1870, has been established at St. Petersburg, is helping them much in their efforts to rise.

10. In Danubian Provinces.—At the beginning of this century the persecutions in Russia caused a number of Jews to emigrate to those States on the Danube which, by the treaty of Berlin in 1878, at which Lord Beaconsfield presided, received a recognition of independence from the European Powers. The emancipation of the

Jewish inhabitants of these provinces was a condition of the treaty, a condition which the conduct of the refugees since their settlement has fully justified. The Jewish immigrants rapidly multiplied, and their intelligence, industry, sobriety, and loyalty bore down prejudice, and won them friends. Of these Danubian states, Servia, Bulgaria, and Montenegro have honestly observed their part of the compact, but Roumania has distinguished itself by its systematic disregard of it—an attitude the more ignorantly ungrateful since, in the Roumanian war of independence, the Jewish Roumanians were among the bravest and staunchest of the soldiery.

11. A Glance at the Rest of the Map.—One can scarcely put one's finger on any part in which there are not some Jews. When, in 1868, M. Joseph Halévy, at the request of the Alliance Israélite, travelled for a year in Abyssinia, he came across some black men whom he believed to be descendants of Jewish refugees from Egypt. This remnant of a tribe is known by the name of Falashas, which in Abyssinian dialect means exiles. M. Halévy made friendly advances, but the little black crowd stood aloof from the white men, silent and suspicious as to their motives in seeking them. 'Accidentally,' says M. Halévy, who tells the story, 'I mentioned the name of Jerusalem. As if by magic, the attitude of the most incredulous was changed. "Oh! do you come from Jerusalem, the blessed city?

Have you beheld with your own eyes Mount Zion?" All doubt was gone. They were never weary of asking these questions, and I must confess,' continues M. Halévy, 'I was deeply touched at seeing their black faces light up at the memory of our glorious history.' Travellers, also, in remote mountain recesses of Asia Minor, in the ancient cities of Hindostan, and in the vast empire of China, have come across various small settlements bearing undeniable traces of a Jewish origin, and keeping up, in a greater or lesser degree, the distinctive rites and customs of Judaism.

In the new world of the colonies, and in the United States, the numerous and prosperous Jewish communities, owing to their speaking European languages, are of course more readily recognisable as Jews, although, in America especially, the Judaism of these dispersed and transplanted Jews is not always in a very much better state of preservation than among the semi-savage sects of ancient civilisation. Among some American congregations Judaism seems to be occasionally rather a religion of sentiment and of complaisant remembrance, than of active and steadfast observance.

In the eastern parts of the world less change is observable among the Jewish inhabitants. Throughout the Ottoman Empire the Jews are not ill-treated, and they keep to the old paths in the somewhat sluggish fashion of Orientals. In Turkey, Persia, and Afghanistan they are not very

prosperous nor very enlightened, but the efforts of the Alliance Israélite and of the Anglo-Jewish Association in establishing schools for secular study, and for the teaching of handicrafts, are gradually leavening the mass. In Palestine the chief Jewish settlements are at Jerusalem, Safed, and Tiberias, and there are small agricultural colonies at Jaffa and Safed. At Nablous there is a remnant of Samaritans who, as in the old days, are quite distinct and aloof from their Jewish half-brothers. At Jerusalem all sects and many nationalities are represented. Ashkenazim, Sephardim and Karaites, Russians and Poles, and Rabbis from all parts of the world, come to weep and to pray, and to lay their bones among the ruins of the city which was once the joy of the whole earth. In these days, the leaders among us are wisely endeavouring to direct this beautiful religious and historic enthusiasm into healthy and useful channels, and to impress on these simple pious souls that labour is one form, and not the least admirable form, of praise.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

TWO CENTURIES AND A QUARTER IN ENGLAND.
(1660–1885.)

1. First Fifty Years.—Manasseh ben Israel's petition for the return of the Jews to England met, as we have seen, with no formally favourable response; but nevertheless, from the date of his visit, (1656), Jews began to settle in England, and no serious attempts were ever made to dislodge them. In 1662 there was a well-attended little synagogue in King Street, City; and by 1664 the small community had grown sufficiently in numbers and in importance to draw up for itself a regular constitution, and to appoint wardens and a treasurer to administer the laws and the funds of the congregation. These laws, or *Ascamoth*,[71] were written in Spanish, and it

was not till 1819 that they were rendered into English. The *Ascamoth* settled the service of the synagogue in its spiritual and financial aspects, provided for the raising of the necessary funds, and, under penalty of *Cherem*, or excommunication, dictated most stringent rules of conduct. A standard of honour as well as of honesty was set up in the congregation, and it was distinctly and authoritatively announced that any member who dropped below this fixed high level, depending on his community to be raised again, would be disappointed. 'No time and no money' would be expended on the defence of such culprits; they must expect the law of the country to take its course, and to be 'chastised according to their crimes.' The *Mahamad*, or council of the congregation, was endowed with almost despotic powers over it. It could equally interdict a marriage, or interfere in a betting transaction, or prohibit the publishing of a book.[72] At first reading, some of the *Ascamoth* may seem arbitrary, and at first sight some of the actions of the *Mahamad* may appear tyrannical, but the circumstances must be remembered. These early settlers in England dwelt 'in the midst of alarms,' they were tolerated, not welcomed, and in their precarious position it would not have been wise for frequent appeal to have been made to the law of the country, in cases of dispute or of wrong-doing among themselves. The *Mahamad* had practically no means of punishment for erring members but moral law and

communal opinion. It certainly brought these down, on occasion, rather heavily, and dealt out excommunication and money fines in cases which would, in these days, be adequately met by argument, or even by a gentle policy of letting alone. Such stringent regulations, however, kept up a high, if somewhat narrow, tone in the community, and the general morality of these early Jewish residents left nothing to be desired. Moreover, this heedfulness concerning the things they were not to do, made them by no means neglectful of the things they were to do; and schools, and a society for visiting and relieving the poor and sick, were set on foot by Ben Israel's countrymen before they had been ten years in England.

The Restoration made no change in the position of the new-comers. The Stuarts, in their light-hearted fashion, took the Jews lightly, and their courtiers seemed to find in the Jewish synagogue a novel and rather amusing sort of entertainment. In 'Pepys' Diary,' under date October 14, 1663, there is a full account of a visit paid by Charles II. and some friends, during the Tabernacle holydays, to the little place of worship in King Street. The fashionable visitors, by degrees, became an interruption both to worship and to decorum, and a law, in 1665, had to be added to the *Ascamoth*, to the effect that, however flattered members of the congregation might feel at this interest shown in them, they were to give their feelings no outward expression during

service by moving from their seats to greet their visitors. In 1673 there was an attempt made to take from the Jews the right of public worship. Strong in their confidence in King Charles' good nature, and in his freedom from religious prejudices, the community petitioned him on the subject, and an order in council set things right at once. It is possible that Queen Catherine's influence may have had something to do with this fortunate result. On impersonal matters, and on subjects which did not affect his own pleasures, it is not unlikely that the king was ready to gratify the wishes of his much-enduring consort; and it is certain that Catherine employed and much valued a Jewish physician, one Antonio de Mendes, who took an interest in the affairs of his co-religionists. James II. was also amiably disposed towards the Jews, and during his reign the alien duties, which required a certain sum to be paid by every 'alien,' both on merchandise and on personal property, were remitted. The concession, however, aroused great opposition among the English traders, and William III., though not personally ill-disposed to the Jews, and with all his Holland memories to guide him as to the wisdom of treating them generously, had to yield to the pressure put upon him, and to see this heavy tax re-imposed on Jewish enterprise.

2. Influx of Germans and Poles: how received.—The tolerably secure position to

which the Spanish-descended Jews from Holland attained in England tempted, in a short time, less happily placed Jews to join them. The new immigrants, who were mostly persecuted Ashkenazim from Germany and Poland, received but the coldest of welcomes from the Sephardic community, and so little was their fellowship desired, that by the end of the seventeenth century especial restrictive legislation was added to the *Ascamoth* of the congregation on the subject. It was enacted that no 'Tedescos' (Germans or Poles) should vote at meetings or receive religious honours; that they should not be allowed to intermarry with the Sephardim,[73] nor to hold any higher office in their synagogue than that of beadle. In fact, socially and religiously, the Spanish and Portuguese Jews 'boycotted' their German brethren. Undoubtedly the Ashkenazim were of an altogether lower class than these others—less refined, less cultivated, and less well off, and the Sephardim, in thus holding themselves aloof, probably considered that they were taking the safest course for their own reputation. By this time (1702) the Spanish and Portuguese congregation had erected and consecrated a beautiful synagogue in Bevis Marks, to which building Queen Anne had contributed a beam.[74] The community had imported from Italy an eminent scholar as chief Rabbi (חָכָם) and their schools and institutions were liberally supported and wisely administered. The Ashkenazim would

willingly have joined in all these good works, but, baffled in their hopes of union, they more or less good-temperedly accepted the situation, and built synagogues, and founded schools and institutions of their own. They increased rapidly in numbers, and gradually spread over the United Kingdom, establishing small congregations in most of the principal towns. Time has now so readjusted things that, in these days, the German-descended Jews of England rival in wealth and in culture, and in numbers far exceed, those who claim ancestry from among the Sephardim. Intermarriage between Sephardim and Ashkenazim is a frequent and welcome occurrence, and all the old feelings of separateness have disappeared with the causes for it.

3. Converts.—In all communities there are individuals who, besides an aptitude for coming to the front, have a very strong liking for that position. They like their voices to be loudly heard, their talents to be widely seen, their wealth to bring them its full social benefit and recognition. For Jews with such tendencies, the conditions of Jewish life for near upon fifteen hundred years had been hard, and the temptation to throw off the cruel, crippling restraints, and to let their light shine out before men, was strong. Some found the temptation impossible to resist, and through the gate of baptism such men and women passed, to gain the open vantage-ground for which

they longed. There were many so-called converts to Christianity among the Jews of England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Perjurers for position would be perhaps a more accurate if a harsher phrase by which to describe them, for there was very little of religious motive, or even of pretence of it, about these 'conversions.' Those who deserted Judaism did so from their keen desire of a career of social and political equality with their Christian countrymen. To this end they took the easiest and quickest road. They would not patiently work, and wait to be emancipated; it was so much simpler to walk into church and be married, or 'converted.' And so they left their posts, these deserters, but Judaism survived their loss, and perhaps was all the stronger and purer for the definite defection of such weak and selfish adherents. It is curious to note how insincere were these 'converts.' Sampson Abudiente, who in 1754 changed his name and his religion, may serve as a typical instance. Sampson Abudiente was a very rich man, and his special temptation was to possess a landed estate, which, as a Jew, was in those days impossible. By a special Act of Parliament, obtained through the influence of Sir Robert Walpole, Sampson Gideon, late Abudiente, gained his desire, and to ensure this estate passing to his children, he brought them all up as Christians. His son, under the title of Lord Eardley, subsequently became a member of the Irish peerage. Sampson Gideon lived in great state at Belvedere

House, Erith, entertained 'nobility and gentry,' cut all connection with his people, and died in 1763, to all outward seeming, a good Christian *parvenu*. Then came the reading of the will. In it 1,000*l.* was left to the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue, on the condition, and with the earnest request, that the testator might be buried in the בֵּית חַיִּים at Mile End, and that his name might be included in the loving mention of our dead which is made in Jewish synagogues on the Day of Atonement and other holy days. It was further found that ever since his conversion, Sampson Gideon had anonymously kept up all his payments as a member of the congregation, and thus there was no ground for refusing the dead man's request.

Some twenty years after this incident the process of conversion was, in a remarkable instance, reversed, and Lord George Gordon, a member of a distinguished ducal house, became a Jew. In the earlier part of his career, Lord George had been an enthusiastic, almost fanatic upholder of the State religion, and had incited, if not actually led, the 'No Popery' riots of 1780. Quite as vehemently, a year or two later he took up the Jewish cause, and gave a proof of the strength of his new opinions by entering into the covenant of Abraham. He became one of the most observant of Jews; he studied the language, he kept the dietary laws, and followed even Rabbinical regulations. The conversion, however, was received with little welcome or favour by

the Jewish community. The sincerity of the convert was not questioned, but his sanity, perhaps, was suspected. Throughout the subsequent short and stormy experiences of Lord George, the Jews, as a body, maintained an attitude which was entirely consistent with their own self-respect; they acted as if they considered a man's religious opinions were a matter that concerned only himself, and were not a subject to make a fuss over; nor would they for a moment permit the rank of the convert to make any difference in their sensible view of his actions. Lord George Gordon died in 1793, and his wish to be buried among Jews was not acceded to by the authorities of the Synagogue.

4. Progress of Anglo-Jewish Legislation.—In 1723 an Act was passed through Parliament which permitted Jewish evidence to be received in all courts of justice, unprefaced by the words 'On the true faith of a Christian.' This was a small but important start on the path of tolerance, that path which was to 'slowly broaden down from precedent to precedent,' till English law and English custom gave full rights of all kinds to English Jews. Another step on the right road was made in 1740, when another Act of Parliament granted to foreign Jews, who had for two years served in a British man-of-war, the right of becoming naturalised British subjects.

The attempt of the Stuarts, in 1745, to regain the throne which they had

dishonoured, gave the Jews of England an opportunity of showing their capacity for loyalty and patriotism. They helped as soldiers, and they helped as financiers in the defence of the country and the dynasty. Great numbers of Jews enrolled themselves in the hastily raised militia, whilst the older and richer merchants subscribed largely, and on far from profitable terms, towards a loan for the Government. Others, again, formed themselves into an association which agreed to take paper instead of specie in payment so long as money continued scarce in the country, and two Jews, in particular, placed vessels, which they had fitted out at their own cost, at the disposal of the Government. The good feeling which this ready patriotism on the part of the Jews evoked, showed itself in 1753 in a hearty attempt on the part of the ministry to pass through Parliament a bill permitting Jews, who had lived in England three years, to become naturalised Englishmen. The matter was very hotly discussed, and gave rise to a great expenditure both of literature and of eloquence. In Ireland, which at that date had a Parliament of its own, the Naturalisation Act, as it was called, had twice passed the Irish Commons, in March 1746, and in December 1747. But this partial victory proved almost worse than a defeat, for it attracted so much attention, and provoked so much opposition, and directly the Bill reached the Upper House, it was, on both occasions, violently thrown out. At Westminster, however, in 1753,

after a struggle, the Naturalisation Bill passed the House of Lords and became law; but so strong was the feeling against it, that in the very next session (1754) it was repealed by 150 votes to 60. Even something in the way of a reaction of injustice would seem to have set in, for when, a year or two later, a certain Elias de Pass bequeathed 1,200*l.* for the purpose of erecting a Jewish college, we find the courts of the day deciding, and the Government upholding their decision, that such a bequest was illegal, as tending to perpetuate superstitious practices; finally the money was taken and passed on to the treasurer of the Foundling Hospital, to be applied to the support of a chaplain to preach Christianity to the inmates.

For a while the efforts of the English Jews to obtain general rights of citizenship were abandoned, and their energy was steadily and steadfastly limited to the righting of one wrong in especial. The marriage law of England, which counted no marriage legal unless performed by a Christian priest, pressed very hardly on the Jews. It put difficulties not only in the way of happiness, but also of property, and made both insecure. Years, however, and patience and perseverance were needed to get this seemingly simple matter set right, and it was not till the reign of William IV. (1830) that an Act was passed which made properly solemnised Jewish marriages in all respects equal, in the eyes of the law, with properly solemnised Christian ones.

5. Communal Progress.—Meanwhile, by marriage or by conversion, or by simple aloofness and indifference, some of the more weak and the more selfish members of the community every now and then slipped from under the many burdens which their Judaism imposed upon them. The brave majority straightway took up the neglected duties of these occasional deserters, and did a double portion of communal work and communal charity. Their synagogues and their institutions supplied to them their only possibilities of distinction. Possibly an honourable ambition to be 'known in the gates' may have combined with religious zeal to make office in the synagogue eagerly sought after. There were, at any rate, good men in plenty who, unlike Sampson Gideon, were content to use their brains and their wealth, not as stepping-stones for themselves, but as scaffolding for the community—men who carried out in the practical, everyday actions of their life the words לֹא לָנוּ יְיָ לֹא לָנוּ כִּי לִשְׁמְךָ תֵּן כָּבוֹד . And as Sampson Gideon served as an instance of the one sort, so Benjamin Mendes da Costa, a man who lived as befitted his wealth, and yet spent 3,000*l.* a year on 'the poor of all creeds,' and who was generally known as 'the truly good Jew,' may be taken as an example of the other. Da Costa died in 1764. Meanwhile, the synagogues and schools and institutions, both of the Sephardim and Ashkenazim, continued to flourish, and every now and again new ones were founded. The present Portuguese

Board of Deputies, instituted to look after Jewish interests generally, held its first meeting and presented its first address, which was one of congratulation to George III. on his accession, at the close of the year 1760. In this proceeding the German congregations united, and from that date forward the two sections of Jews in England, the Sephardim and the Ashkenazim, drew constantly closer to each other in every kindly feeling, and in all good works. The bond of brotherhood between European Jews was further cemented and extended by reason of the active correspondence which was maintained between the Jews of London and the older established committees on the Continent, and this intercourse was good not only for the religious, but for the commercial, interests of the various congregations.

As the eighteenth century drew to its close, echoes from the thunders of the French Revolution (1789) were borne to English shores, and the pitiful, passionate cry for liberty, equality, and fraternity, which, after all, was but a stammering version of ‘Love thy neighbour as thyself,’ seemed in the air; but yet, and for a long while, in the air only. The conscience of men was stirred, yet still, for many years to come, the Jews of England were regarded not as neighbours, but as ‘aliens.’ It is written that ‘it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.’ The long hoping without fuss,

the long waiting without anger, of those days were good for the English Jews; and their quiet steadfastness, no less than their active work, had a share in bringing about the happy state of things that was, though so slowly, coming to them.

6. The Nineteenth Century.—The years went on, and the nineteenth century opened on a numerous community of Jews in England, who were loyally fulfilling all the duties of Englishmen, and who were still denied most of the privileges and many of the rights of English subjects. When Benjamin d'Israeli was born, in 1804, trade was fettered by restrictions, professions were handicapped, university education was barred, and any municipal or state service was impossible to Jews. Prejudice certainly was dying down, and this was due, in some respects, to Jewish conduct, and in some respects, it may be gratefully acknowledged, to Christian effort. Novelists and dramatists often can preach to wider audiences than priests, and a certain Richard Cumberland, in 1794, by a kindly conceived and well-written play called 'The Jew,' did what he could to make Jews better known and better appreciated. His play became fashionable, and thus Richard Cumberland, in his degree, helped, like Lessing, in good work. But the work was of terribly slow accomplishment, and clever Jews and ambitions Jews grew often impatient, and now and again steadfast and observant Jews grew unwise in their zeal. Those who were

in authority saw so plainly the temptations to apostasy, that their very keenness of vision was a danger. They drove too straight, and held the reins too tight, for waverers on the road. 'For us or for our enemies?' the Synagogue seemed to ask. It listened to no compromise. 'Belong to us altogether, or leave us altogether,' was its way of meeting half-hearted adherents. It was an attitude which admits of defence, and even excites admiration, but it was one, nevertheless, which lost many a member to the fold, among the rest the family of D'Israeli. The future Lord Beaconsfield was a boy of nine years old when (in 1812) his father, Isaac d'Israeli, then leading the life of a scholarly recluse, was fined 40*l.* for refusing to accept the office of warden in the Spanish and Portuguese synagogue. Much correspondence ensued, Isaac d'Israeli eloquently pointing out that he was by habit and by inclination unfit to hold office, and the authorities stubbornly insisting that each son of Israel should take his share of communal burdens, or, failing this, should pay without protest the money penalty which such refinements of disability, by the laws of the Synagogue, entailed. It ended, in 1817, by Isaac d'Israeli formally withdrawing from the Synagogue. His four sons and his one daughter were subsequently baptized.

More and more the disastrous effects of being thus shut out, by reason of their religious opinions, from use and name and fame impressed itself on the Jews. The time

seemed ripe for active and sustained effort, and thoughtful and enlightened men in the community, Isaac Lyon Goldsmid foremost among them, began to work in earnest for the boundaries to be enlarged. Their energies were directed to the entire removal by Parliament of all remaining civil and religious disabilities, to the end that Jews might take their rightful place among their fellow-citizens in every department of the State. From the year 1833 onwards, a bill for the removal of Jewish disabilities was passed by the House of Commons, and each time by an increasing majority. Ten times was it sent up to the Lords, and ten times was it rejected by the Upper House. Year by year, however, the opposition declined, and Macaulay, in a very famous speech, demolished all the arguments that could be brought against it. In 1847, Baron Lionel de Rothschild was elected a member of Parliament for the City of London. For two years he did not attempt to take the oath nor his seat, but in 1850 he was admitted to be sworn on the Old Testament, and took the oath of allegiance, omitting the words ‘on the true faith of a Christian.’ The House counted this a disqualification, and ruled that the Baron could not sit nor vote. Sir David Salomons, when elected for Greenwich in 1851, disregarded this ruling of the House. He took the oath in the same form as Baron Rothschild had done, but sat and voted, incurring the legal penalty of a 500*l.* fine each time he did so. This of course brought things to a crisis, and a long

struggle ensued. In 1858 the Commons (by 297 votes to 144) passed Lord John Russell's Bill, which permitted Jews to omit the words which were to them unmeaning, unnecessary, and untrue. In the Lords the second reading of the Bill was rejected by 119 to 80. The dead-lock was averted by a suggestion that the House should be competent on occasion, by special resolution, to modify the form of oath. This was agreed to, and on July 26, 1858, Baron Lionel de Rothschild, by special resolution of the House, took the oath of allegiance, with the distinctively Christian words omitted. In 1860 this concession was made a standing order of the House, and finally, in 1866, the Parliamentary Oaths Amendment Act was passed, an Act which removed the obnoxious words altogether. Since that date there has been but one form of oath for the two Houses, and Sir Nathaniel de Rothschild, on becoming our first English Jewish peer in 1885, had no trouble nor hesitation about taking his seat and vowing his allegiance in the Lords.

7. A Slander revived and slain.—In 1840 an anonymous writer in the 'Times' created a most painful sensation by gravely asserting that an accusation just then raised against some Jews of Damascus, of having killed Christian children and used their blood for Passover biscuits, was very likely to be true, since such rites were formulated in the Rabbinical writings of the Jews, and frequently practised in Jewish communities.

An assertion so positively and authoritatively made, in a paper like the 'Times,' was a most serious matter for the Jews. Denial, of course, was easy, but something more than the scores of indignant letters which were despatched to the 'Times' was needed to disperse the readily aroused prejudice of ignorant folks, and to dispose once and for ever of this lying accusation. The necessary champion of the truth was found in Professor Theodores of Manchester. In a most remarkably able and scholarly letter,[75] which occupied two and a half columns of the 'Times,' the matter was exhaustively treated, and so entirely and successfully was the blood accusation disproved, that no echo of that wicked calumny has been heard in England from that day to this.

8. The Man of the Nineteenth Century.—In English courts of law, the issue of a case depends less on its advocates than on its merits, and, in the long run, the like is true of the cases that come before the wider courts of public opinion. The emancipation of the Jews in England was greatly helped by the character of the Jews in England, and, despite the many restrictions which were still in force, the nineteenth century produced some noteworthy figures among them. Of the men who, by conduct and by effort, by using their riches or their talents as a trust rather than as a possession, helped to make the Jews respected and worthy of respect, the

names of the Goldsmids, father and son, of many of the Rothschild family, of Sir David Salomons, and of Dr. Joshua van Oven, will be gratefully recalled. Among women writers of a wholesome and unsensational sort, Grace Aguilar (1800–1844) takes her graceful and honoured place; and Arthur Lumley Davids (1811–1832) and Emanuel Deutsch (died 1867) have each a niche among the scholars of the time. There are other names, both of workers and of scholars, some too valuable, some too recently lost, to be less than familiar. Numa Hartog, and Leonard Montefiore, and Edward Emanuel call on our hearts as well as our intellects for remembrance; but these, and such as these, may well be left.

In the goodly procession of nineteenth-century English Jews, the foremost figure is undoubtedly that of Sir Moses Montefiore (1784–1884). Both in his private character and in his public life, Sir Moses was a realisation of the Laureate's ideal knight,—

'Whose glory was redressing human
wrong;
Who spoke no slander, no, nor listened
to it;
Who loved one only, and who clave to
her.'

Born in 1784, and living to receive congratulations on his hundredth birthday, Moses Montefiore's long life covers a century of wonderful progress in the position of his race, a progress to which his

conduct, and his presence, and his efforts very largely contributed. His circumstances permitted him to be widely and wisely generous, and whenever and wherever help was wanted for a good cause, or a blow was needed to be dealt at a bad one, Sir Moses was to the fore. His courtesy acted as a charm alike on princes and on beggars. To his far-reaching philanthropy Damascus did not seem distant, nor Russia nor Roumania remote; and Syrian Christians, when oppressed, gained his sympathy as readily and as heartily as Jews and Christians nearer home. But because his people, and especially those of them under foreign rule, needed more of his advocacy and of his help, it was to them he gave most. Seven times he journeyed to the Holy Land, trying what heart and purse could do against the rooted forces of poverty and neglect. His first pilgrimage to the city 'sitting desolate' was made with his wife, when he was forty-three, and his latest, as a faithful widower, when he was ninety-one. The biography of Sir Moses Montefiore[76] makes good reading for the boys and girls of his race, who may gather from it that Jewish heroes of the old single-minded and enthusiastic type are by no means an extinct product of this prosaic age.

9. Conclusion.—And here, with this brief record of Sir Moses Montefiore, these 'Outlines of Jewish History' may well end. But the 'Heroic History,' as Manasseh ben Israel called it, the miserable glorious

record of the ages, is itself, in truth, never-ending. Line upon line is still being added, and *finis* will never be written on the page of Jewish history till the Light which shineth more and more unto the Perfect Day shall fall upon it, and illumine the whole beautiful world. Each Jew and each Jewess is making his or her mark, or his or her stain, upon the wonderful unfinished history of the Jews, the history which Herder called the greatest poem of all time. '*For ye are My witnesses, saith the Lord.*' Loyal and steadfast witnesses, is it, or self-seeking and suborned ones? A witness of some sort every Jew born is bound to be. He must fulfil his mission, and through good report and through evil report, and though it be only writ in water, he must add his item of evidence to the record, that all who run may read.

And on the Jews, and even more perhaps on the Jewesses, of the present it depends whether the men and women of our race in the future shall be worthy of these of the past, of these kindred of ours who loved their faith in the days when 'love was grief, and love besides.'

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Footnotes.

1 – Dean Stanley's phrase.

2 – תוֹרָה, נְבִאִים and כְּתוּבִים: abbreviated תנ"ך.

3 – Nasi, נָשִׂיא, 'Prince.' Later on, the titles רַבָּן, our master, רַבִּי, my master, and רַב master, were in use.

4 – B. Disraeli's *Home Letters*, p. 119.

5 – Renan.

6 – *Tanaim* may be translated teachers, but it is applied only to the teachers of the Mishnic period.

7 – See *ante*, p. 31.

8 – Mahomedans is the general name given to the followers of Mahomed and professors of the faith of Islam; but Mahomedans are also called Moors and Saracens, in somewhat the same geographical sense that modern Jews are divided into Sephardim and Ashkenazim (*i.e.* Spanish and German). The Saracens are those Mahomedans who dwelt in the East and crossed over into Turkey. The word is Arabic in its derivation (*sarog*, east; and *sirocco*, wind). The Moors were those Mahomedans who dwelt in Morocco and crossed over into Spain. See map.

9 – The word means excellence.

10 – Koran has the same derivation.

11 – Mrs. Browning.

12 – Massora means tradition.

13 – Franzos.

14 – The literary portion of the history of this period will be found in Book III., 'Starlight.'

15 – Alcharisi.

16 – טוּלִיטוּלָה, Hebrew for Toledo.

17 – One of these Rabbis subsequently founded a college at Cairo, another in Kairuan, and the third, it is said, at Narbonne.

18 – *H E P*, supposed by some to be the initial letters of the three words *Hierosolyma est perdita*, meaning Jerusalem is lost, was the war-cry of the Crusaders. The object of the Crusaders was to regain Jerusalem. Hep, Hep, was their signal for murdering and plundering Jews *en route*. It grew to be a most familiar sound in the Middle Ages.

19 – See Maimonides, Book III., chap. xxviii.

20 – Capital of Arragon. See map.

21 – From the Hebrew מָחֳרָם אַתָּה.

22 – See p. 103.

23 – The remainder of this paragraph is quoted almost verbatim from the author's work, *About the Jews since Bible Times*.

24 – Prov. xi. 1; xx. 10.

25 – The Prioress's Tale.

26 – See page 72.

27 – The badge was called a *tabula*, and was probably made in imitation of the two tables of the Law which Moses is, pictorially, represented as carrying. At first this badge was made of white linen or parchment; it was afterwards altered to yellow felt.

28 – A mark was a coin of the value of 13*s.* 4*d.*

29 – See *ante*, chap. xiv.

30 – The Greek word is *poëtes*. Gradually it received the Hebrew form *payyāt*, and the Chaldaic form *paytan*. The root was then treated like a Hebrew root, *piyyut* was formed—literally, poem, but, as a rule, restricted to liturgical poems.

31 – Abraham Ibn Ezra.

32 – Anonymous.

33 – See page 125.

34 – He is mentioned among the Gaonim at p. 126.

35 – See pp. 120–124.

36 – There were two stars of this name; the other one was Moses Ibn Ezra of Granada, a poet of some note.

37 – *See* p. 138.

38 – The English version of *Benjamin of Tudela's Itinerary* is accessible; and, if somewhat less easy reading than some modern books of travel, it should be of sufficient interest to Jews to be familiar to them.

39 – Graetz.

40 – The existence of Bulan and of the Jewish dynasty of the Khozars is historical, the rest may be accounted as 'idyls of the king.'

41 – This extract is from a letter, dated 1199, to Rabbi Samuel Ibn Tibbon, a friend who, later on, translated, under Maimonides' direction, his famous work, *The Guide to the Perplexed*, from Arabic into Hebrew. The English translation of this letter to Ibn Tibbon, which was originally written in Arabic, thence translated into Hebrew, is by Dr. H. Adler—*Miscellany of Hebrew Literature*, 1st series.

42 – Which means, from Moses our Lawgiver till Moses Maimonides, none rose like Moses.

43 – See p. 267.

44 – The allusion is to the siege of Leyden, 1573, when, as a last chance of relieving the city, William the Silent had the great dykes pierced so as to let in the sea, and thus flooding the country, succeeded in drowning out the besiegers, and sending in barges with food to the besieged. The story is splendidly told in Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*.

45 – Traditional interpretation identifies the Biblical *Ashkenaz* (Gen. x. 3), *Zarephath*, and *Sephared* (Obad. 20) with Germany, France, and Spain. The Jews of Spain were therefore called *Sephardim*, and those of Germany *Ashkenazim*. These names are applied to Jews of other countries, in the degree in which they approach to the former or the latter in their pronunciation of Hebrew, and in their ritual.

46 – The Abarbanel who pleaded to Ferdinand and Isabella. See chap. xxi.

47 – Grotius was also for some years Swedish ambassador at Paris. Milton was there received by him in 1638.

48 – Parts of this chapter are taken almost *verbatim* from an article by the author which appeared in *Good Words*, Oct. 1884.

49 – From 'Declaration to the Commonwealth.'

50 – *Cromwell*, vol. ii. p. 359.

51 – The Hero as King—*Heroes*, p. 342.

52 – Novalis.

53 – See p. 87.

54 – Thomson.

55 – See p. 220.

56 – See p. 193.

57 – A thaler is three times as valuable as a mark.

58 – See p. 113.

59 – See p. 216.

60 – See p. 210.

61 – Goethe's phrase.

62 – Dan. iii.

63 – Lowell.

64 – Goethe.

65 – See p. 193.

66 – *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge der Juden historisch entwickelt.*

67 – *Zur Geschichte und Literatur.*

68 – Samuel of Babylon, who died 253.

69 – ‘A partir de 1791, il n’y a plus à proprement parler de Juifs de France, mais des citoyens français professant la religion israélite.’—*Histoire des Israélites*, Reinach, p. 340. To which work, in the later chapters, I am under some obligation for facts.—K. M.

70 – מַעֲמָד a Hebrew word meaning representative assembly.

71 – הַסְכָּמוֹת is a Hebrew term denoting agreements.

72 – A certain Moses Netto was denied permission to publish an English translation of the Prayer-book, and a penalty of 5*l.* was imposed on any member who should buy, sell, or read such a book.

73 – When, so late as 1744, Jacob Israel Bernal, a member of the Portuguese congregation, applied to the Mahamad for leave to marry a German Jewess, very humiliating conditions were attached to the reluctant permission. The bridegroom was not ‘called up to the law,’ the members of the Congregation were not allowed to be present at the ceremony, and no ‘offerings’ were accepted. A descendant of this Mr. Bernal married a Duke of St. Albans.

74 – This synagogue was very much injured by fire in 1738, but it was rebuilt on the same site, and the old beam given by Queen Anne was preserved and replaced. The building was finished in 1749, and has stood, practically unaltered, since that date.

75 – Professor Theodores' letter, in pamphlet form, is to be found at the British Museum.

76 – See a biographical sketch, reprinted by permission from the *Times*, by Mr. Israel Davis. *Jewish Chronicle* Office, 2 Finsbury Square, 1885.

Transcriber's Note.

Punctuation has been standardized.

This book was written in a period when many words had not become standardized in their spelling. Words may have multiple spelling variations or inconsistent hyphenation in the text. These have been left unchanged unless indicated with a Transcriber's Note.

The Erratum correction has been incorporated into the text.

Index references have not been checked for accuracy.

The following corrections have been made in the text:

- O – 'Pombaditha' replaced with 'Pumbaditha'
  (Sora and Pumbaditha grew to be)
- O – Agobart' replaced with 'Agobard'
  (Agobard, 129)
- O – 'Alcharizi' replaced with 'Alcharisi'
  (Alcharisi, Judah, 132)
- O – 'Azaria' replaced with 'Azariah'
  (Azariah de Rossi, 273)

- O – ‘Barleus’ replaced with ‘Barlæus’ (Barlæus, Caspar, 243)
- O – ‘Bernhard’ replaced with ‘Bernhardt’ (Bernhardt, Isaac, 290)
- O – ‘Christine’ replaced with ‘Christina’ (Christina of Sweden, 243)
- O – ‘Cossacs’ replaced with ‘Cossacks’ (Cossacks, massacre of Jews by, 278)
- O – ‘399’ replaced with ‘329’ (England, 323, 329)
- O – ‘Fraenkel’ replaced with ‘Frankel’ (Frankel, Rabbi David, 285)
- O – ‘Halachah’ replaced with ‘Halacha’ (Halacha, 92)
- O – ‘Henriette’ replaced with ‘Henrietta’ (Herz, Henrietta, 298, 305)
- O – ‘Joachim’ replaced with ‘Joachin’ (Rabbi, 170)
- O – ‘Kabbalah’ replaced with ‘Kabbala’ (Kabbala, 256)
- O – ‘Massada’ replaced with ‘Masada’ (Masada, 71)
- O – ‘Montpellier’ replaced with ‘Montpelier’ (Montpelier, 130)
- O – ‘Rumania’ replaced with ‘Roumania’ (Roumania, 312)
- O – ‘Saadiah’ replaced with ‘Saadia’ (Saadia, 126, 188, 189)
- O – ‘Salamons’ replaced with ‘Salomons’ (Salomons, Sir D., 329)
- O – ‘Strassburg’ replaced with ‘Strasburg’ (Strasburg, 158)

- O – ‘Sunna’ replaced with ‘Sunnah’ (Sunnah, 121)
- O – ‘Tannaim’ replaced with ‘Tanaim’ (Tanaim, 8, 89)
- O – ‘Hatton’ replaced with ‘Hutton’ (edited by Hutton)
- O – ‘xxix’ replaced with ‘xxviii’ chap. xxviii.

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