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DRACHMAN



FROM THE HEART OF ISRAEL

BY

Bernard Drach

JAMES POTT & CO.

FROM THE HEART OF ISRAEL





BY

Bernard Drachman.

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fm

b. in N.Y.

Rabbi, Hebraist, author.
with Jewish Theological
Seminary, N.Y., 1893-1909;
Lib. with
Yeshiva College, N.Y.

nice copy.

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THE VILLAGE *Frontispiece*

From the Heart of Israel

Jewish Tales and Types



BY

Bernard Drachman

Illustrated by

A. WARSHAWSKY

NEW YORK
JAMES POTT & COMPANY
1905

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APOLOGIA PRO LIBRO SUO

"Is Saul also among the prophets?" With my mental ear I hear thus exclaim those in whose view the teller of tales stands immeasurably higher than the rabbi, minister, preacher, scholar, or whatever else may be called he whose vocation it is to disseminate Hebrew religion and wisdom, when they see that one of the latter class has dared to intrude among those who take fiction as their exclusive and legitimate field, and has also ventured before the public with a book of tales. "What would the priest in the house of graves (cemetery)?" I hear, on the other hand, indignantly ask those who deem the wisdom of the Torah alone worthy of attention, and who think it degradation and sin to turn away even for a moment from the study and the teaching of Holy Writ and the words of the sages to waste time with the telling of empty tales. Both agree in their application to the present case of the Latin and English proverb "*Ne sutor ultra crepidam*" ("Let the shoemaker stick to his last"); and that they are not

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right is not for the one who is responsible for the present effort to say, but must be left to the decision of an impartial public, which will not fail to tell truthfully whether it has found aught of pleasure or profit in the stories of Jewish life hereinafter contained. But it may be permitted to the writer to say that, in his humble opinion, both of the criticisms quoted above are based on erroneous conceptions. The telling of tales is neither independent of nor contradictory to the Torah; that is to say, it may be a most excellent method of inculcating pure and noble lessons, and has always been used for such purpose by the great teachers in Israel.

Indeed, the putting before the world of truthful pictures of Jewish life is in itself a good and useful work. It is extraordinary, considering that the Jews have lived in the midst of all civilized peoples for almost twenty centuries, what ignorance concerning the teachings of their religion and their characteristics as a people still prevails. They have sojourned in the midst of mankind and have wandered from land to land, stamped everywhere with the seal of mystery, looked upon by all not of their creed and kin as a "peculiar," enigmatical, incomprehensible people. The fact that their Book, which most thoroughly reveals their innermost spirit, has

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become the cherished property of the world, should have made such misconception impossible; but it has not done so. Whatever, therefore, helps to show Jewish life in its true aspect, to reveal the poetry and the romance, the sorrow and the wretchedness, but also the joy and the beauty, the glory and the heroism of Jewish existence even in the unheroic present, performs a most useful, truly religious work. Nothing can do this more effectively than fiction, which appeals to multitudes to whom works of formal learning, of profound and scholarly research, could never find access. This is the excuse of the writer for departing for a time from those domains of Jewish learning which should, perhaps, more properly employ his energies, and becoming, in a measure, a rival of those who have in recent years tilled the field of Jewish fiction. In a ministry now of many years' duration he has naturally had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with many interesting types of Jewish character, and with many incidents which speak eloquently of the trials and tribulations which still form a part of Jewish experience, of the evils and good which result therefrom, and of the influence of Jewish teachings working under such conditions. It has seemed to him desirable to pre-

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sent some of these to the world in this easily grasped and popular form in order to assist in the attainment of that comprehension of the Jews and their life which is so necessary, if they are ever to cease from their present abnormal state of mystery and be recognized in their natural relation to the general life and religion of mankind. Whether he has performed his task properly his readers shall judge.

THE AUTHOR.

NEW YORK, Ellul, 5665—September, 1905.

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FROM THE HEART OF ISRAEL.

THE VILLAGE KEHILLAH.

NORDHEIM.

MANY persons, perhaps the majority of the readers of a certain kind of Jewish literature at present in vogue, led astray by the revival and improper application of the term Ghetto, have an idea that the great mass of the Jewish people on the continent of Europe have their habitations in filthy, noisome slums of the great cities, and that it is only in such secluded reservations, away from the contact or observation of the Gentile, that Judaism in its ancient, traditional form and pristine vigor, is or can be, maintained. In the imagination of such persons, deceived by prejudiced or sensation-seeking writers, Judaism is a feeble, pale, cellar plant which leads its anæmic existence in darkness and slime, but which withers and fades when exposed to the fresh, strong breeze and the bright, warm sun of heaven. These notions,

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however well they may suit the requirements of ambitious story-tellers, are incorrect both as regards the alleged facts and the inferences drawn therefrom. In the greatest part of the civilized world the Jews are not confined, whether by compulsion or choice, to particular sections of the cities, but dwell freely among their Gentile fellow-citizens everywhere; nor is the law of Moses forced to flee for refuge to darksome purlieus, where the humblest and lowliest of Judah's strain drag out a wretched existence as unwilling neighbors of the vicious and the criminal, but finds multitudes of sincere upholders and adherents in the high places of the lands among the happy possessors of what mankind esteems highest, culture and wealth. In fact, it is not to the great cities at all that we should look for the best examples of a living, earnest Judaism. Scattered broadcast through the Old World, particularly through the lands of central and southeastern Europe, may be found to this day thousands of Jewish communities in villages and rural towns which are in very truth "wells of purest Judaism undefiled," and living refutations of all the pet theories of the modern Jewish (?) novelist. Our brethren in those little rural communities breathe the purest, health-giving air that nature gives forth over moun-

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tain, field, and forest, and have never found in the keen ozone any faith-destroying, heretical qualities. They dwell side by side with the Gentile and meet him continually in all the commercial and social relations of life, but they have never found in the free intercourse any dread influence subversive of Judaic beliefs and practices. Indeed, few of them are aware, except in a hazy and indirect manner, that Judaism is in danger in this modern age of ours. They live as their ancestors did before them, honest, simple, earnest, sincere Jewish lives; happy in their state of moderate wealth or endurable, light-pressing poverty; keeping their Sabbaths and their holidays, fasting and feasting in the prescribed seasons, laying Tephillin on week-days and eating only permitted food at all times, giving freely of their means to assist the poor and afflicted, and accepting misfortune with resignation as the will of God, and not doubting but that this Judaism will continue to exist for all time to come.

Of such a little *Kehillah* in a German village, Nordheim, in the Rhön Mountains of Bavaria, and of some of the quaint and interesting persons that composed it, my tale shall be.

When, as a child, I made my first studies of the world around me, one of the objects which

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chiefly attracted my childish gaze was a picture which hung on the wall of the parlor of my home. It was a crude and inartistic picture, awkward in delineation and barbarous in color; but it was full of interest to me, for it spoke to me of a place far across the sea, a place which oft-told but never wearisome tales had surrounded with a bright halo of romance, and which my eager imagination had glorified into a veritable fairyland; it was a picture of a village in that Germany which seemed so far away and so unreal, my mother's native place, Nordheim *vor der* Rhön. These sentiments were not entirely, nor even mainly, due to the picture itself, but to the descriptions with which mother ז"ל used to accompany it; for mother dear, God rest her soul, among her other good qualities, had a most vivid and emphatic way of impressing her ideas upon her auditors. She was not only in loving tenderness and devotion the ideal of a Jewish parent, but a most charming and entertaining *raconteuse*, full to the brim of reminiscences of her youth, an animated chronicle of persons and events, and capable of describing both the humorous and the pathetic in an inimitably touching and taking manner. In addition to all this she was a living refutation of the favorite anti-Semitic calumny, that Jews have

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no sentiment of patriotism. She cherished in her heart the warmest and most unquenchable love for her native land, while her attachment to the memory of her birthplace, its ties and its traditions, approached the dignity and sincerity of a religion. No wonder that from such a stirring and enthusiastic source I imbibed the liveliest interest in all that concerned Nordheim before-the-Rhön, its inhabitants and its welfare. I would stand for hours at a time before that crude little picture on our parlor wall, gazing at the array of houses with startlingly red roofs and dazzlingly white walls, at the fields of brilliant green and the trees with trunks as straight as ramrods and mathematically elliptical foliage, and at the tin-soldier-like *gendarme* whom the rustic artist, who must have inclined either to realism or militarism (I could never determine which) had depicted marching, with martial air and projecting bayonet, along the country highway.

But I saw none of these things. My imagination gazed beyond these externals and saw the quaint and touching figures of those who had their abode in this secluded retreat, and I found myself wondering whether it would ever be my privilege to see the spot where mother's cradle had stood, and to sojourn there where life

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flowed on in such pure and peaceful and virtuous channels, far away from the crush and the turmoil, the evil and the anguish of the great world, where the peasants were simple, honest folk and the Jews all faithful to their ancestral religion, where old age was venerated and childhood obedient and respectful, where such things as violating the Sabbath and eating *Trefoth* were unknown.

My opportunity came in my twenty-first year. Circumstances, the nature of which need not be dilated upon here, made it my privilege to spend several years in Europe in study. But while I awaited, in joyous anticipation, the day when I should enter upon my course at the North German University and Seminary, at which I was to prepare for my life's vocation, it was with an absorbing interest, I might almost say with a passionate longing, that I looked forward to actually seeing Nordheim, and actually knowing the persons and conditions of which I had heard and dreamt so much. Never shall I forget the day when, having crossed the stormy Atlantic and travelled by train a day and a night southward from Hamburg, I alighted at Mellrichstadt, the railroad station nearest to Nordheim—four English miles—and saw upon the platform, waiting for me, a pleasant-faced, dark complex-

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ioned youth, whom I had never seen before, and yet whom I at once recognized, for his features appeared in more than one counterfeit presentment in a well-worn family album, over which I had often pored more than three thousand miles away. It was Cousin Solomon, and he had come to the station, having been notified by letter of my prospective arrival, to meet his American relative, and to conduct him to Nordheim and the bosom of his family. Then and there I recognized the reality and the value of sentiment. Here were two persons, born in different and widely separated lands, speaking different mother tongues and citizens of different nations, who had never seen each other before; and yet so powerful were the ties of kinship and the remembrance of common blood and a common origin, that they sufficed to bridge over all that yawning gap of separation and to bring heart to heart and lip to lip in a union of truest love and affection. Our recognition was mutual and instantaneous. We pronounced each other's names, fell upon each other's necks, and a moment later were chatting as intimately as though we had met daily during all our previous lives. Three years long I spent my summer vacations at Nordheim, and I came to know and to love it and the surrounding re-

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gion so well that when the hour of final parting came, it cost my heart more than one pang and drew more tears from my eyes than I should like to confess. What a charming ideal life of sentiment and pleasure we led there, Cousin Solomon and I. We seemed to be hovering in a dream world, far too sweet and beautiful to be real. We were at once students on a holiday, friends of nature, children without a shade of care or anxiety, and sincere, devout worshippers at the shrine of Israel's God. We climbed together the steep and lofty mountains which abound in that region, and when we had reached the summit we gazed with delight at the dazzling panorama spread out before us and inhaled deep draughts of the pure, cool, health-giving air. We wandered for hours through the dense pine forests or undertook long trips on foot to distant villages or spots that were interesting for some historical or other reason. Once we made a long trip, in company with Aunt Caroline, to the village of Burghauen, on the other side of the Rhön Mountains, to visit some relatives there. We travelled in a carriage belonging to the Duke of Weimar. We had hired it from the duke's manager, who was not above turning an honest penny with his master's property when occasion offered. The carriage bore the

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ducal escutcheon, and our coachman and footman wore the duke's livery; and as we rolled through the various villages in grand style, the peasants and their wives and children all came out and made deep and reverent obeisance. I was quite astounded, but Aunt Caroline and Cousin Solomon were so amused that they could hardly keep straight faces. Both they and I bowed to the right and to the left and answered the salutations right royally, at which the people seemed highly gratified.

"What is the reason of all this," said I (to whom this unexpected enthusiasm was extremely puzzling) to Solomon. "Do they make so much fuss about everybody?" "Why, no!" said Solomon, laughing heartily. "They recognize the carriage and the lackeys, and they take us for members of the ducal family. They think mamma is the duchess, and you and me they take for the young dukes."

But, altogether, everybody was extremely friendly in Nordheim and vicinity, Jew or Gentile, peasant, merchant or teacher, acquaintance or stranger, without exception. It was "*gruesse Gott*," and "*guten Morgen*," and "*guten Tag*," and "*lebe wohl*," and "*auf Wiedersehen*," and "*schlafe wohl*," and "*angenehme Ruhe*," and any number of other kindly and sympathetic

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phrases, and all said with such evident sincerity and good intentions as went quite through one and left one feeling warm and charitable and kindly disposed toward humanity in general. And then the eating, so abundant in quantity, so excellent, and more than satisfying in quality. At first Aunt Caroline wanted to feed me all the time. Six or seven times a day she would spread the table and invite me to partake until I protested, and by dint of hard pleading induced her to reduce the number of meals to four, with an occasional extra bite in between. It makes my mouth water yet to think of the "*gefüllte Flanken*," and the "*gruenkern Suppe*," and the "*eingelegte Gänsebrüst*," and the "*Zwiebeltätchcr*," and the "*gesetzte Bohnen*," and the "*Shabboskugel*," and the thousand and one other delicacies with which dear Aunt Caroline used to regale us, and to which healthy appetites and youth gave a zest compared with which ambrosia must have been poor. And, oh, the beer! Such magnificent stuff! So different from the wretched pretence which we call by that name in America. I quite lost all my temperance principles in Nordheim and have never recovered them since.

But along with this joyous physical life there went a spiritual life no less joyous and satisfy-

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ing. We were Jews there in Nordheim. The Sabbath was a guest whose arrival was looked forward to with the most eager anticipation, and which seemed to cast a magic, sacred glamour over all the Jewish houses in the village, transforming the prosaic, work-a-day appearance of persons and things into an aspect of dignity and holiness. All day long on Fridays until about an hour before nightfall, a tremendous bustle of preparation was going on. Such cleaning and scrubbing and polishing, such baking and boiling and brewing! It seemed as though every house was being turned topsy-turvy. On that day, too, the men folks came home several hours sooner than usual, and then there was added the turmoil of the taking of baths and the polishing of shoes, and the taking out of clean shirts and Sabbath suits, and dressing and getting ready. But about an hour before nightfall all the noise and clamor and turmoil ceased and Sabbath stillness began to settle over the village. The quaint old seven-cornered Sabbath lamps were taken out and the Jewish housewives lit them, pronouncing at the same time the prescribed benediction. How charming and yet impressive Aunt Caroline looked as she stood with uplifted hands and reverential mien before the sacred lamp, the Sab-

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bath cap of dainty lace and ribbons surmounting her refined and regular features of purest Hebrew type, while from her lips issued in the holy tongue the words of the benediction, "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King of the universe, who hast sanctified us with Thy commandments and bidden us light the Sabbath lamp."

A half-hour later all were assembled in the little synagogue, which was filled to the very last seat, for the Nordheim synagogue was not built on the American plan. In our progressive country we build great and imposing synagogues and temples for the benefit, not of the people who regularly attend—for them a very small edifice would suffice—but of those who pay the Almighty the honor of a visit only once or twice a year. But the Nordheim synagogue had accommodations only for its regular members and attendants, and these were expected to be in their places on every occasion of public services. Sometimes somebody would be missing at service, and then it used to amuse me to notice with what anxious solicitude inquiry would be made of his family as to the cause of his absence. It appeared to be taken for granted that only illness or some other equally grave reason could induce any one to be

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absent from synagogue at time of worship. I could not refrain from smiling when I thought how pointless such solicitude would be in America, where, on the contrary, the question addressed to any average Jew, should he present himself in the synagogue on any but two or three days of the year, would be, "What brings *you* to *Shool* to-day?"

The services in the synagogue at Nordheim were intensely interesting to me, not, indeed, because of the artistic rendition of the ritual or the technical excellence of the singing, but because of the spirit of devotion and earnestness by which they were pervaded. I have listened to numbers of cantors who certainly rank higher in their profession than the humble individual who acted in the capacity of village teacher, *Chazan*, and *Shochet* in Nordheim, and the musical performances of trained and paid choirs are undeniably superior to the untutored though vociferous efforts of a rustic congregation. But all these have something perfunctory and mechanical about their efforts which deprive them of real charm and of power to touch and move the spirit. One remains coldly critical in listening to them, and judges them solely from the standpoint of professional ability and artistic merit. Not so in Nordheim. There was an all-pervad-

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ing sense of earnestness and reality in the worship which made one forget the *how* of the prayers and hymns and think only of the *what*. Faith, deep and firm as the rocks, ingrained into the very tissue and life of the spirit, looked forth from those simple, earnest faces, shone forth from those sincere and expressive eyes. This spirit gave the familiar ritual an entirely new vividness and impressiveness. The worshippers seemed to be speaking directly to their heavenly Father, and when, at the close of the *Lecho Dodi*, the hymn of welcome to the Sabbath, all rose and faced the entrance, I half expected to see Queen Sabbath herself, clad in bridal robes of celestial purity, enter through the portals of that humble house of God.

The prayers concluded, the worshippers greeted each other with hearty "Good Shabbos" salutation and wended their homeward way. The scenes in the homes were in some respects even more impressive than in the synagogue. Uncle Koppel's house particularly was resplendent with a blaze of glory. The dining-room, which also served as parlor and best room, was brilliantly lighted, and in the midst of the effulgence shone, with especial radiance, the Sabbath lamp. The table was covered with a linen cloth of snowy whiteness and laden with

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the finest porcelain, glass, and silver that the household could boast, while at the head of the table, opposite the seat sacred to the master of the house, stood the two Sabbath loaves covered with a beautifully embroidered satin cover; and at their side the silver *Kiddush*-beaker and the decanter, from which the wine of blessing was to be drawn. Before *Kiddush* Uncle Koppel "marched" with the youngest of the children, and presented a picturesque sight indeed as he paraded up and down the room, carrying the infant of the family upon his right arm and leading the next youngest by his left hand, chanting meanwhile the hymn of welcome to the Sabbath angels. Then came the solemn benediction when the children all presented themselves with bowed heads before their parents, and were blessed by them in the words pronounced by Aaron of old over the tribes of Israel, with an added invocation in the case of sons that the Lord might make them like Ephraim and Manasseh, and of daughters that they might become like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah. Then came Kiddush, and the formal washing of hands and breaking of bread, and then the Sabbath meal.

Oh, the pleasure of that Sabbath meal! Everybody had a magnificent appetite on Fri-

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day evening; which was really no wonder, seeing that every one had worked and hurried all day in preparation for the holy evening; and that, in accordance with the religious precept, no one had eaten any substantial meal all day in order that he should be able to do justice to the first meal of the Sabbath. The dishes were various and all excellent, for they were seasoned with that finest of spices—the Sabbath—which gave them a flavor all their own, and which the most famous *chefs* of European or American hotels would strive in vain to rival; but the *pièce de resistance* was undoubtedly the fish. Trout of the finest quality, speckled beauties, which had only been drawn a few hours before from the icy waters of some one of the mountain streams of the Rhön *gebirge*, they made their appearance at the table cold, from a sojourn of several hours in the rock-hewn cellar, which served the purpose of our modern refrigerators, and with a sweet-and-sour sauce of the consistency of jelly. They were consumed with an avidity which boded ill for their speckled *confrères* of the mountain streams and shady pools. After the meal and the formal pronouncing of grace, in which all joined with a volume of sound which attracted the attention of the village boys in the street outside, each one followed

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his or her own sweet will. Some conversed, some read devotional books, some dozed until the flickering of the lights betokened their approaching extinction and warned all that the hour of retiring had arrived. Then with pleasant "good-night" wishes, each sought the shelter of his or her couch.

On the morrow the observance of the Sabbath was continued in a manner worthy of its inauguration. The morning service, which began at eight and was over at half-past ten, was followed by *Kiddush* and the second of the three prescribed Sabbath meals. Here the chief feature was the "*gesetztes Essen*," or dishes which had been cooked on Friday and kept warm in a special kind of oven known as "*Setzöfen*," in which they were surrounded by a gentle heat which neither burned nor dried them, until they were served at the Sabbath meal. Some persons assert that food cooked a day previous to being consumed is injurious to the health, but to judge by the favor in which it was held in Nordheim, such can hardly be the case. Of course not all food is capable of being treated in this manner; but that which is, acquires a special taste and a mellowness which makes it peculiarly palatable.

On our Sabbath menu we had "*gesetzte Boh-*

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nen," the dish of whose glories Heine has sung, and "*Shabbos-Kugel*," to whose merits even a poet could hardly do justice. After dinner visits were in order. The younger members of the *Mishpochoh* went to pay their respects to their seniors, and the children of the community called at the various houses without distinction of relationship and were treated to fruits and sweetmeats. What impressed me on the part of the children was their extremely respectful and bashful behavior, amounting almost to timidity. They would knock timidly at the outside door; and on being bidden to enter would step in on their tip-toes, timidly utter the Sabbath greeting, and then stand in a row without opening their mouths until they were told to be seated. They would not touch anything or do anything without permission, and when given fruit or sweetmeats would modestly utter words of thanks and eat them in silence. Their actions were typical of the German-Jewish standard of child behavior. The children who were old enough to receive tuition were also examined on the Sabbath in the subjects in which they had been instructed during the week. Great was the joy of parents whose son translated with fluency the *Sedrah* of the week, and the capable lad always received his reward in

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the shape of an extra portion of fruit or sweetmeats.

After the visits and the examinations came the Sabbath nap. The Sabbath nap! Let no one speak of it in tones of levity or disrespect, for it stood in high esteem indeed in Nordheim and other communities of the same type. Every one deemed it an absolutely indispensable feature of correct Sabbath observance; and though few of the people were learned in Hebrew lore, yet nearly all were able to quote in defence of their practice the cabalistic interpretation that the letters of the word שבת (Sabbath) are equivalent in meaning to the sentence שֵׁנָה בְּשַׁבָּת תַּעֲנוּג, which may be parodied as "*S*leep on *SaBBath*, the heart delighte*TH*."

Between the hours of 1 and 4 P.M., the Nordheim *Kehillah*, to use a heathenish illustration, lay locked in the arms of Morpheus. On sofas and beds or in arm-chairs, within the house or before the doors, the worthy *Baale Batim*, their spouses and children slumbered, dozed, and reposed. The cat slept under the stove, the dog dozed peacefully before the door, the very horses and cattle stood motionless as statues within their stalls and seemed to slumber. It was a most peaceful, somnolent, soporific scene. Not a sound disturbed the quiet of the village streets,

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for the Gentile peasants were all abroad in the fields. The very spirit of Sabbath pervaded the noiseless air, and everywhere were rest, repose, and tranquillity universal. I, too, who had never been accustomed to sleep by day, could not resist the drowsy influence of the general example, and after the first week or two took my Sabbath nap as regularly as any, and found it most agreeable. At four all were awake again and then the third Sabbath meal, which was usually light, and consisted only of coffee, cake, and fruit, was partaken of. The congregation then gathered in the synagogue for afternoon service, at the conclusion of which the Chazan "learned *Shiur*"—that is to say, read to the assembled auditors extracts from a Hebrew devotional work, in German translation, accompanying them with a running commentary of his own. His diction was poor, his expressions the reverse of elegant, and his train of thought in absolute disagreement with most of the pet theories of the age; but I doubt whether the most eloquent and scientifically trained of modern preachers ever had as attentive and sympathetic a congregation as he. Now came the charmed time known as "between *Minchah* and *Maariv*," the period most attractive and pleasing to the Jewish heart of all the Sabbath day.

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THE VERY SPIRIT OF SABBATH PERVADED THE NOISELESS AIR

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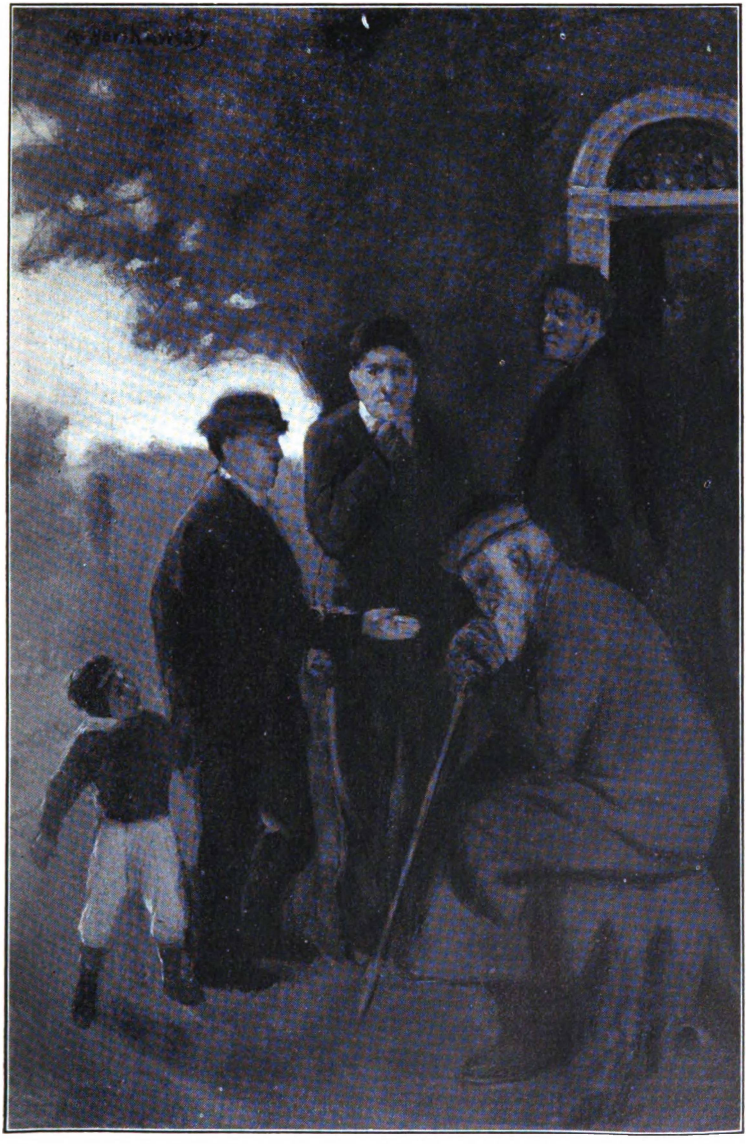
As the light of the sun is most beautiful and glorious just before it sets, so the Sabbath seems sweetest and most delightful when it is about to depart. The afternoon prayers and the *Shiur* were both concluded; the day was beginning to grow dark, but almost an hour must still elapse before the Sabbath would be over and the evening prayer of the first day might be recited. Some of the people went for a brief stroll in the fields; others went into the inn where they were furnished with beer and other light refreshments without payment; for the Gentile inn-keeper knew well that the observant Jew bore no money on his person on the Sabbath day, but most remained in the synagogue or gathered in the court-yard before the sacred edifice and passed the time in pleasant conversation or the relation of anecdotes. There they sat and stood, in various attitudes, while the deepening shadows made their figures ever vaguer and more indistinct, and enjoyed the freest opportunity for unrestricted conversation and interchange of thoughts that all the week afforded.

All possible subjects came up for discussion "between *Minchah* and *Maariv*." The politician of the Kehillah discoursed learnedly on the European situation and the various problems of statecraft involved in the relations of

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the great Powers to each other, the philosopher shed the light of his wisdom on the great scientific movements of the day and the wondrous inventions which are revolutionizing civilization, while the Talmudist elucidated knotty and interesting questions of rabbinical law or lamented the downfall of religious sentiment in these evil days and contrasted these with the unyielding fidelity and loyalty of yore. They all found attentive and eager listeners, to whom their words were as the very revelation of the Urim and Tummim; but they did not arouse the same degree of enthusiasm as the story-teller. This accomplished narrator of witty tales and humorous anecdotes held the hearts of his auditors in his hands; and when his turn came and he began to draw upon his apparently inexhaustible stock of *Mesholim*, an immense enthusiasm took possession of the entire audience, and there was no limit to their enjoyment of the numberless good points he made. They were indeed amusing, those tales of impecunious rabbis, and still more impecunious *Bachurim*, of awkward bridegrooms and homely brides, of witty Poles and scheming *Schnorrers*. But they were more. They were instructive, for they reflected the inner life of the Jewish people, and showed, even if from a humorous

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THERE THEY SAT AND STOOD, IN VARIOUS ATTITUDES, WHILE THE DEEPENING SHADOWS MADE THEIR FIGURES EVER VAGUER AND MORE INDISTINCT *Page 21*

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point of view, the many trials and difficulties by which they were encompassed.

But now the shadows had deepened into night, and the *Shammas*, who had the privilege of reading the service before the rest of the congregation in order that he might be permitted to perform the work-a-day task of lighting the lights, interrupted the pleasant tales of the story-teller by a brief notification that the time for prayer had arrived. The evening service was brief, lasting in all hardly more than a quarter of an hour. Its chief feature was the *Havdoloh*, in which the Chazan pronounced a number of benedictions over wine, spices, and a peculiar braided wax candle, and thanked the Lord that He makes a distinction between light and darkness, between Sabbath and week-day, and between Israel and the nations. The service concluded, the worshippers greeted each other with hearty "*Gut Woch*" and repaired to their homes, but not yet to resume work-a-day tasks.

It was an unwritten law in Nordheim that the Saturday night was not to be given over to labor or business, except in cases of emergency. The women were particularly zealous in following this rule. Instead sociability reigned supreme. The men indulged in friendly card-play, the married women sat together in groups and gos-

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siped, the youths and maidens played musical instruments, sang, and danced. These pleasant occupations were continued several hours, so that on Saturday nights the worthy Jewish burghers retired much later than usual.

The sincerity and thoroughgoing consistency which marked the observance of the Sabbath were characteristic of the religious life of the Nordheim community throughout the year. It would be inconsistent with the scope of this sketch to go into all the details of religious life and practice; but suffice it to say that Jewish piety, as illustrated in Nordheim, was eminently earnest, emphatic, and genuine. The very children possessed the spirit of martyrs. They would have endured tortures rather than eat forbidden food or violate the Sabbath or any other of the holy days. Some of the manifestations of this piety were quaintly humorous or pathetic, according to the viewpoint from which they are regarded. The children of Nordheim, like children the world over, were very fond of fruit and berries. Had they been permitted to go into the orchards and gardens and gather their sweet products unrestrained, there can be no doubt that as much would have disappeared down their throats as they brought home. But the Nordheim mothers struck upon a shrewd

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scheme for circumventing the appetites of their sweet-toothed offspring, which did equal credit to their ingenuity and their psychological knowledge. They would send the children to gather fruits or pick berries upon a fast day. The plan was as effective as it was beautifully simple. The children brought home all that they gathered, for no Jewish child in Nordheim would have even thought of committing such a heinous sin as tasting food on a *Taanis*. Think of applying such a rule to American children! It would be about as effective as trying to restrain a bull with a piece of cotton thread.

It is recorded of a worthy Nordheim *Baal Habbayis* that he once saw some flies rise from his boots and settle upon some hay, which was later on eaten by his cows. Now that in itself is a trifling and insignificant incident; but it so happened that the boots, in accordance with German village custom, had been smeared with tallow, which, from the viewpoint of the Jewish religious law is *Trefah*—that is, ritually unclean, and forbidden to be eaten. Our worthy Nordheimer at once felt himself burdened in his conscience and despatched a special messenger post-haste to the rabbi at Gersfeld with an inquiry as to whether the milk of those cows might lawfully be drunk. This pious scrupu-

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losity did not, however, as might be thought, involve any gloomy or dreary harshness of sentiment. What we are accustomed to call the Puritanical frame of mind was utterly unknown in Nordheim. On the contrary, a cheerful and pleasant disposition, which made the tone of social intercourse extremely agreeable, was the all prevalent mood. In individual instances this mental tendency was emphasized into pronounced joviality, and the happy possessors thereof became the "*Spass macher*," the jesters and fun-makers of the community. Woe betide the unfortunate individual who acquired a reputation for sourness and unsociability. He was considered a legitimate victim for the gibes and jests of the official jokers, and small indeed was the meed of sympathy which he received.

Another instance of the prevailing jocoseness was the custom of attaching nicknames to persons, which were then used instead of their proper appellations. It was rarely that any one was referred to in Nordheim by his given name, the nickname being so universally used as almost to displace the real and legal cognomen. These nicknames were derived from some personal characteristic or some peculiarity arising from vocation or experience in life, which had struck the village wags as humorous. It was "the

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black Elias," or "the long Moses," or "the bold Isaac," or "the gentle Sarah," the last two appellations being, of course, mildly ironical. One individual, who had an undue amount of audacity in his psychological make-up, was known as "der *Baishan*," that is, "the bashful or timid one," while another who had failed in nearly everything he had undertaken was universally dubbed "der *Mazzeldige Shmuel*," that is, "lucky Sam." A family, some remote ancestor of which had once been imprisoned in a tower and escaped therefrom by leaping from the window of his cell, was generally known as "*die Thurm hüpfer*," "the tower-hoppers," while six brothers, all of whom were over six feet tall and stout in proportion, bore the strikingly apposite designation of "*die Kinderlich*," that is, "the babies." The swineherd, who called his charges together by means of a long tin trumpet, from which he emitted shrill and piercing, though hardly melodious notes, was styled by the Jews "*der Baal Tokea*," that is, the blower of the Shofar or ram's horn trumpet used in the services of the New Year; while the village constable, who was an extremely pious Catholic and always walked around through the village streets on Sundays with a prayer book in his hand, from which he read with strait-laced mien and

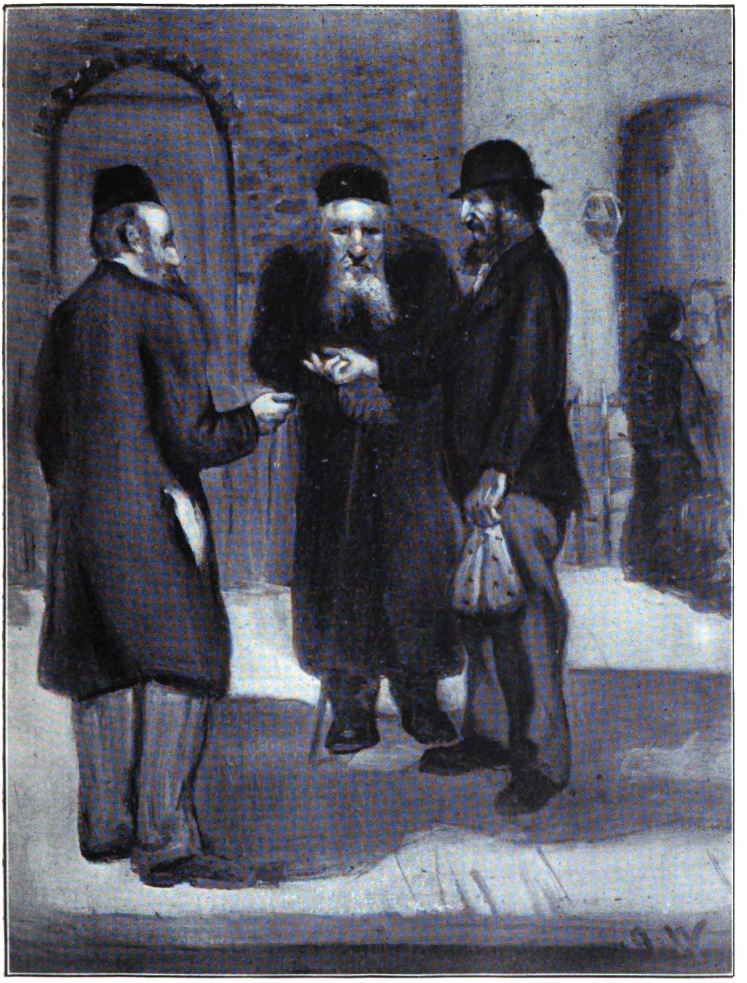
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ostentatious devotion, was dubbed "*der Baal Tephillah*," that is, the cantor or reader of the synagogue services.

Schnorrers.

The two banes of village life and at the same time the most diverting figures therein were the *Schnorrers* and the gendarmes or rural policemen. The first-named gentry, wandering Jewish mendicants, who believed in the socialistic doctrine that the world, or at least that part of it which professed Judaism, owed them a living, were a most interesting set and worthy of a special study in themselves. They honored the community frequently with their visits. Some were usually visible in the streets at all seasons of the year, and the services in the synagogue were generally graced by the presence of two or three. In most instances they professed intense piety and then their *Tephillin* were larger, their *Talethim* longer, and their prayers louder and more ecstatic than those of the rest of the congregation. They came from anywhere and everywhere. Most of them were of Russian or Polish origin, but there was a goodly sprinkling of individuals of German birth and occasionally a Sephardi from Jerusalem or some other Eastern region, clad in Oriental robes and with a majes-

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THEY HONORED THE COMMUNITY FREQUENTLY WITH THEIR VISITS

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tic turban upon his head, relieved the monotony of Schnorrerdom and added interest and diversity thereto by his strikingly alien and picturesque appearance. They came in the most diverse guises. Some appeared in the rôle of venerable rabbis with flowing beards, and anxious to display their learning in the law to whomsoever they could induce to listen; others professed to be merchants who had lost their all in ill-starred commercial ventures; while others were wandering apprentices—*Handwerksburschen*—temporarily out of work. Sometimes they were accompanied by their wives, who were always more voluble and eloquent than their husbands. Sometimes an entire family, grandparents, married sons and daughters and children of all ages, including infants in arms, made their appearance and then the resources of Nordheim charity were severely strained adequately to provide for them.

These Schnorrers were not beggars in the ordinary sense. They certainly had no humble or suppliant air. They came into the house with the air of calling upon old personal friends, and seemed to think it an entirely self-understood and axiomatic matter that their co-religionists should take upon themselves the duty of caring for their needs.

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Among them many, no doubt, were genuinely unfortunate and deserving individuals, but there was more than a suspicion that a large proportion had taken up the pursuit of Schnorring as a peculiarly pleasant and profitable vocation. Their reliance upon the charitable disposition of their brethren in faith was well grounded. The Nordheim Jews were guided by the eminently humane and noble principle that it is better that ninety-nine undeserving persons should be aided than that one deserving person should be refused the assistance he required; and, consequently, every applicant for charity, unless it was positively known that he was unworthy, received the help he craved. This help usually took the form of food, lodging, and some money or clothing. A sort of system prevailed. The Schnorrer would first call upon the *Parnass*, or president of the congregation, who would then give him a ticket, called *Plett*, a corruption of *Billet*, upon some member of the congregation, entitling the stranger to food and lodging. These tickets were issued in rotation, and were usually cheerfully honored. Some of the members even had a predilection for entertaining these destitute brethren, and would rival each other in the numbers they accommodate. It was amusing to hear one boast that he had

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harbored, let us say twenty-seven, Schnorrers during the year, only to be told by another, with triumphant mien, that the number of his non-paying guests had been thirty-five. The most celebrated hostess of this kind was a widow named Hannah. This warm-hearted daughter of Israel strove to fulfil literally the precept of the sages, "Let the poor be the children of thy house." The days were few when her house did not contain some "*guest*"; and she would give him of her best, and wait upon him as though his presence was the most distinguished honor. When asked once how it was that she, although not a woman of means, was always ready to receive needy strangers, far more so, indeed, than persons of far greater wealth, Hannah answered: "Why, that is a very simple matter. All that one needs is a *Lef* and a *Loeffel*."

Altogether, the mental attitude of the Nordheim Jews toward their needy and mendicant co-religionists was very different from that which prevails to-day; at any rate, in America. At present the unfortunates who depend upon the aid of their supposedly sympathetic brethren are considered a nuisance; an unsightly excrescence upon the body social to be abolished by all means, if possible. The

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wretched applicant for relief is rigidly scrutinized and interrogated by lynx-eyed committees until he is made to feel as though he were a criminal on trial for his life. A domiciliary visit is paid to his home by some surly "investigator," whose efficiency is measured by the number of unfavorable reports he makes. And woe betide the miserable one whose habitation shows some traces of neatness and gentility, and where some humble ornaments, relics, perhaps, of happier days, have been suffered to remain, and have not found their way into the pawnshop. Such a one is at once declared an "undeserving case"; for does not his dwelling show that he is still possessed of means, and his application is at once summarily and without mercy rejected. But Nordheim knew nothing of such uncharitable charity, such inhuman humanity. The disposition there was truly charitable in the kindlier, and hence nobler, sense of the word. Poverty was looked upon as a necessary and inevitable feature of human existence, as, indeed, a part of the Divine order of the world; for had not He said in His law, "The poor shall not cease from the midst of the land"?

The unfortunates who had been selected by some mysterious dispensation of Providence to bear the hard burden of poverty were the ob-

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jects of real and genuine commiseration, and every effort was made to alleviate their sad condition. And if some of them did occasionally resort to deception or petty misrepresentation in order to secure a larger benefaction than would otherwise have fallen to his share, there was no horror-stricken outcry, no show of virtuous indignation, such as our high-salaried or amateur charity experts would indulge in; but people merely shook their heads, rather pityingly than otherwise, and would say: "Poor fellow! he has little enough in this world, God knows. No wonder that he tried to get a little more." Indeed, if the Schnorrer was really a shrewd fellow and his trick a well-devised one, he was far more apt to arouse amusement than resentment, and would actually profit by his nimble wit. This I saw well illustrated shortly after my arrival in Nordheim. One day a Schnorrer presented himself with an expression of utter woe upon his countenance before Uncle Koppel, and in heart-breaking accents informed him that he had just received news that he had become an *Ovel*. "Alas, woe is me," he wailed. "My poor, dear wife in Poland is dead! What shall I do without her? Who will care for my poor, unfortunate orphans? How shall I keep the *Shivah* for her, as is due to her memory, I

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who have no home and no means?" It need hardly be stated that the sad case of the stricken widower aroused the most profound sympathy among the Jews of Nordheim. Uncle Koppel at once placed his house at the disposal of the unfortunate man in order that he might properly observe the seven days of mourning, and most of the members of the congregation offered to attend the mourning services morning and evening. Aunt Caroline looked well after his comfort, provided him with four or five square meals daily and a good bed at night. At the conclusion of the seven days a substantial purse was made up for his benefit and he departed, showering blessings upon the heads of all the Nordheim *Kehillah*, and vowing that he would never forget their kindness and their true spirit of brotherliness.

A few weeks later Uncle Koppel had occasion to make a trip on business to Römhild, a somewhat distant town in the grand duchy of Meiningen. As he never ate dinner when away on these trips, it was customary to keep his dinner for him, and all the household would remain up until his return. It was rather late before he returned, after nine in the evening. As soon as he had strode through the door we all noticed that something unusual had be-

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fallen him during the day, and that that something had been of an amusing nature. His face was wreathed in smiles and he was silently chuckling to himself. We all became, of course, curious to know the cause of his amusement, but none, except Aunt Caroline, ventured to ask. "For goodness' sake, husband," said she, "what is the matter? Let us know." "Give me my meal first, wife," said Uncle Koppel. "I need strength before I can tell you." All during the meal Uncle Koppel sat with sides shaking with ill-suppressed laughter, while curiosity and impatience consumed us all. At last, his meal concluded and grace recited, Uncle Koppel began his story. "I heard something in Römhild to-day of our Schnorrer," said he; "the one who kept Shivah in our house." "Indeed," we all vociferated, "what was it?" "I called first on Moses Rosenbaum," he resumed, "in reference to some cattle that I wished to buy of him; and after we had finished our business, he said to me: 'By the way, Koppel, there is a very sad case in town at present, and it would be a real *Mitzvah* for you to help us a little in relieving it.' 'What is it,' said I. 'A poor man,' said he, 'has suddenly received news that his wife died, and he is so destitute that he cannot support his orphans without help,

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or even keep Shivah. We have helped him some and he has been keeping Shivah in my house during the week.' 'Aha,' said I, beginning to smell a rat, 'this is strange. We had just such a case in Nordheim a few weeks ago. I think I shall go over and see your man.' We went over to Rosenbaum's house, and, sure enough, it was the same fellow. The Shivah-keeping business in Nordheim had suited him so well that he was trying it again in another place. When I saw him I said: 'My friend, I believe I have met you before.' He looked at me, not in the least abashed, and said: 'Oh, yes, in Nordheim, a few weeks ago.' 'What do you mean by this brazen-faced fraud,' I asked, 'pretending to have lost your wife and swindling people into charitable gifts by pretending to keep Shivah?' 'Oh, my good sir,' said he, with great pretence of earnestness, 'it is no deceit at all. The first time it was a false report. My wife had not died. But this time she is really dead, really indeed; and if you don't believe me you can go yourself to Pitchichow in Poland, my native town, and convince yourself. You can, indeed.' We all laughed heartily at the fellow's impudence, and warning him to be sure that his wife was dead before he sat Shivah for her next time, we bade him be-

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gone. He went off with great alacrity, evidently glad that he had fared no worse."

Gendarmes.

The gendarmes or rural policemen were the second bane of village life; but while the Schnorrer was looked on with charitable eye, for these latter gentry no one had a good word. They were detested, thoroughly and intensely. As a rule they well deserved the detestation in which they were held, for they were pompous, insufferable individuals, egregiously proud and conceited because of the little authority they possessed, and over-eager to display their power; in a word, petty tyrants of the worst kind. They were equally hated by Jew and Gentile, and were not popular even with the judges and magistrates, who were often liberal-minded gentlemen, and who knew well the tyrannical disposition of their rustic retainers. The multiplicity of laws and regulations in the German statute book, particularly those referring to trade and commerce, gave the gendarmes the much-desired opportunity for the display of their power; and as the Jews were the chief element engaged in commercial pursuits, they were also the chief victims of these rustic arbiters of weal and woe. To defeat or discomfit a gen-

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darme was a highly meritorious deed, and all the community rejoiced in concert when one of these potentates had been made the victim of some particularly ingenious trick.

An incident which had happened some time previous to my arrival in Nordheim, and which all the community were highly enjoying at the time of my arrival, will illustrate this disposition. There lived in Nordheim a poor, half-witted Jew named Meyer, an unfortunate fellow without relatives or home or means of subsistence, who depended for his support on the charitable gifts of the kind-hearted villagers. Despite his mental infirmity, Meyer possessed, as is not seldom the case with the weak-minded, quite a stock of humor; and as he was always cheerful and pleasant, and was continually doing odd and amusing things, "Shoteh Meyerle," or "Little Meyer the fool," as he was called, enjoyed considerable popularity. Everybody, rich and poor, high and low, Jew and Gentile, knew him well. Everybody had a friendly greeting for him when met on the road; nobody, not even the most unruly boys, would harm him in any way or permit him to be harmed by others. He had free access to every house, and enjoyed altogether liberties and privileges not possessed by any other member of the community. One day

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it chanced that Shoteh Meyerle determined, in accordance with his wont, to visit the adjoining village of Willmars to obtain some gifts. The day was hot, the road was long and dusty, and Meyer soon felt that rest and recuperation would be agreeable. These could not be had on the dusty road, and he, therefore, stepped aside into a field where there was a fine tree, in whose cool shade he sat him down and reposed. This act, it is true, was illegal, for the agrarian regulations of the Bavarian state strictly prohibit the stepping upon cultivated fields on the part of others than the proprietors, or those to whom they give permission. But what recked Meyer for that; he was, in a measure, above the law. He could violate the solemn enactments of the code with impunity, for the light in which he was viewed by the community enabled him to say, like a celebrated American politician of later date, "What's the Constitution between friends?" Meyer, therefore, sat him down on the cultivated field of Farmer Dietrich without having obtained his formal permission, but without the least fear of consequences. This time, however, he was in error. A new gendarme had recently come to Nordheim, a stranger from a different region, unacquainted with the people and their ways, but with a soul longing

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to acquire distinction by making some brilliant arrests. His reputation as a surly and churlish fellow had preceded him, and every one had scrupulously avoided him and taken particular care not to come into conflict with any of the numerous statutes and police regulations; so that hitherto no one had fallen into his clutches, and his ambition for distinction had as yet had no opportunity to be gratified. This particular morning he was walking along the road, meditating upon his ill luck (as he considered it), and cursing the people of Nordheim and vicinity for an absurdly law-abiding crowd. What especially grieved him was that no Jew had yet fallen into his hands, for he was a true anti-Semite; and to haul up one of the accursed Semites on some good and heavy charge was incense to his soul. While thus marching along the highway and meditating, he beheld a man sitting upon a stone in a field, whose appearance clearly indicated that he was not a peasant nor a field laborer, and who, therefore, had probably no right to be there. It was, of course, our friend Meyer; but our doughty gendarme knew him not, and was not aware of the peculiar status of immunity which he possessed. "Aha!" thought the gendarme, his soul filled with joy at the idea of at last making an arrest. "A

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law-breaker! Probably a wandering apprentice (*Wandersbursch*) or itinerant merchant (*Handelsman*) who does not know that I, the zealous and faithful watchman of the law, am in the neighborhood, and who has therefore dared to invade the sacred precincts of the fields! I must approach cautiously lest he see me while still afar, and escape." Thus thinking, he began cautiously to draw near to the neighborhood of the suspected violator of the law, slinking behind bushes and walls so as not to reveal his presence until he should be in the immediate vicinity of his intended victim, when he would pounce upon him as the tiger springs upon his prey.

But, cunning as the gendarme was, Shoteh Meyerle was still more cunning. He had seen the bright uniform and shining musket of the pompous champion of the law when they first appeared at the distant turning of the Ostheim *chaussée*. He at once understood his intention when he saw him first pause and afterward slowly advance, seeking cover behind bushes and walls and, with the instinctive cunning of the half-witted, he at once resolved to baffle his elaborate plan and to have some sport with his would-be captor. He remained quietly sitting upon his stone, apparently in

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entire ignorance of the gendarme's approach until just before the latter came into too uncomfortable proximity, when he arose and began to move leisurely across the fields in the direction of the Sommerberg, a forest-crowned hill situated somewhat to the northeast of the village. At this the gendarme was compelled to show himself. He burst forth from his covering of bushes, leaped upon the field and called upon the intruder, as he considered him to be, to stand and submit to arrest. Instead of doing so, Meyer continued to move on at a somewhat more rapid pace. To realize the meaning of this action, one must remember that in Germany a person when called upon by the police is expected at once to stand and give an account of himself, and invariably does so. Only one who has the gravest of reasons for not desiring police attention would dare to attempt to evade them when their attention had once been called to him.

Our worthy gendarme was now convinced that he had a dangerous criminal to deal with, and his soul thrilled with the hope of making a brilliant arrest; one that would secure him favorable notice from above, rapid promotion, and perhaps immortality in the annals of criminalistic achievement. He shouted to Meyer at

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the top of his voice to halt, breaking at the same time into a run and dashing toward him. But Meyer did not halt. On the contrary, he too began to run, and was soon speeding over hill and dale, hotly pursued by the now thoroughly enraged officer.

Who can fitly describe the terrors and the glories of that extraordinary race? Meyer was thin and light and active, possessed of splendid wind and as fleet as a deer. He led the gendarme a merry chase, indeed, over hills and down into valleys, through forests and over brooks, through corn-fields, meadows, and gardens. But the gendarme was a strong man and game, though rather heavy from overmuch eating and beer-drinking; weighed down with his heavy musket, and sadly out of condition through lack of exercise. Filled with rage and determined to make a prisoner of this extraordinary criminal, he panted and toiled on in pursuit, despite weariness and perspiration. Meyer could easily have distanced him, but had no intention of doing so; and therefore so controlled his pace as to remain always in sight of his pursuer, and not permit the latter to lose hope and give up.

Thus the chase continued until hunter and hunted, having covered more than four miles of country, found themselves at the gates of Mell-

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richstadt, the chief town of the district and the seat of the district court, which at that time, as Meyer well knew, was in session. Here, Meyer pretending to have grown weary, gradually slackened his pace and permitted himself to be seized by his panting and perspiration-bathed pursuer. "Aha, accursed Jew! Aha, thou rascal!" hoarsely exclaimed the latter, as he seized Meyer roughly by the collar, "at last I have thee! Now thou shalt pay bitterly for thy villainy and thy audacity. I shall drag thee straight to court, and the honorable judges will know well how to deal with an audacious wretch, such as thou art, and who undoubtedly must have committed some great crime or else he would not have thus fled from me." Meyer vouchsafed no answer and offered no resistance, but meekly followed the gendarme to the court-house, which was but a short distance away; although the triumphant officer in his wrath at the unprecedented chase he had been forced to make, literally dragged him thither in most ungentle manner.

The district judge, clad in his silken robes of office, and with his velvet cap upon his head, was seated at his elevated desk at the upper end of the court-room, at either side an assessor, when this remarkable pair, the

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stout, hot, perspiring gendarme, with face red as fire, and the comical, well-known figure of the half-witted Jewish beggar entered the room, the former holding the latter with an iron grasp and with an expression of intense excitement upon his countenance; while the latter was perfectly cool and self-possessed, and was smiling all over with an expression of perfect content, as though a run of four miles and apprehension by the constabulary were every-day and quite pleasant experiences in his life. An interesting case was going on at the time, and the court-room was crowded with a mixed multitude of peasants, working-men, Jewish merchants, and landed proprietors, among whom the arrival of this singular pair created a lively sensation, especially as the mischievous propensities of Shoteh Meyerle were well known and curiosity was rife as to what he was up to now.

When the gendarme entered the court-room, he at first hesitated for a moment, being undecided as to whether he had the right to appear at once before the judges or not; but the supreme judge, who knew Shoteh Meyer perfectly well (as did also the assessors), and was himself consumed by curiosity concerning the meaning of this extraordinary arrest, at once signalled him to advance, which he immediately did. No

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sooner had the gendarme brought his prisoner before the bar than the latter made a deep bow to the court; and, smiling affably at the judges, said in a voice audible all over the room: "Good-morning, *Herr Gerichtshof!* Good morning, my *Herren Assessoren!* How are you all feeling to-day? I trust you all slept well last night!" This, in a court-room, extremely unusual salutation was accompanied by an extraordinary smirk and a comical flourish of the arms, and was greeted by an outburst of hearty laughter on the part of the audience; in which the judges joined, a proceeding extremely disconcerting to the gendarme, who detected in it a note of friendliness to the prisoner, which he could not understand, but which boded ill for the success of his charge.

The gendarme was then ordered to tell his story, and gave the facts with which we are already familiar, laying particular stress on his suspicion that the prisoner was guilty of other grave crimes, based on the desperate manner in which he had endeavored to avoid arrest. This story was listened to with evident amusement, which added greatly to the embarrassment of the valiant captor, who began to feel very cheap, though he knew not why.

Meyer was then called upon for his side of the

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case. "Why, most honored judge and assessors," said Meyer, with a most engaging smile and ingenuous air, "I do not know why I have been arrested, or why the Herr Gendarme is so angry with me. I am only a poor, humble man, and I have never done any one any harm in all my life. I was resting a little in Farmer Dietrich's field this morning, and afterward I took a little lively run to Mellrichstadt and I saw the Herr Gendarme a few times on the way. Hardly had I reached Mellrichstadt when he fell roughly upon me and dragged me here, and that is all I know."

"But why were you in Farmer Dietrich's field?" asked the supreme judge, trying to assume a severe air. "Do you not know that is against the law, and that you make yourself thereby liable to severe punishment?" "That may be, your honor," answered Meyer; "but I did not think I was doing any wrong. All the people hereabouts are very kind to me, and willingly permit me in their fields; and I thought it would be the same this time as always."

"But why did you run all the long way from Nordheim to Mellrichstadt, and in this hot weather, too?" asked the judge, suppressing by a great effort his amusement.

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"The reason I did that," said Meyer, with a most innocent expression of face, "was for the benefit of my health. I have been suffering a great deal lately from constipation, and the doctor recommended me exercise in the open air." This answer was greeted with a shout of laughter from all sides.

"But," continued the judge, still endeavoring to conduct the inquiry in a judicial manner, "when you saw the gendarme running after you, you should not have kept on without noticing him. You should have stopped to see what he wanted of you. Why did you not do so?" "I should gladly have done so, your honor," said Meyer in a tone of perfect frankness, "but I did not have the least idea that he wanted anything of me. I thought that he, too, was probably suffering from constipation, and that the doctor had also recommended him exercise for his health." This answer literally "brought down the house." Amidst a storm of merriment, which utterly defied the usual restraints of court discipline, the case was dismissed and the crestfallen gendarme was overwhelmed with a flood of ironical compliments on his zeal as an official and his ability as a runner. Shoteh Meyerle was more popular than ever after this incident,

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but it was many a day before the gendarme could muster up courage to look any one in the face.

Reb Shemayah and Other Nordheim Worthies.

O sweet Nordheim! Though thy inhabitants, particularly those who professed the ancient faith of Israel, were but few, how numerous, comparatively, were those whose characters for one reason or other were interesting and noteworthy. Let me pass a few of these in review before the eye of the reader before I close this insufficient though veracious chronicle. Without a doubt the most important and significant of these persons was Reb Shemayah. He was my grandfather, although it was not my privilege to behold him in the flesh, for he had passed to the better world some years before my visit to the village. He was a perfect type of the old-time, sincere, loyal, and devout German Jew. He was the son of an old family of high repute and standing, which had been settled in Nordheim for several centuries; and one of his ancestors, whose picture appears in an old village chronicle, had enjoyed the unique distinction of being the only inhabitant who owned a saddle horse. Like all the sons of the better

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class of Jewish families in former generations he received a thorough training in Hebrew and Talmudic studies. At the *Yeshibah* in Fulda, to which he had been sent to study rabbinic lore, he attained such distinction by the keenness of his intellect and the rapidity of his progress that the venerable rabbi became warmly attached to him, and declared that he alone should be his successor and his son-in-law, the husband of his youngest daughter.

Just as Reb Shemayah was about to attain the loftiest pinnacle of Jewish ambition in those days, to become a rabbi and to take as his wife the beautiful, dark-eyed daughter of the Fulda Rav, an event occurred which destroyed his hopes in both these regards, but gave occasion for the display of his noble idealism. The Bavarian Government issued a rescript to the effect that in order to wean Jews from the petty forms of trading to which they had hitherto been addicted, and to induce them to take up agriculture, the law prohibiting Jews from owning land, which had been in force for centuries, was repealed, and it would henceforth be permitted them to own and cultivate land, the same as all other citizens.

The beneficent intentions of the new law were evident, but the Jews hesitated to take ad-

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vantage of it; indeed, they were loath to do so. The centuries of unfamiliarity with agriculture were partly to blame for this reluctance; but then, again, there was also a strong prejudice against the farmer's vocation, which was considered low and rude and far inferior in social value to that of the merchant or scholar. Reb Shemayah did not share these views. His soul was all aflame with enthusiasm when he heard of the new law which, in his opinion, first put the stamp of real citizenship upon the Jew. Not only did he consider agriculture intrinsically ennobling and the only vocation in consonance with true Jewish, Biblical precepts, but he also held that the landed class are the real foundation of the state, while all others are but floating parasites. When he saw that his brethren were hesitating, and that none appeared willing to purchase land, he determined to give them a good example and himself became a tiller of the soil. He invested his whole fortune in the purchase of a farm near Nordheim, which he himself began actively to cultivate. Thus did Reb Shemayah renounce the rabbinical vocation and become a peasant. It was a tremendous sacrifice to make; but what was worse was that he had to renounce his sweet bride too, for the old Fulda rabbi was ob-

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stinate and had no liking for these new things. "A peasant shall not have my daughter," he said; and though Reb Shemayah loved sweet Miriam well, he loved Israel better, and for the sake of his ideal he sacrificed a piece of his own heart. Encouraged by Reb Shemayah's example, many other Jews invested in land and endeavored to learn the art of agriculture; and at present Jewish tillers of the soil are no longer rarities.

In the Nordheim community and the entire surrounding country Reb Shemayah enjoyed the highest possible reputation. He was universally loved, respected, revered. And right well did he deserve his high repute, for a character of such singular purity, sweetness, and nobility belongs to the rare things of earth. He was profoundly and exceptionally devout, even for those days when piety and religious strictness were usual and ordinary in Israel. The Torah, the divine law, he considered God's most precious gift to mankind, and Israel's mission he held to be to practice this law and to show its excellence to the world; and by lives of utmost virtue and beneficence to be *mekaddesh Ha-Shem*, *i.e.*, to sanctify the name, and to bring honor and glory to Him whose servants were thus righteous and good. He lived up to

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his ideal, and his life thus became one long record of kindly words and noble deeds. Jews and Gentiles alike had in him a sincere friend and a trustworthy counsellor, and were equally glad to seek his wise counsel and ready assistance in their hour of need or distress. The Schnorrers had in him a particularly warm sympathizer, so that, after his death, they lamented that Nordheim, although charitable beyond the average, had lost its halo of glory in their eyes. He always believed any tale of woe told him by a suppliant stranger and never wearied of assisting, for the thought of deceit or fraud never entered his guileless mind. The learned wanderer had his especial sympathy, and he would always welcome such a one right royally to his home and listen with kindliest interest to his erudite comments on Biblical or Talmudic passages or new solutions of old difficulties; and after entertaining him with unstinted generosity, would dismiss him laden with blessings in substantial form.

It was not because Reb Shemayah was wealthy that he was able to do all these things, by merely sparing a little from his abundance. On the contrary, he gave thus liberally as a matter of principle, of religious duty, and his charitable gifts often involved great sacrifices

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on his part. During the greater part of his life he lived in rather straitened circumstances, and rigid economy was necessarily the strict rule of his household. His entire fortune had gone to the purchase of his *Bauerngut;* and as he was neither a trained agriculturist nor a keen business man, his finances might have fallen into great disorder but for the iron rule he had set up for himself, and from which he never deviated, never to contract debts which he could not see his way clear to pay. In addition to his ordinary difficulties he met with several misfortunes, which would have sufficed to break down the courage of an ordinary man; but his sublime faith enabled him to bear all these trials cheerfully and resignedly, and, like Rabbi Nahum of old, he would repeat whenever any tribulation came upon him: "This also is for good."

A striking illustration of this trait was given after he had been for quite some years actively engaged in his chosen vocation, had found his chosen life-partner, and had already a family of several daughters. In the middle of a bitter winter night a fire suddenly broke out in Reb Shemayah's dwelling; and, quickly assuming dimensions which rendered it impossible to check it, the family were driven forth half-clad into the

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icy night. The house was burned to the ground and hardly anything of its contents was saved, but the barn had escaped, and there Reb Shemayah and his nearly frozen wife and family found refuge. There, too, his wife, Perla by name, who had for some time been expecting the advent of a little stranger, gave birth to a beautiful black-eyed boy, the first male child. It was a heartrending conjuncture. His home a mass of smoking ruins in the intense cold of a Bavarian mountain winter, nothing saved but a few quilts and articles of clothing, his family huddled together for refuge in a barn, through the chinks of whose wooden walls the chill blasts blew keenly; and most heartrending of all—to see his dear wife forced to undergo, under such circumstances, the pains and dangers of childbirth. It was a situation which would have broken the courage or destroyed the faith of another man. But Reb Shemayah lifted his eyes to heaven, and in all sincerity and truth uttered the words: "I thank Thee, O Master of the universe, for Thou art good. With one hand Thou smitest, but with the other Thou healest. Thou hast destroyed my habitation, but Thou hast also fulfilled the prayer of my heart and given me a son." And, indeed, the terror and the suffering were soon over. Kind

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Jewish neighbors hastened to open their homes to the afflicted family. Neither mother nor child was any the worse for the harsh exposure, and the black-eyed boy became subsequently the Uncle Koppel, whose hospitality I enjoyed. If anything in the whole incident distressed Reb Shemayah keenly, it was the necessity of accepting, if even temporarily, the assistance of others. Himself ever ready to assist the needy, he entertained an intense aversion to receiving himself such assistance.

Though Reb Shemayah was, as we have seen, an ethically noble and exalted character, he was by no means gloomy or austere. On the contrary, he was natural and unaffected in his ways, accessible to every one, dearly fond of a joke, and a capital story-teller. Despite his readiness to accept as true tales of distress, he was, nevertheless, an excellent psychologist, and had no difficulty in thoroughly reading the characters and motives of those with whom he was thrown into contact. This ability once enabled him to baffle an attempt which was made to victimize and blackmail him, and to turn it into a humorous triumph for him.

Nordheim, as regards the majority of its inhabitants, was an intensely Catholic village. The feasts and fasts of the church were cele-

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brated there with great pomp and unction, and the numerous religious processions were particularly solemn and, according to rural standards, magnificent. In these the Jewish inhabitants, of course, took no part, and, indeed, usually remained secluded in their houses during their continuance. For this there were several reasons. The Jews being, from the Catholic standpoint, heretics and unbelievers, were *eo ipso* excluded from participation in these Christian solemnities; and their presence in the streets on such occasions was apt, even in these more tolerant times, to rouse the slumbering embers of religious animosity and bigotry. Besides, the Jews themselves, warm adherents of their own monotheistic creed, would rather have suffered martyrdom than to have participated in practices which they looked upon as closely akin to idolatrous.

Shortly after Reb Shemayah had become a Nordheim peasant and citizen, the village priest who happened at the time to be presiding over the spiritual affairs of the community conceived what appeared to him a most brilliant idea, by means of which he believed he could press a substantial contribution out of the learned and pious new Jewish householder. A great holiday of the church was approaching—the indul-

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gent reader will kindly excuse the author for his ignorance of Catholic theology, which prevents him from specifically stating which one it was—of the celebration of which a particularly great and splendid procession was the leading feature. In this procession substantially all the Gentile villagers took part, and at its head a splendid effigy of the crucified one was borne. The office of carrying the image was performed by a citizen especially selected by the priest and burgomaster conjointly with the council; and to be chosen for this duty was deemed a high honor, and was eagerly coveted by the good Christian burghers of Nordheim. Our priest's idea was as follows: The honor of carrying the image should be bestowed, with flattering words and honeyed compliments, upon Reb Shemayah as a prominent and universally respected citizen of the village. Of course the cunning ecclesiastic did not seriously mean that Reb Shemayah should actually perform the office, for it was entirely out of the question that any Jew, however worthy, should actually take a leading part in the solemn ceremonies of the church; but our worthy theologian knew well that the aversion of the Jews to participating in such observances was even greater than the disinclination of the Christians to permit them so to do, and

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he had no fear that Reb Shemayah would, under any circumstances, consent. What he imagined would happen was that Reb Shemayah, on being informed of his selection for the honorable task of image-bearer, would decline the honor on the ground that his religion did not permit him to participate in such functions; and when he would be further informed that it was not possible for a citizen to refuse an honor to which he had been duly appointed by the constituted authorities, would beg and implore to be let off, and would finally offer a good round sum to be released. This sum, after various difficulties and objections, would be graciously accepted as a mark of special favor, and thus the little comedy would find a pleasant and profitable end. Filled with this splendid idea for "spoiling the Egyptians" this time in the form of a Hebrew, the priest hastened to the burgomaster and confided his plan to him. That worthy, also, not at all averse to having a little innocent sport and gaining some filthy lucre from the unbelieving Jew, at once gave the plan his most hearty approval, and it was resolved to put it forthwith into execution. Accordingly Reb Shemayah was astounded that evening, when sitting in his room resting after the labors of the day, to hear first a resounding

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knock with the old-fashioned knocker on his front door and afterward from the lips of his Perla, who had gone to answer the summons, and who returned with an expression of amazement not unmingled with anxiety upon her face, the words, "The priest and the burgomaster are here and desire to see you."

Reb Shemayah at once felt that this visit betokened something unusual. He had often met and conversed with the priest and the burgomaster, singly and together; the one and the other had also been casually within his four walls, but neither had ever visited him formally, and this special visit by the two leading men of the village together he knew must have some particular and unusual reason. He at once determined to reflect ripely on whatever proposition they should make him, and to act upon it in accordance with his best judgment and wisdom. He rose and received them with great politeness; and after they had seated themselves, in accordance with his request, he inquired to what he owed the distinguished honor of their visit. The priest, in view of the deference due to his holy calling, acted as spokesman and explained the mission which had brought them thither.

"We have come, dear Reb Shemayah," he said, "as a deputation from the church and secu-

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lar community of Nordheim, to show you how free from prejudice or bigotry our village is, and in particular how greatly we love and honor you. You know, of course, that it is a fixed rule with us never to confer any of the honors connected with the rites and ceremonies of our holy church upon any one but a true believer, in full communion with and good standing in the church; but so greatly do we love and esteem you that we have resolved for your sake to depart from this time-honored and otherwise invariable rule, and to honor you as greatly as we would the best of our true Christian burghers. We have therefore come as a delegation to inform you that you have been selected for the high and solemn office of bearing the Holy Image at the great procession of ——mas next, and at the same time to congratulate you upon this rare honor, which has never yet been attained by any Jew." Reb Shemayah listened to this smooth speech with external calmness, but with the most violent internal agitation. The priest had understood well his true feelings. His very blood ran cold at the thought of the proffered *honor* (?). What! he, the scion of a long line of martyrs who had died at the stake rather than prove recreant to the command thundered forth amid Sinai's flames, "Thou shalt not

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make unto thyself any graven image, or any likeness of anything which is in the heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters beneath the earth; thou shalt not bow down to them nor worship them"; from whose dying lips had issued the cry, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One"—— he should march in the procession of an alien cult and himself bear an image for the idolatrous adoration of the multitude! He felt his very soul sicken at the thought. But his keen mind and his shrewd, intuitive perception of the fitness of things helped him out of his difficulty. He missed the note of sincerity in the priest's smooth words; he noticed that neither his demeanor nor that of his companion, the burgomaster, was exactly such as is characteristic of persons desiring to confer honor upon another; besides, he knew full well how utterly contrary to all Catholic rule and precedent it was to permit heretics to participate in church ceremonials, and he could not conceive that an exception should be made for him, and in a flash the whole devious machinations were revealed to him, and he realized that it was only a cunningly thought-out plot to extort money from him as the price of exemption. He resolved to baffle the ingenious scheme with equal ingenuity, and to give the

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plotters no opportunity to narrate later on, with vociferous hilarity, how shrewdly they had victimized and blackmailed the Jew. His first step was to express his sense of unworthiness of the proffered honor. "I feel greatly honored, indeed," he said, "by this proof of the esteem in which my fellow-burghers hold me; but how can I accept such a distinction? I am only a young citizen. There are others, older and better known than I; besides I am not even of your faith. I am a Jew whom you deem an unbeliever; and how, then, can I aspire to an honor which should be conferred only upon a true and undoubted co-religionist of your own?"

"We have considered these things well, Reb Shemayah," said the priest; "and you need not hesitate to accept the honor on account of them. If we esteem you so much that we are willing to overlook them, surely you need not be troubled on that score at all."

"But surely you know," said Reb Shemayah, "that my religion also forbids me to take part in such ceremonies. Judaism teaches me that the fundamental ideas which you solemnly proclaim by your processions and other such observances are not true; and I may not lend my countenance to them by participating personally in services held in recognition and

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affirmation of them. It is not lawful for me, as a Jew, to adore an image, or to assist in its adoration by others. I am sorry; but, while appreciating, indeed, the high honor you would bestow upon me, I feel that I must decline it as not suitable to one of my faith."

"My dear Reb Shemayah," said the priest in a somewhat harsher manner, while the burgomaster sustained him with a threatening shake of the head, "I am sorry to hear you speak thus. Permit me to say that your words are displeasing, not to say offensive. To decline on such grounds the distinguished honor offered you is to scoff at our holy faith; is, indeed, to insult our entire Christian community here in Nordheim. Furthermore, let me remind you that it is a matter of civic obligation, and that it is not feasible for a citizen to decline the honors or refuse the functions which the community may see fit to confer upon him. If such were permitted, our civic honors might go begging and all authority would fall into contempt. You have been selected, as an honored citizen, to take a leading part in a great public ceremony, and it is expected that as a loyal burgher you will overlook your religious scruples and perform your public duty. Both as a Jew, who needs to live in peace with the inhabitants of

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other faiths, and as a true citizen of this community, we expect, nay we insist, that you will at once declare your willingness to perform the duty assigned to you by the constituted authorities of the community."

These words made a deep and evident impression upon Reb Shemayah. He was visibly agitated. The choice the priest had given him was a hard one. Either recreancy to his so ardently loved faith, or the disfavor of his fellow-townsmen, and perhaps punishment as a scoffer at the established religion, or a contumacious rejector of civic honors.

The priest and burgomaster gazed at him with triumphant eyes, thinking in their hearts that now they had the Jew on his knees, and that presently he would be begging and pleading for mercy, and offering to do anything or give any amount if only they would release him from the dreaded and abhorred "honor." The priest was already considering the amount he should ask as the condition of release; and the burgomaster, foreseeing that the unselfish (?) disciple of other-worldliness would want the lion's share, was resolving in his mind that he would insist on a fair and equitable division of the spoils, share and share alike. But Reb Shemayah had prepared a little surprise for them.

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"Your reverence," he said when the priest had concluded his remarks, "I beg your pardon for my hasty words, uttered without a true comprehension of the importance of the privilege bestowed upon me. Your lucid explanation has fully convinced me that I was in the wrong. I see now that it is my duty as a good citizen to accept with gratitude any duty which the community may assign to me, even if it does not agree with my religion. I accept, therefore, the honor you have conferred upon me, and I desire you to express my thanks to the worthy councilmen for the high privilege which I have received at their hands."

It was the turn now of the priest and the burgomaster to be agitated. They could hardly believe their ears. Reb Shemayah, the Jew, the heretic, to be the leading figure in the great ——mas procession! The thought was horrifying. They realized that their brilliant plan had failed, that the Jew had triumphed, that they had gotten themselves into a pretty pickle out of which they would have vast trouble to extricate themselves; for, of course, Reb Shemayah had not been really invited by the councilmen, and the matter had never been even broached to them by the cunning schemers. They were beaten, disconcerted, crushed.

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Worst of all, they had to dissemble, to pretend that they were delighted.

"Do I understand you, then, Reb Shemayah," said the priest, suppressing by a great effort his discomfiture, and forcing his countenance to assume a pleased expression, "you are willing to accept the honor and will bear the image at the procession?" "Yes, your reverence," answered Reb Shemayah. "Your eloquence has convinced me and induced me to do so."

"Such being the case," answered the priest, "we may consider the matter settled and will now bid you good-by." The priest and burgomaster thereupon took their departure. When they were gone, the members of Reb Shemayah's household, who had heard with amazement, not unmixed with horror, his declaration of willingness to bear the image, besieged him with questions as to how it was possible for him to think of such a thing. But Reb Shemayah only smiled and answered not a word. In the meanwhile the priest and the burgomaster had a heated and angry discussion. Each blamed the other for the extremely embarrassing position in which they were placed; but the priest smarted most under the reproaches of his colleague in iniquity, for the fact was indisputable that the plot had originated with him, and it was particularly

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mortifying to him, as a man of presumably superior wisdom, to have committed such an egregious blunder, and to be in danger of ignominious exposure. The upshot of their debate was that Reb Shemayah must be induced to change his mind and withdraw his acceptance of the impossible honor which they had tendered him, and that knowledge of their scheme, and the manner in which it had been frustrated, must be kept from the councilmen and the people in general.

But who should undertake the difficult and unpleasant task of undeceiving Reb Shemayah, a task which, they clearly foresaw, would involve confession of their guilty purpose and practically throwing themselves on the mercy of the Jew, whom they had deliberately plotted to torture and plunder, and who had so cleverly turned the tables upon them? Each desired the other to undertake the disagreeable mission; but finally the burgomaster yielded to the urgent pleadings of the humiliated cleric and consented to visit Reb Shemayah and endeavor to alter his unexpected resolution. Accordingly at a very early hour the following morning—the burgomaster called intentionally so early in order to forestall any attempt of Reb Shemayah to disseminate the news of the distinction he had received—the burgomaster appeared again in Reb Shemayah's

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dwelling. Our friend was not in the least surprised to see the burgomaster; in fact, he had expected that either he or the priest would appear, but expressed, as in duty bound, great astonishment at his early visit.

"To what do I owe the honor of this very early call, good friend burgomaster?" he said, with voice and countenance expressive of surprise. "Is there any other service, perhaps, which the community requires of me?"

"No, good friend Shemayah," said the burgomaster, with halting voice and embarrassed manner; for, in good truth, he felt very cheap indeed. "In fact, I have come to tell you that his reverence, the priest, and I discussed the matter of your acting as image-bearer on our way back from your house last evening, and we came to the conclusion that we had not given enough consideration to your Jewish prejudices; and that we really ought not to insist on your performing an act which is against your conscience. I have, therefore, come to tell you that you are released from the function for which we had selected you, and that you need not act as image-bearer."

"Aha," thought Reb Shemayah, "so this is the direction from which the wind blows! Well, you shall not get off so easy. You and your

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reverend companion must first be taught a little lesson of consideration for the feelings of others, and be discouraged from similar financial ventures in the future." Then he spoke aloud and in a tone of the utmost courtesy and deference to the burgomaster. "I thank you, most worthy burgomaster, for the delicacy and consideration for my conscientious scruples which your words display, and which are no doubt felt also by his reverence, the priest. But I have also reflected well on the matter, and I shall ask no special privilege as a Jew. As his reverence so well explained last night, it is a matter of civic obligation; and I do not wish, as a Jew, to shirk any civic duty, or to have it said that my co-religionists are unwilling to perform any task which the state imposes upon them. I do not ask, therefore, for any exemption, but shall cheerfully perform the task assigned me, and appreciate greatly the honor which I have received in being selected for such a function."

The face of our worthy burgomaster was a sight to behold during the delivery of these words, and his feelings would beggar description. He was a picture of limp despair, of utter dismay and dejection. He saw clearly that there was no other escape from the predicament than to make a clean breast of it, which he accordingly

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resolved to do. It is unnecessary to enter here into all the details of conversation, to repeat the faltering words of the confused and embarrassed burgomaster, and the indignant outbursts of virtuous wrath on the part of Reb Shemayah. Suffice it to say, that the burgomaster made an abject confession of the whole despicable plot, and begged Reb Shemayah to have consideration with him and his companion in guilt and not bring disgrace on them both; which Reb Shemayah, after his first outburst of wrath had subsided, consented to do, but only on condition that the priest, as the instigator of the plot, should visit him and personally ask his pardon.

Both conspirators were glad enough to settle the affair in this way. The priest appeared before Reb Shemayah the following evening with an humble apology, which the latter accepted, but not until he had read the abashed cleric a good lesson on the moral aspects of the priestly vocation, and on the duty of respecting the feelings and scruples of those who do not think as we do. Nothing ever became officially known of the episode, but the facts leaked out somehow, as facts of this kind have a way of doing, and became the common talk of the village for a considerable time. The incident caused Reb Shemayah to be looked upon in a some-

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what different light than hitherto. He had previously enjoyed the reputation of rectitude and piety; after this he acquired a name for shrewdness and wit, so that the phrases, "shrewd as Reb Shemayah," "sharp as Reb Shemayah" vied in popularity in Nordheimer speech with the other phrases, "good as Reb Shemayah" and "pious as Reb Shemayah."

And thus this good and noble man lived his allotted tale of years in his rustic home, respected and loved; yes, revered by all. As the French king said, "*L'Etat, c'est moi*," so Reb Shemayah could have said had he been egotistical enough to have thought of such a thing, "The Nordheim *Kehillah;* I am it." He was the one dominant, overshadowing figure in the whole Nordheim community; so that Nordheim became known as the place where Reb Shemayah lived. And Nordheim people, when away from home and stating whence they came, would often hear in comment the words, "Oh, that is where Reb Shemayah lives." Some of the less appreciative members of the congregation resented slightly this preëminence, which was shared by no one except Reb Shemayah's excellent wife, Perla. Indeed, the story-teller of the congregation, who was also the communal wag and humorist, suggested that as Reb She-

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mayah was equivalent to the whole *Kehillah*, the text of the *Yekum Purkan* prayer, in which the blessings of heaven are implored on Sabbath mornings for the congregation, should be altered so as to restrict the benediction to Reb Shemayah and his worthy spouse. He actually proposed a new wording with that purpose in view, which, as it is not devoid of a certain wit and may be interesting to those acquainted with the synagogue ritual, I shall not refrain from giving in this place.

Yekum purkan min Shemaya
Für die Perla und Reb Shemayah
In Nordheim vor der Rhön,
Ve-Nomar Omain.

Translated, this composition, a *mixtum compositum* of Chaldaic and Jewish-German, runs thus:

My salvation arise from heaven,
For Perla and Reb Shemayah,
In Nordheim before the Rhön,
And let us say, Amen.

But these rebellious murmurings did not dim even in the slightest degree the brilliant radiance of Reb Shemayah's reputation for learning, piety, and benevolence. Ably seconded by his beloved Perla, who was on her part also a model of olden Jewish wifely virtues, God-

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fearing, modest, hard working, and tender-hearted, and who suffered from lack of recognition solely through being eclipsed by the incomparable and exceptional merit of her husband, he maintained an ideal home in which the traditional principles of patriarchal authority and filial devotion, of strictness tempered by gentleness and love, and of constant inculcation of lofty ethical precepts were undeviatingly maintained. And when this gentle and truly pious pair were laid away to rest—as they were within a few brief days of each other—in the little Eternal House in Willmars on the other side of the hill, tears flowed from the eyes of the many hundreds who had followed them to their last resting-place; and all felt that the words of the rabbis in the Talmud were but too true: "When the truly righteous are departed from a place, gone is its glory, gone its radiance, gone its splendor."

Yes, Reb Shemayah was the crowning glory of Nordheim's history, his life-time the golden age in the pages of its annals. And therefore we shall glance but briefly at some of the other whimsical or touching figures that lived and moved and had their being within its ancient walls. There was old Eliezer, who was always praying, because he thought it a sinful misuse

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of human speech to apply it to any other use than to the worship of the Maker. He always restricted his worldly remarks to the briefest possible compass, and was never known to grow angry at any one except on one occasion. Then it was the writer's sainted mother, at the time a little girl of a lively and humorous disposition, who had the misfortune to arouse his ire, and even to receive a slap from his holy hand. That happened in this wise. Eliezer had no sons, but two daughters who bore the appellations respectively of Simchah and Glueck, the signification whereof in the English idiom is "joy" and "good fortune." These two daughters, contrary to the usual lot of the Jewish maidens of Nordheim, remained unmarried for a long time, so that at last they entered into that state most hateful even to-day in our age of "bachelor girls," but doubly hateful then, old maidenhood. Finally Simchah succeeded in becoming betrothed to a very worthy man. Eliezer was overjoyed; but Glueck, although outwardly joyous, was, naturally enough, more than a little jealous and displeased. At this juncture mother, peace to her soul, chanced to meet old Eliezer when returning from the synagogue, where the happy event had been announced and the young couple duly blessed and,

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yielding to a momentary mischievous impulse, accosted him thus: "*Mazzol tov*, Eliezer! I suppose your Glueck must have a great *Simchah* that your Simchah has such a *Glueck*." The joke was good; but Eliezer did not appreciate humor, and a slap was the reward of this humorous effort. Eliezer not only spoke little at any time, but on Sabbath he eschewed the vulgar vernacular altogether and would only speak Hebrew, which language he alone considered suitable, as the holy tongue for the holy day. But as he was anything but a Hebrew scholar, the results of his efforts at restoring to colloquial use the idiom of ancient Canaan I will leave to the imagination of the reader.

Then there was Asher, the *Chazan*, who was not really the Chazan or official precentor of the synagogue, but a hard-working merchant in a small way, who supported himself and his family by untiring and unceasing labor and industry, but who was called Chazan because of his remarkable knowledge of the traditional melodies of the German-Jewish ritual. These melodies he could chant with much skill and a pleasant voice; and his rendition of the services was so well liked by the members of the congregation that they did not hesitate to say that Asher

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"was a better Chazan than the Chazan." Asher was a pleasant and friendly individual altogether; but if one wished to gain his particular and undying gratitude, there was no better way of doing so than by communicating to him some new *niggun* or Hebrew melody. It was my good fortune to communicate to him some of the more modern synagogue chants which I had heard in America, and which he, in his isolated village life, had never had occasion to hear; and I do not doubt but he remembers me gratefully to this day. Asher and his two brothers were *Cohanim*—that is to say, of Aaronitic or priestly descent. As such it was their prerogative, and that of their sons, to pronounce the threefold benediction over the congregation on holidays; and it was touching, indeed, to listen to their solemn and melodious rendition of the ancient chant, and to notice the dignity and earnestness with which they prepared to perform their traditional funtion. To gaze at them while chanting the benediction was not permitted.

Then there was Isaac, the *Schlemihl*, a well-meaning, earnest struggler, but a perfect type of the *Schlemihl* or Jewish ne'er-do-well, upon whose undertakings no blessing ever seemed to descend. He worked harder, probably, than any three other members of the Kehillah; but in his

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hands the fairest projects seemed to receive a blight, and the most promising business ventures turned to wormwood and ashes, to apples of Sodom and grapes of bitterness. But the Schlemihl, perfectly useless though he was to himself and his family, had one very evident purpose in the scheme of life, namely, to open the hearts of his brethren to impulses of kindness and benevolence. They certainly acted toward him in the most sympathetic and brotherly manner, and permitted neither him nor his family to suffer. At the time of my arrival in Nordheim, Isaac had just managed, through one of his usual transactions, to lose all he had, and to have his house, which he had received as part of the dowry of his wife, seized in satisfaction of his debts. But the Nordheim Kehillah, assisted by some benevolent friends from other places, paid off his debts, redeemed the house, and furnished him with a certain amount of capital with which to begin life anew. For safety's sake the Kehillah retained the title in the house; for, as Uncle Koppel said to me in confidence, "We might otherwise have to buy the house every year."

A peculiarly interesting character was David the horse-dealer, a jovial, hale fellow, handsome too, and tall and strong as a lion, a very

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"mighty man in Israel." He was a stanch friend and reliable, and could be depended upon to go through thick and thin for one who had once gained his friendship. But David had one weakness, not unnatural, perhaps, in those of his vocation. He knew no scruples of conscience in regard to transactions in horse-flesh; and some of his achievements in that line had been, if report spoke truly, to say the least, extremely venturesome. Thus he was credited with having once sold a Prussian major who prided himself on his expert knowledge of the equine species, a horse with only three hoofs. The manner in which David was said to have done the trick was as follows: The deal took place in midwinter, when the ground was covered with snow to the depth of a foot or more. The horse was a fine animal, coal black and of handsome form, except that the left front hoof was lacking. David led the horse out of the stable; and as it stood in the deep snow before the Prussian major, who was critically examining it through his eyeglasses, the absence of the hoof was not noticeable. He then put it through its paces, cracking his whip furiously, so that the horse leaped and dashed in a most fiery manner, and the absence of the hoof was again not noticeable. The major was charmed

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with the fire and grace of the animal, bought and paid for it at once, and ordered it to be sent to his quarters. It is said that the major was furious later, not so much on account of the money loss, but because he, the expert, had been so neatly duped, and because he had no legal remedy against David. Had David put a false hoof in place of the lacking member, he would have been liable to a heavy penalty for fraud; but he had not done so, and had made no false representation. And therefore the major not only had no case against him, but could not even demand the cancellation of the sale. Thus the story for whose veracity I will not guarantee. But, however weak David's conscience may have been in matters of horse-trading, his conduct otherwise merited no reproach and he was well liked.

Many were the estimable and lovable characters in Nordheim's Kehillah, and I cannot attempt to describe or even mention them all. Of Uncle Koppel and Aunt Caroline I have already spoken. Uncle Koppel was a typical Jewish *Baal-Ha-Bayith*, or householder, a business man of probity, whose word was as good as his bond, a faithful worshipper at the altar of Israel's God, and a worthy upholder, by character, if not by learning, of the repu-

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tation of Reb Shemayah, his father. Aunt Caroline was a true mother in Israel, loyal, conscientious, and devout. Their able sons and charming dark-eyed daughters were imbued with their spirit, and together they formed an ideal household. Nor must I forget Aunt Gella, the only other child of Reb Shemayah who had remained in the native village, a woman of noble parts, who, had her lot been cast somewhere else in the great world, might have played an important part in history. Her noble brow, which emerged so modestly from the recesses of her *Scheitel* and her mild and clear blue eyes, showed her the possessor of a strong and well-developed intellect; and her wise and well-considered conversation showed that the reality corresponded to the indications. Her heart was as warm and good and her spirit as firm and courageous as her mind was keen and clear; and she was, so to speak, the combined oracle and Lady Bountiful of the village. Was any female or, for that matter, any male villager in trouble, in want of counsel or help, she or he would direct her or his steps to the neat cottage in the Long Street where dwelt Aunt Gella, and there would find counsel or comfort, or whatever help was required. A plague of dysentery came once upon the village, and then it was

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that Aunt Gella showed herself the veritable angel of help. While it continued she hardly ate or drank or slept or changed her clothes. She worked with tireless energy at her mission of mercy, going from house to house among the afflicted ones, bringing the right medicine to one, the right food to the other, and money to the third. Dear Aunt Gella: methinks I see her sweet, mild face now, and hear the words of blessing with which peasant and Jew mentioned her name. And besides those whom I have mentioned, there were dozens of householders in which piety, probity, and loving kindness were the constantly practised rule of life.

Yes, Nordheim, I loved thee well, and I love thy memory. I loved thee for thy simplicity, for thy natural goodness, for the true and unpretentious way in which thou didst lay stress upon that which is pure and noble, and didst reject that which is base and vile in human life; for the picture which thou didst show me of the beautifying and sanctifying effect of a simple, sincere, and honest Judaism, simply and sincerely lived. Thou wast one of the forces which did lead me to love and uphold the Torah, and to cleave to the faith which my and thy ancestors received at Sinai from Sinai's God.

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Oh, that this tale of thee might work likewise upon the hearts of others like me, children of an unbelieving and irreverent age, and stir them to love for Israel's God and devotion to Israel's sacred heritage!

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THE LITTLE HORSERADISH WOMAN.

How many of my readers know the little horseradish woman? Many, I have no doubt, are more or less acquainted with her; and those who are not can make her acquaintance without any difficulty. Almost any afternoon and late into the evening, except on Sabbaths or Jewish holidays, she may be found at her post in one of the blocks of upper Third Avenue, New York, standing behind her improvised little table, industriously rubbing away at her acrid merchandise, with only occasional pauses to wipe away with the corner of her snow-white apron the tears which her lachrymose occupation forces from her eyes, or to give customers extraordinarily liberal portions of her finished product. The size of the portions she sells is quite astonishing to the customer; but the little horseradish woman is scrupulously honest in matters of weight and measure, of mine and thine, and would not think of giving less.

Her tears, too, are quite remarkable. Indeed, I believe that horseradish tears have not been

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THE LITTLE HORSERADISH WOMAN

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appreciated as they should be, for they are a species entirely *sui generis*, and not to be confused with any other tears that are shed on earth. Ordinary, every-day tears indicate sorrow and produce weakness; crocodile tears indicate hypocrisy and produce disgust; but horseradish tears are born of industry, and their offspring are energy and good-humor. Such, at least, is the case with our little horseradish woman; for, no sooner has she wiped away one of her periodical outbursts of tears, than she begins to rub away again with the utmost energy and the best humor in the world. My observation of the tears the horseradish woman sheds has made me their confirmed admirer. I have no liking for the lachrymose ebullitions of love-lorn maidens, of snivelling swains, or of wheezing or wheedling Pecksniffs. Give me horseradish tears; they are the honestest, cheerfullest—I had almost said—manliest tears in the world.

Our horseradish woman is known by various names. Some call her "the old Rebecca"; others, desiring to speak more formally or respectfully, refer to her as "old Mrs. Levy"; but the appellation by which she is most widely and popularly known is *das Meerrettich Weible* —the little horseradish woman. It makes no

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difference, however, by what designation she is known, she is popular under them all; for the little horseradish woman is liked. Some like her for her courage in toiling so constantly and industriously, and supporting herself at her advanced age; others like her because of her unfailing cheeriness and good-humor; others, again, because of her simple, trustful faith and earnest piety, for the little horseradish woman is more than usually religious, and is to be found in the synagogue, not only on Sabbaths and holidays, but also at the early morning and evening services on week-days, and is one of the most attentive listeners to the rabbi when he expounds the Sedrah on Sabbath mornings, or "learns Shiur" on Sabbath afternoons or week-day evenings.

It is a truly pleasing picture which the little horseradish woman presents when she stands at her post ready for business. Her regular and refined features, of the familiar Jewish type, are, it is true, worn and wrinkled, and the hair which peeps out from under the cloth band and the old-fashioned bonnet which surmount her head is whitened by the seventy or more winters which have passed over her; but the light of intelligence, of benevolence, and of pure and refined sentiments shines in her countenance

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and makes it singularly attractive. Her clothing is of the plainest. She wears a dress of some simple, dark material and over it a long, white apron; but no patch, tear, nor stain is visible anywhere, and we feel instinctively that we have before us a person who, though in humble, even lowly circumstances, is naturally and intrinsically refined.

But as yet we do not know the little horseradish woman. It is only upon entering into conversation with her that we really find out what she is, and a great surprise awaits us then. For this poor, little, old woman who stands upon the street in all weather and seasons, and toils so hard to earn a few cents by the sale of her commodity, comes of excellent family, has had, for her time, an exceptionally good training, and is, in some respects, a remarkably well-educated woman.

She was born as the daughter of a rabbi in a small provincial city of Germany, and her father, besides instilling into her soul the seeds of fervent Hebraic piety, saw to it that she received a thorough secular and religious training. As a consequence her manners are those of polite and well-bred circles, her German is pure and correct in grammar and pronunciation, and what is most surprising and pleasing to the Jew-

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ish scholar, she is acquainted with the entire Bible in the original Hebrew. The Book of Psalms she knows by heart and quotes with amazing fluency; and from her experience in her father's house she has derived a large number of technical Talmudic phrases, which she uses in her conversation with entire correctness of expression and application.

And the most remarkable thing of all is the entire lack of self-consciousness on the part of the little horseradish woman. She is entirely unaware that there is anything out of the ordinary in her life, her characteristics, or her circumstances. She never comments upon the different conditions that prevail to-day, never boasts nor condemns, is simple, natural, and unaffected; a typical, humble, pious Jewish woman. Oh, that you might come, you artificial, affected daughters of an artificial, affected age, and learn simple refinement and natural dignity from this lowly sister of yours! The lesson is needed and would prove effective.

Last Saturday night, after the "going out" of the Sabbath, my wife and I also determined to go out for a stroll on Third Avenue. We often take these strolls, and enjoy them. My wife loves the excitement of the lights and the crowds, which make it doubly pleasant to meet

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an acquaintance or make an occasional purchase; and I am equally fond of studying human nature where it makes its most characteristic appearance, in the busy throngs of men. We had not seen the little horseradish woman for some time, for she had given up of late her habit of coming to our house with her wares, and her stand was not on any of the blocks we usually traversed.

That evening we extended our walk a little further than usual. As we neared —th Street, suddenly Mrs. —— exclaimed: "Look, there is the little horseradish woman!" Sure enough it was she, and we immediately went up to her.

While she was returning our greeting with great cordiality and friendliness, I noticed that she did not appear to be as well as usual. Her movements were lacking in their customary vivacity, and her face seemed thinner and paler than its wont.

"How are you getting on, Mrs. Levy?" I said, while she was filling a bag with our ordered portion of horseradish.

"*Boruch Hashem*, quite well," she responded with a smile. "My friends are good and patronize me steadily, but I feel that I am growing older. I was quite ill the other day. I nearly

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fainted here on the street; but the people in the delicatessen store were very kind. They took me in and gave me cold water, and kept me there until I recovered; and I am feeling quite well now."

While listening to her words, I thought to myself how hard her lot was; and I asked myself whether it really was necessary for her to stand on the street and earn her living in such a trying manner.

"My good Mrs. Levy," I said, "don't you think your life is too hard for you? Would you not rather go to some institution where you would be cared for?"

"Oh, no, thank you," she responded. "I don't wish to go to a home. I have a husband, although he is old and feeble, and good children who do what they can for me; and I am glad that I still can earn something myself. You know what King David says in the Psalms," and she quoted glibly, "*Yegia keppecho ki sochel, ashrecho ve-tov-loch*" ("If thou eatest what thy hands earn, thou art happy, and it is well with thee"). "I eat what my hands earn, so I am happy."

"Why don't you come to our house any more?" broke in my wife.

"Oh," answered the little horseradish woman,

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"I heard that another woman brings you your horseradish, and I did not wish to be *massig gevool*."

Our package was now ready and we departed. But my thoughts gave me no rest. I was thinking continually of the little horseradish woman, and whether it was not possible to devise some means of improving her lot.

A few blocks down the avenue we met Mr. and Mrs. Bergheim. They are friends and neighbors of ours, and our greetings were cordial. I soon turned the conversation to that which was uppermost in my thoughts.

"You know the little horseradish woman, do you not?" I asked.

The Bergheims nodded assent.

"Don't you think something could be done for her?" I continued. "It does seem wrong that such a worthy old person should be forced to stand on the street and toil so hard for a livelihood."

The Bergheims smiled at each other peculiarly.

"What would you do for her?" asked Mr. Bergheim. "She is much too proud to accept charity; besides, she really does not need to work, as her children supply her with all she requires for herself and husband. Her horse-

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radish receipts are so much extra income that she earns."

I must confess that this reply rather staggered me. There appeared to be a mystery about the horseradish woman which was puzzling, to say the least.

"But why, in the name of common sense," I demanded, "does such an old and not over-strong woman toil on the streets, in rain and shine, by day and by night, if she has all she requires and does not need to work? It doesn't seem reasonable. She isn't touched in her upper story, I hope?"

"Oh, no, not at all," said Bergheim; "but you see, she has rather unusual and exalted notions about duty. Since the requirements of herself and husband are satisfied and she has some strength, she thinks it her duty to labor for the poor. Every cent she earns by selling horseradish she gives to the poor. It is quite an amount, for she has many customers; and quite a long list of widows and orphans and feeble old men who are regular pensioners on her charity.

"Every *Rosh Chodesh* there is quite a gathering in her humble flat. All sorts of needy and afflicted persons, men, women, and children, crowd her rooms, and she divides among them, with the most kindly sympathy but with excel-

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lent judgment, all the money she has earned during the month. The blessings she gets are innumerable, and she considers herself well rewarded thereby for all her trouble.

"I found this out by accident, as she never says a word about it to any one. When I asked her why she went to all this trouble, she quoted a passage from the Pentateuch: 'Verily, thou shalt not harden thy heart nor close thy hand against thy poor brother'; and in another from the Ethics of the Fathers, 'The poor shall be the children of thy house," and said those were her reasons.

"That, my dear ——, is why you cannot do anything for the little horseradish woman, except to be her customer and patronize her liberally. She wants no charity, and will take no gifts for 'her poor,' whom she wishes to assist with her own earnings."

So that was the explanation of the riddle. The little horseradish woman was emulating the work of the Master of the universe, was toiling early and late to feed His hungry ones, to dry the tears of His afflicted, to care for His poor. I was lost in admiration, both of the noble soul of this humble daughter of Israel and the sublime glory of Israel's law, which put such thoughts into her soul.

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I have made up my mind that the next time I see the little horseradish woman I shall pronounce over her the benediction which the rabbis ordain to be spoken at the sight of kings and queens, for she is a real queen, an uncrowned queen of mercy and love. "Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who hast given of Thy glory to flesh and blood."

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THE GENERAL.

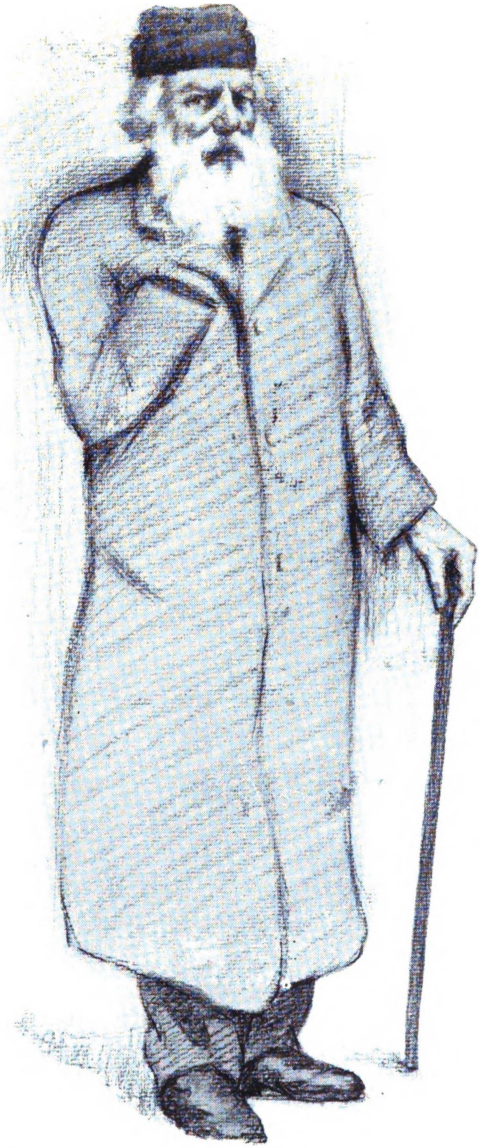
I have distinguished company in my study this morning. No less a personage than Gen. Sergei Pavlowitz, late commander of the —th division of the regular Russian army, has paid your humble servant the honor of a visit, and is now seated in the rocking-chair opposite my desk. I must, however, ask my readers not to strain their imaginations unduly in summoning up before their mental vision a suitable picture of military pomp and splendor. The general is not in full uniform heavily braided and trimmed with gold lace, nor radiant with glittering epaulets and buttons. No plumed helmet surmounts his head; no clanking sabre swings at his side; he is neither gloved, booted, nor spurred. His appearance would not dazzle the onlooker, nor overawe the most timid; in fact, no one would, at first sight, think of connecting him in any way with marching hosts or warlike scenes. As he sits there in my rocking-chair, gazing at me with his mild blue eyes, upon his head a little black skull-cap, his long, snow-white beard flow-

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ing down upon the front of his shirt and his black broadcloth coat; in his hand a stout cane to assist the steps which age has made somewhat uncertain, while he descants upon a matter of purely synagogical interest, there is no suggestion about him of martial glory, no hint of the groan and agony and heroism of battle. He seems just a plain, every-day, elderly Russian Jew, diffident and retiring in worldly affairs, but bright enough in matters of Jewish concern, of Hebrew learning, and religious practice, such a man, in a word, as may be found in any of the orthodox synagogues throughout New York but particularly on the lower East Side, where the places of worship and solemn assembly of his brethren and countrymen most abound.

But now my visitor has concluded the business which brought him hither and rises to depart. Immediately one can notice a vast change in the impression he makes. He does seem different now from the ordinary so-called Ghetto type he appeared identical with a moment ago. There is something commanding, something indefinitely military and authoritative about him. Though feeble, he stands perfectly erect, and his figure and bearing are thoroughly military. Military, too, is the almost painful

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THERE IS SOMETHING COMMANDING, SOMETHING INDEFINITELY MILITARY AND AUTHORITATIVE ABOUT HIM

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neatness which characterizes his attire, from his well-brushed hat and coat down to his brightly polished shoes, a far-off reminder, as it were, of the days when a dull button or a frayed coat sleeve meant disgrace and the guard-house; but most military of all is his right sleeve, for it hangs empty, with only a short stump filling the upper part near the shoulder, a mute reminder of bloody Sebastopol, where a British sabre cleft the arm to which it belonged in twain, and its owner hovered for many a day 'twixt life and death.

This is the General. Perhaps, strictly speaking, he does not deserve the title, for he long since was stricken from the Russian army list, and might even meet with condign punishment were he to return to his native land; but once he bore it with full right and authority, and no military shortcoming, no lack of loyalty or courage upon the battlefield was responsible for its forfeiture. It is, therefore, only natural that his friends and neighbors who know his history give him the title. So "the General" he is, and "the General" he will remain, until death calls him to his last long bivouac. What a tremendous change in state and fortune! Once a distinguished military commander, whose slightest behest thousands hastened to obey because of

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his heroism; beloved by his countrymen and honored by his emperor; the husband of a renowned general's daughter, and with every prospect promising rapid advancement and eventually loftiest rank; now the humble denizen of an obscure street in the Jewish quarter of New York, his life in nowise different from that of the other long-bearded habitués of the synagogue and the Beth Hammidrash.

How came this Jew, son of a proscribed and pariah race, to attain to such distinguished rank in the service of the persecutors of his people? How came he to lose it, and to sink back again into the lowliness from which he sprang? It is a strange tale, showing what sombre romances, what heartrending tragedies Jewish life is still capable of producing in the empire of the Czars. I shall tell it you.

Some seventy years ago there lived in one of the western provinces of Russia a young couple. Israel Rabbinowitz was the husband's name, and Malka Feige that of the spouse. They were a pious and worthy pair. The husband was a respected merchant, whose scrupulous honesty and commercial rectitude were no less esteemed than his unswerving religious fidelity, and the accuracy and extent of the Hebrew scholarship which he displayed in the

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Talmudic debates of the circle of "learners" in the Beth Hammidrash. Malka Feige was a worthy mate of such a husband. Kindhearted, unwearyingly industrious, and devout, she was a typical Jewish housewife.

They had but one child, a blue-eyed, fair-haired boy of eight, whom they loved with the passionate devotion of which parental hearts are capable when they have but one object upon which to concentrate their affection. He was literally the apple of their eyes. His father cared for his intellectual welfare, and provided the best and most highy esteemed *Melammedim* to introduce him into the intricacies of the Jewish education of that time; and the lad, who had a bright and acute intellect, responded well to these efforts, and at eight was quite a little prodigy of Biblical and Talmudical learning. His mother, on the other hand, looked after his physical well-being, fed him on delicate food, clothed him in a *jubitza* of extra fine material, brushed and combed his little *peoth* until they shone, and set her pride upon making him finer and brighter in appearance than his comrades. Like Hannah of old, she had determined to dedicate her offspring to the Lord. Already in imagination she saw him seated upon the rabbi's seat, greeted by the plaudits of admiring thou-

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sands; and so strong was her faith in that future for her son that she rarely called him by his given name, which was Saul Isaac, but always referred to him as "my little rabbi." Thus the love, the hopes, the ambition of these parents were all wrapped up in this, their only son.

Troublous times were just beginning then for the descendants of Jacob living on Muscovite soil. Nicholas the First sat on the throne of the Czars; and, like so many of the Russian potentates before and after him, could find no more pressing task to perform than to convert his Hebrew subjects to Christianity. He had no respect for the conscientious scruples which kept the Jews faithful to their ancestral religion; he could not appreciate the heroism with which they endured every conceivable suffering and martyrdom rather than grow recreant to the allegiance plighted to their God. In his eyes they were only a mass of obdurate, stubborn, and pestiferous heretics, who refused to see the beauties and accept the salvation of Christianity. He thought and thought and cudgelled his brains to devise some scheme by which to overcome the endless resistance of Judaism to its own dissolution, and finally evolved a plan which for sheer deviltry and refinement of heartless brutality would have done credit to

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the blackest fiend in the legions of Satan; and this, too, in the name of the religion which claims love and tenderness as its own special prerogative, and calmly assumes all the progress of humanity and civilization as its doing.

His plan, in brief, was to separate the parents and the children. With the old Jews, he knew nothing could be done. They would go to the stake or the dungeon, and would not recant; but if, he reasoned, the young Jews could be removed from parental influence, could be caught, so to speak, before their characters were formed, and be placed in charge of priests or other Christian officials, they would be unable to resist, but would succumb to the powerful pressure brought to bear upon them and would become genuine Christians.

This fiendish plan he proceeded, with icy deliberation, to put into execution. What cared he for the cruelty or violent dissolution of natural relations, for the tears of terrified children, for the immeasurable woes and heart-breakings of bereaved parents. His tyrant's view of statecraft approved the plan and other considerations had no weight. Then were legions of brutal emissaries sent into the provinces reserved for the habitation of the children of Jacob. Their conduct resembled that

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of brigands rather than of officers of the law. In numbers so great as to defy resistance, they would fall upon some unsuspecting Hebrew settlement, generally at dead of night; would burst into the houses, and with utter disregard of all considerations of justice or frenzied appeals for mercy, would tear the weeping and terror-stricken children from the arms of their screaming and frantically resisting parents, would throw them into the ready standing wagons and would carry them off, never more to return.

It would take the pen of a Dante and the brush of their own Verestchagin fitly to depict the awful scenes which occurred on the occasions of these visitations, the demoniacal brutality of the despot's henchmen, the helpless terror of the childish victims, and the unutterable, paralyzed agony of the wretched fathers and mothers who saw their beloved ones dragged away to that which for them was worse than death, and could do nothing to save them from their fate.

The same fate befell our Saul Isaac. It was a cold midwinter night. The Rabbinowitz family were sleeping peacefully, all unsuspecting of evil. Suddenly the sound of powerful blows upon the door caused them to awake in terror. Too well they knew what those sounds

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meant, although there had been no report that the "*chappers*," as they were called, were coming to their province. Hastily the agonized parents sought to find some place of concealment for their son. A second later the door fell beneath the shower of blows rained upon it, and several ruffianly looking men, dressed in uniform, burst into the room. Without showing any warrant or offering a word of explanation, they seized the shrinking lad. Roughly they thrust aside Israel, who would have protested, and flung off Malka Feige, who clung to them in a half-insane effort to rescue her boy. The lad himself they tossed into the wagon, into the midst of twenty or more other lads, who already cowered there, and drove off.

Let us draw a veil over the unutterable sorrows of that parent pair, thus foully deprived of the beloved of their souls. Heaven alone has power to right wrongs such as these, and to the mercy and justice of heaven we must commend them.

Let us follow Saul Isaac on the course which he was obliged to pursue. His experience was not at first different from that of thousands of others. He was taken to the convent of St. Sophia in the neighborhood of Moscow. There a thorough Russian and Christian education was

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given him, and every effort was made, by means of mingled kindness and severity, to induce him voluntarily to accept baptism, for even the perverted and tyrannical minds of his captors perceived that a compulsory administration of the rite could have no binding obligation upon the conscience. To be sure, their notions of voluntary action were rather remarkably casuistical. Severe beatings, periodical starvation, and longer or shorter terms of imprisonment were all considered legitimate forms of missionary effort with which to persuade the cantonists, as the abducted Hebrew children were called, of the superiority of Christianity to Judaism, and to induce them *voluntarily* to accept it.

It is a glorious tribute to the power of Jewish teachings that most of these helpless victims, despite their tender years and pitiful condition, were by no means quick to yield to the maltreatment or blandishments of their masters. Most of them resisted for years; some never yielded.

Four years were required to bring our Saul Isaac into the frame of mind requisite for the acceptance of Christianity. At first he wept and wailed constantly and would touch no food except dry bread and water; and, young as he was, he refused to listen to the instruction of

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the Russian monks. But as the weeks rolled into months and the months into years, without seeing other than Gentile faces and without any word from his parents or any other Jews, gradually his recollections grew dimmer and his resolution weaker. Finally he no longer objected to the Christian instructions, and in his twelfth year he was baptized with great pomp and parade in the chapel of the monastery, receiving the name of Sergei Pavlowitz. From this time on his advancement was rapid. After three years of general education he decided to enter upon the military career, and in his fifteenth year he entered the Imperial Cadet School at St. Petersburg.

The memory of his parents had quite faded from his mind; or if the thought of them ever came to him, they seemed like ghostly figures of an unreal world, entirely devoid of actuality or connection with his present existence.

Sergei Pavlowitz was one of the most popular students at the Cadet School. His quick intellect, which had enabled him to comprehend the abstruse debates of the Talmud, stood him in good stead in mastering the details of military science, while his handsome figure in the neat Russian uniform and his polite and obliging ways were universally pleasing. In due course

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of time he graduated as a lieutenant of artillery.

His career in the army justified the expectations of his student years. He combined the two most requisite military qualities, high capacity and rigid fidelity to duty. He became in rapid succession a captain and then a colonel of artillery.

While holding the latter office he attracted the attention and then aroused the love of Olga, the beautiful daughter of General Wladimir de Mitkiewicz. Shortly afterward the General sent for him, and in due form and in the most flattering terms offered to make him his son-in-law. Such a distinguished honor could not be refused. To be sure, a momentary pang went through the heart of the young colonel; and the shadowy faces of his father and mother seemed to rise from the gloomy recesses of the past and gaze at him reproachfully, but these sensations were too dim and faint to have any effect. He accepted the offer of the venerable General, which was, indeed, a most complimentary one, and because of which he became the object of many congratulations and no little envy.

In the magnificent cathedral of Kurski-Kazan the nuptials of the dashing Colonel Pavlowitz

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and the beautiful and accomplished Olga de Mitkiewicz were consummated with all the gorgeous ceremonial of the Greek Church, and amidst an unprecedented display of wealth and luxury. The vast edifice was crowded with representatives of the noblest and finest families of the province, while the streets surrounding the cathedral were thronged with a vast multitude of the baser sort; and the personal interest and gratification which all displayed were quite extraordinary.

It cannot be denied that the striking attentions and adulations of which Colonel Pavlowitz became the recipient did almost turn his head. In no other country are honors so much appreciated as in Russia; and those he had received were quite exceptional, both in extent and in cordiality.

He was happy, very happy; happy in the possession of the radiant, beauteous creature he could now call his own, and from whose sparkling eyes love and devotion, ardent and sincere, shone forth; he was happy in the evident sympathy and admiration of all his associates, and he was happy in the consciousness that his future was secure and that he was destined to a brilliant and distinguished career. Very faint and dim, indeed, were now the images of the

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ghostly past, and they did not affect his actions in the slightest; but somehow or other they would not forsake him, and he often found himself wondering with a peevish sort of dissatisfaction and impatience, why they did not leave him to enjoy undisturbed the pleasures and honors of his present station.

Shortly after his marriage the Crimean war broke out. Russia was engaged in a titanic struggle with the Western Powers, and Colonel Pavlowitz was among those summoned to defend the fatherland. The parting from his young wife was marked by tears and sobs; but still he heard the summons to war with stern joy, for, like a true soldier, he longed to display in actual combat the qualities he had gained in theoretic instruction; and then he longed for action—intense, stirring action—to drive away the shadowy, reproachful faces which tortured him by their constant recurrence.

He was one of the commanders in charge of the defence of Sebastopol. He was personally engaged, and displayed the greatest gallantry in many of the desperate conflicts of that bloody campaign. At Balaklava he was in command of a part of the artillery, which received the world-renowned charge of the Light Brigade; and it was while fiercely beating off that attack

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that an unexpected blow of a British sabre took off his right arm near the shoulder.

For three months our hero lay in the hospital, the object of universal sympathy and interest, for the good-will which had been previously entertained toward him had been greatly heightened by the splendid bravery and skill he had displayed in the war and the cruel wound he had received.

The Emperor himself had sent several times to inquire concerning his condition, and the visits and inquiries of lesser personages were innumerable.

As soon as he was able to resume his active duties, the Emperor ordered a review of the entire army. It was a glittering spectacle, a sea of brilliant uniforms, shining bayonets, swords and cannons, interspersed with magnificent bands of music, an ocean of deeply interested onlookers. Our hero rode at the head of his regiment on a splendid black charger, his empty sleeve hanging useless at his right side. As he passed the grand stand where stood the Emperor and his brilliant retinue of officers and aides, His Majesty ordered the parade to halt. Then in the presence of the army and the serried throngs of spectators, the Emperor addressed him as follows:

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"Gen. Sergei Pavlowitz, my good and faithful servitor. I have noticed the courage and devotion with which you have served in my army. It is always my wish fitly to reward virtue and fidelity, and I therefore appoint you to the command of the —th division of my regular army."

Hardly had these words, which His Majesty pronounced in a loud and clear voice, been spoken, than the entire army, breaking for a moment through the restraints of discipline, and the vast throng of spectators, burst into enthusiastic hurrahs and cheered again and again the name of Sergei Pavlowitz. It was a glorious and inspiring moment.

Our hero flushed with pride and gratification; but, obedient to the rules of military etiquette, said no word, but merely saluted with profound reverence, and a second later the stern command rang forth and the host marched on.

Words cannot describe the exultation which now filled the soul of General Pavlowitz. He was fairly intoxicated with joy. Every ambition of his life seemed gratified, and with rapture he thought of the delight with which the news of his great advancement would fill the heart of his beloved Olga, who had visited him during his stay in the hospital, and had now returned to their home in Kursky Kazan.

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AS THE CAVALCADE PASSED A CORNER THE GENERAL HEARD A CRY

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Little did he reck that a tremendous change was impending, that an event was about to occur which would recall with irresistible force the events of his early life and change the entire current of his military career. But so it was, and the climax of his military ambition was also destined to mark its sudden and complete end.

The parade had been dismissed. The spectators had dispersed, and the various regiments were marching back to their several barracks.

Accompanied only by his staff and a small escort of cavalry, General Pavlowitz was returning to his headquarters. Their road led through some of the old streets of the town. As the cavalcade passed a corner the General heard a cry. He alone of all the company noticed it, but there was something in it that thrilled and chilled him and filled his frame with violent agitation. It was a wailing, sobbing cry in a woman's voice, and its burden was made up of a few words, oft-repeated, in the Russo-Jewish dialect: "Oh, woe is me, my little rabbi, my Saul Isaac! oh, woe is me, my little rabbi, my little rabbi!" General Pavlowitz heard the cry and understood the words. Though for more than twenty years he had heard and spoken only Russian, yet those words came to him as the far-off echoes of his own past, intelligible,

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familiar, sweet, and unutterably sad. Like a flash there rolled away the many years of Russian, Christian, and military training, and he saw himself again in the happy days of his childhood, a little innocent Jewish boy, proudly reciting his week's lesson before a circle of admiring neighbors, while father and mother beamed with satisfaction. Then, again, the memory of the awful night when he was snatched from them, and he quivered again with fresh horror and indignation. Turning his head as his horse trotted on, he saw, standing at the corner an elderly Jewish couple, gazing after him, with tears streaming from their eyes and an expression of intensest anguish upon their faces, the woman wailing and sobbing as in frenzy. He knew them at once. They were his father and mother. His resolution was instantly formed. His parents and he should meet. Hastily summoning a subaltern, who like himself was a baptized Jew, he bade him leave the ranks unobserved, go back to the old couple and inform them that the General would see them that evening at a certain quiet hotel of the town.

Faithfully the subaltern fulfilled his chief's commission, ignorant, of course, of the reasons thereof, but with his soul filled with an indefin-

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able sympathy with its object, which instinctively he felt was noble. Quietly he dropped behind the troop, and in a few hastily spoken words communicated to the aged couple the wish of the General, whereupon he put spurs to his horse and speedily rejoined his companions, none of whom had observed his action.

That evening a young man in civilian attire inquired at the office of the Narodski Hotel whether a certain Jewish couple were not at the hotel, and was shown to the room where his parents (it was the General) were awaiting him. The meeting was pathetic, almost tragic, in the intensity of the emotions it aroused. The first sentiment was that of great, overwhelming joy. The reunited parents and child wept and smiled alternately, and embraced each other with a fervor only possible to those whose hunger for love had remained so long unsatisfied. Especially did Malka Feige clasp her long-lost son to her breast in a paroxysm of maternal affection, and very, very reluctantly did she release him from her embrace. But finally the first mighty ebullitions of emotion had subsided somewhat and they began to discuss their eventful career and the difficulties of their present position.

The parents' story was soon told. Their presence in Sebastopol was quite accidental, or

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rather, as they devoutly believed, providential. During all these years they had been unable to learn anything of the fate of their boy. They knew neither the place where he had been kept during the first few years after his abduction, nor anything of his subsequent experiences; and all of their efforts to obtain some information had remained entirely fruitless, so that finally they had despaired of learning anything of him any more. A few days previous to the memorable occasion of their reunion, Israel had received a favorable business proposition which required his presence at Sebastopol; and as Malka Feige did not care to remain at home in utter solitude, she had determined to accompany him. They had not gone to the review, for they had no heart for pageantry or splendor, and it was quite by chance that they happened to be standing at the corner of the street when the little company of cavalrymen with the general rode by. Gazing at the company in a casual and apathetic way, Malka Feige's sharp eyes had at once noticed, despite the disparity of age and brilliant uniform, the resemblance in the features of the leader to those of her own Saul Isaac, and her mother's heart told her that this was her stolen boy. Then had she, in a sudden and irrepressible outburst of feeling,

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uttered the cry which attracted the attention of the General and brought about the meeting.

Saul Isaac then told his parents the story of his experience, which, as it is well known to my readers, need not be repeated. After he had concluded, the conversation turned upon their future relations, and they all recognized that it was a most difficult and dangerous one.

"Ah, dear son," said Malka Feige, "what shall our future be? I cannot live without you, now that my eyes have seen you alive; but how can we come together, since we are but a humble Jewish couple and you a great general, and especially since you have become, alas for my sins! a Christian? It is indeed impossible for us to live together. The Czar would never allow it."

"Yes," chimed in Israel, "and think what a disgrace it would be for us to have it known in the *Kehillah* that my son, the *Illuy* and *Charif*, was a *Meshummed!* I could never endure the shame of it. All your glory would be no compensation."

It was indeed a knotty and thorny problem. But Saul Isaac had already reflected upon the matter in all its aspects, and with customary promptness of resolution had determined what he would do.

"Dear parents," said he, "be at rest. Never

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shall I forsake you more. Now that God, the God of my fathers, has brought us together thus wonderfully, we shall never be separated again. I shall stay with you and be a Jew, a sincere, loyal Jew. I know that I must renounce my high rank, to which the Emperor has just appointed me, and all my hopes for the future, and leave this country; for, as a Jew, not only would every avenue be closed to me, but as an apostate I would be sure of severe punishment, and, perhaps, even of death. But what care I for that! I have never been sincerely a Christian. I only became such because my power of resistance was gone and there seemed no other prospect in life. But now that I see you again, my resolution is formed, and is unalterable. I love you; I love my poor, persecuted people; I love my God. I shall return to you and to Him with all my heart and soul."

The parents shed tears of joy, not unmingled with grief and apprehension, at this heroic announcement.

"But how about your wife?" asked Malka Feige. "You are married to one who is not of our religion, but who accepted you in good faith and intention. Lawfully you may not abide with her, but honor forbids you to leave her. What shall you do?"

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"Of that, too, I have thought," answered Saul Isaac. "I love my Olga dearly, but my faith and my God are more precious to me than the love of woman. I shall go to Olga, tell her frankly of all the circumstances which surround me and ask her to accept our faith and become a Jewess. If she consents, we shall leave the country together and all will be well. If she refuses, I shall tell her that it were better that we parted, for true, God-pleasing marriage cannot exist between persons of different faiths. But, under all circumstances, I am determined henceforth to be a true Jew, to live and die as such."

The parents declared themselves satisfied with this solution of the problem, and they separated with the understanding that Israel and Malka Feige were to go home and Saul Isaac was to keep them informed of all his movements.

The first step of General Pavlowitz after the reunion with his parents was to seek leave of absence from the army to visit his wife in Kursky-Kazan. This was granted him without difficulty, in consideration of his meritorious services and his natural desire to share the joy of his advancement with his wife. With every external manifestation of joy, but with a heart filled with secret misgivings, he set out on his

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journey. He feared much for the result upon his wife of the revelation that he had reverted to Judaism, and hardly dared to hope that she would look with favor upon his proposition that she should accept the faith of her husband.

Knowing only too well the intense aversion with which his brethren were regarded by the Russians belonging to the official Greek Church, and having often had occasion to notice with what scorn and contempt the name "Zid" was uttered by the haughty representatives of Muscovite self-conceit, he realized keenly that no greater shock could possibly be inflicted upon his Olga than the announcement that her husband was one of the despised and hated Jews. But it appeared to him that no other course was consistent with honor and rectitude, and he determined not to deviate from the straight path of duty.

Often during the long and tedious journey he tried to imagine the answer which Olga would give. Sometimes he thought of her as declaring that her husband's faith and people should be hers, and that with him she would go to the uttermost ends of the earth; at other times he imagined her saying that the faith of her fathers stood higher to her than aught else, and that she would never forsake it. But in his wildest

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imaginings he did not form any notion of what the actual reception of his words would be.

He had determined to make his announcement immediately after his arrival at home; but when he saw the radiant face of his wife and felt her warm kiss upon his lips, his heart failed him. How could he speak words which might bring sorrow to such a beautiful and affectionate creature. He suffered himself to be carried to his splendid residence, and partook of the luxurious repast which Olga had prepared for him. He simulated gayety, and spoke with affected animation of the war and his part in it and his advancement and brilliant future prospects. He determined to make his announcement on the morrow. But on the morrow his courage had not returned, and he could not speak. He who had faced charging armies undaunted and looked death in the eye without flinching could not make a statement which might grieve the woman to whom he had given his name and who loved him so ardently. But on this day he was abstracted and dejected, and could not suppress the sighs which from time to time forced themselves from his breast.

Olga could not help noticing his melancholy. That evening she determined to speak to him concerning its cause.

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"Sergei, my love," said she, when the evening repast had been served and the servants had withdrawn, and they were nestling side by side upon the luxurious divan, "Sergei, my love, something is troubling you. My woman's heart tells me that some secret grief is eating out your soul. Will you not tell your Olga what it is? Will you not let me share your grief?"

"Olga, dearest," said Sergei, gazing at her with troubled eyes, while sudden pains shot through his heart, "Olga, dearest, how can I tell you what I know will grieve you and bring great sorrow upon her whom I love and cherish more than myself?"

"Tell me," she pleaded; "am I not your wife? Did I not swear to be the partner of your joys and sorrows? Tell me your burden; and no matter what it is, I shall help you bear it."

"Well, then," answered he, "since you urge me, I shall tell you. Know, then, I am a Jew. Your husband, the great General Pavlowitz, is but one of that abhorred race, one of those wretched pariahs whom the Emperor and the people alike despise—a 'Zid.' Is it not sufficient cause for grief that the high-born Olga de Mitkiewicz should be tied to such a one, that he should be able to call her wife?"

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Olga looked at him with eyes in which a curious light shone.

"What folly you speak, Sergei," she said. "How can you call yourself a Jew? To be sure, I know, and when I gave you my hand I knew, that Hebrew blood flows in your veins; but it is now many years since you renounced the sinful heresy of Judaism and were baptized into our holy Greek Church in the chapel of the monastery of St. Sophia. How, then, can you call yourself a Jew, since the church and our gracious Emperor recognize you as as good a Christian as any of us? Put away these foolish thoughts, dear Sergei, and let not the fact of your Hebrew descent trouble you in the least; and be assured that it does not diminish my love for you in the slightest degree."

Sergei gazed with tear-stained eyes for a moment at his wife, and then spoke in a voice choking with emotion:

"Dearest Olga, what you say is well put, but I cannot recognize it as correct. I was baptized against my will; my consent was insincere and superficial. For a time I could disguise my real sentiments; to-day I can do so no more. I am a Jew, in faith as well as in blood. I have seen again my parents, and the sight of them has revived all my olden feelings, all the

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childish love for my faith. No longer will I wear the mask, will I play the part of being Christian. I am determined to be a Jew. I intend to renounce all my offices and dignities and flee to a land where I may be at liberty to live according to the dictates of my conscience as such. My wife, too, should be a Jewess, should share my beliefs and hopes. Olga, can you go with me; can you accept our Jewish faith in one God and His holy law; can you resolve to share my lot in my unknown future home and be a true partner to me for life and for eternity? If you can, you will fill my heart with joy; but I do not urge you to make the sacrifice. If you choose to remain in your faith and your native land, you will be entitled to a legal divorce. I would leave you all my property and possessions and will never trouble you again. Speak, Olga, and tell me your decision?"

When Sergei had concluded he gazed again into his wife's face, anxious to know by its expression the manner in which she had received his words. What he saw surprised him. He had expected to see there the expression of anger or displeasure or, at best, surprise, uncertainty, and hesitation.

Instead, he beheld the beautiful countenance

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of Olga, all radiant with a strange and inexplicable joy. She was smiling a smile of triumph, almost of exultation; but there was withal a solemnity in her eyes which showed that there was no levity in her joy, but that it was based upon some profoundly earnest sentiment. While he was gazing at her, almost stupefied at her unexpected look, Olga began to speak.

"Sergei," said she, "you have told me your secret. I shall tell you mine. You belong to a proscribed race; so do I, and am now really your sister in faith. You are a Hebrew. I descend from the Subotnikis, those sincere seekers after God whom the renowned Zacharia of Tambow converted to Judaism some centuries ago. As a student of Russian history, you know that the emperors persecuted the "Judaizing heretics," as my people were called, with even greater cruelty and persistency than they did yours. Imprisonment, deprivation of civil rights, and banishment to remote sections of the empire, and even harsher punishments were inflicted upon them.

"Under these circumstances thousands of our brethren fell away completely; others fled to foreign countries where they openly professed Judaism; and others nominally adhered to the

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Greek Church, but in their hearts secretly cherished their faith in the one God of Israel and endeavored to fulfil His holy law as far as in their ignorance and their difficult circumstances they could.

"My family belonged to the last-mentioned class; but through the high connections it has formed, it had grown quite lax and out of touch with the brethren. But we have, nevertheless, never forgotten our origin; and, though I feared to tell it to you, thinking you had become a thorough Christian and would not like to be reminded of your former state, your Hebrew descent was really one of the causes which gained for you my affections, for we Subotnikis honor and revere those native born in the household of Israel very much, and esteem a marriage alliance with them a high privilege.

"Your announcement, therefore, of your intention to be a Jew, instead of displeasing me, has afforded me the keenest joy, a joy I never expected to feel. I shall accept your faith, dear Sergei, not merely because I desire to please you, as my husband, but because my heart already inclines toward it with sincere devotion. I shall share your lot and your future, whatever they may bring of joy or sorrow. And like Ruth of old I shall say: "Thy people shall be

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my people and thy God my God. Whither thou goest I shall go; and where thou diest I shall die, and there shall I be buried."

Words cannot describe the tremendous revulsion of feeling which the words of Olga, so unexpected, produced in the breast of our hero, whom we shall henceforth call only by his Hebrew cognomen of Saul Isaac. He was transported from the depth of misery and apprehension to the seventh heaven of joy by this so pleasing solution of a difficulty which he had looked upon as almost insoluble. But Olga was also filled with joy, and the radiant gladness which shone from her beautiful eyes showed that she considered that hour, which meant for her the beginning of exile and, perhaps, of poverty, as the happiest of her life.

The husband and wife, now joined by a new and profound sympathy, embraced each other with a fervor of love they had not known before, after which they sat down to write a letter to the parents of Saul Isaac. In this letter Saul Isaac gave expression to the happiness which filled his heart, and Olga wrote a few kindly lines, closing with the words, "Your loving daughter and faithful handmaid of Abraham."

The happy couple now made quiet prepar-

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ations to leave the land. Gradually the general disposed of his property and turned it into cash. When this had been accomplished, after several months, the General and his wife left the town of their residence quite openly, under the plausible pretext of making a short foreign tour. Their first destination was a frontier town of Roumania, whither Israel and Malka Feige had preceded them. From this place Saul Isaac wrote to the Minister of War, resigning his commission in the Russian army and frankly stating his reasons for his action. Then they proceeded to Jerusalem, where the parents of Saul Isaac had resolved to pass their declining years in pious seclusion and the service of God. In the holy city Olga was formally received into the community of Israel, the name of Sarah being conferred upon her.

Here they lived for twenty years. Six children were born unto them, all of whom received an excellent Hebrew and secular training, and were reared to industry, virtue, and the fear of God. After the death of the parents, which occurred in the twentieth year of their sojourn in the holy city, Saul Isaac and Sarah thought it desirable, in the interest of their children, to emigrate to America. Accordingly they settled in New York some years ago. Saul Isaac and

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his wife selected for their residence a portion of the city mainly inhabited by Russian co-religionists, for in their midst they felt themselves most at home.

Saul Isaac finds his chief pleasure in attendance at synagogue, and it is a question open to debate which affords him the most pleasure, the sermons of the *Maggid* or the gossip and anecdotes in which the congregation indulges in the intervals of services.

As for Sarah, she is so thoroughly Judaized, so punctual and exact in the fulfilment of her religious duties, so particular in maintaining the *Kosher* character of her household and such a fluent speaker of the Russo-Jewish jargon, that one would never suspect in her anything but a genuine Russian Jewess, native and to the manner born. Their children have grown up to be handsome and talented young men and women, good Jews and good Americans.

Saul Isaac and Sarah are happy and contented. No tinge of regret for their former state ever enters their hearts. But often as they worship in the synagogue there comes spontaneously to their lips the words of Solomon: "Blessed be the Lord God, who hath given rest to His people Israel."

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TOO LATE, BUT ON TIME.

Moses Levinsky awoke with a start upon his humble couch in the little hall bedroom in the sixth story of the immense and crowded tenement-house in Eldridge Street, New York City, in which he dwelt. He very much feared that he had overslept himself and would be late at the early morning service of the Congregation Sons of Peace. The light which shown through the narrow window of his room was much brighter than the pale illumination which usually greeted his early waking eyes and seemed to show that the day was further advanced. A glance at the cheap silver watch which lay upon his trousers on the chair next to his bed showed him that his apprehensions were only too well founded.

The Congregation Sons of Peace invariably began its devotions at 6 A.M. Moses Levinsky was in the habit of rising at half-past five; his toilet and the walk to the little meeting-room in the next block required twenty-five minutes, and he was regularly in his place five minutes

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before the voice of the *Chazan* or precentor, chanting in classic Hebrew, "Exalted be the living God and praised," betokened that the service of adoration and supplication, with which modern Israel supplies the place of the ancient sacrificial worship, had begun. But to-day the watch which usually indicated about a quarter past five when he first glanced at it in the early mornings, stood at half-past six. The congregation had already been engaged in prayer for a full half-hour, and he could hardly hope to be with them before the services, which usually lasted somewhat less than an hour, were concluded. Watches and clocks are obstinate creatures. They persist in their opinions, which can be plainly read in their faces. They care not at all how disagreeable or unpleasant their statements may be to those who consult them, and they can neither be reasoned with nor stared out of countenance. And so Moses Levinsky's watch did not recede at all for all the hard stares which that rather confused individual directed at it; but, on the contrary, advanced a minute or so, while he, who had now risen upon his side and rested upon his left arm, gazed at it with puzzled and rueful countenance.

The truth was that Moses was in doubt as

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to the right course to pursue. His watch told him that he might as well make an exception to-day from his regular practice and stay at home, for he could never hope to be on time at the services, or even present during any considerable portion of them. On the other hand, his conscience smote him greatly at having overslept himself; and thus incurred the danger of breaking his life rule, of always beginning the day in the house of God, and in the words which the ship captain once addressed to the prophet Jonah when he had gone to sleep in the midst of all the turmoil of the storm, it called to him, "What aileth thee, O sleeper? Arise, cry out unto thy God." After a minute's hesitation conscience won the battle over comfort. Moses hastily sprang from his couch, made his simple toilet as speedily as possible, and in something less than twenty minutes was on his way to the little synagogue ("place of prayer" was the unassuming name which the worshippers themselves gave it) of the Congregation of the Sons of Peace. While he is on his way thither, we will take occasion to describe him to our readers; for many of them, no doubt, are at a loss to understand what kind of a person he is, and particularly fail to comprehend why he should be so dreadfully put out

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HE WAS NOTHING BUT A COMMONPLACE, EVERY-DAY PEDDLER

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at the mere possibility of being absent from prayers one morning, a thing which, I am sure, would never disturb the majority of my worthy readers in their mental tranquillity.

Moses Levinsky was a very ordinary and insignificant individual, such as you might pass a thousand times in the street and never pay any attention to. He was nothing but a commonplace, every-day peddler who wandered from morning to evening through the streets of the great metropolis, with a huge basket suspended in front of him, filled to overflowing with a miscellaneous assortment of goods—suspenders, shoe laces, pins, needles, tape, handkerchiefs, stockings, and what not—and endeavored to induce his fellow-beings to purchase sufficient of his store to provide him with a meagre livelihood. He had straight and regular features, of a rather handsome Semitic type, though worn and furrowed, not so much by years—he was only forty-three—as by care and anxiety; his hair and large irregular beard were black, heavily streaked with gray, and his clothes and close-fitting derby hat were decidedly shabby. All in all, he was not an imposing figure; and when we add to the unimpressiveness of his exterior the fact that he had a nervous, deprecatory manner, and looked around him with timid,

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apprehensive eyes, and also that he was a very indifferent master of the vernacular, which he spoke hesitatingly and with a pronounced Slavonic-Jewish accent, the reader will at once realize that he was of the type which low comedians love to caricature and street urchins to mock at, if not to treat worse.

But his external appearance was no indicator, except for those who are accustomed to read and understand such exteriors, of his internal characteristics. Beneath the unprepossessing outward semblance there dwelt a keen intellect and a noble soul which might well deserve the admiration of the discerning. He had received a good education of its kind in his youth in his Russian home. He had been thoroughly trained in Hebrew, had read the entire Bible in the original, and was well acquainted with the Talmud and the modern Hebrew literature from which he had derived correct ideas of the world and the development of modern science. But he had not been able to utilize his training either in his native land or America. In Russia he had desired to become a rabbi, for which his learning and his sincere religious bent amply fitted him; but all the positions he knew of were filled, and so after a few years' vain waiting he kissed his wife and his two little ones good-by

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(he had married early while still a student at the *Yeshibah*) and set sail for America, where, he thought, congregations without number were ready to greet him as their spiritual chief. But a brief glance at the conditions surrounding the rabbinate among his immigrant brethren under the Western skies had cured him of his desire to make it his vocation. As he had neither capital nor sufficient secular training to enable him to become a merchant, or secure a remunerative commercial position, he had only the choice between two ways of gaining a livelihood. He could become a workman in a sweat-shop or a peddler. He chose the latter and, at the time this story begins, had pursued the occupation of itinerant merchant, an occupation in which there is little gain and less glory, for some ten years. During all these years he had permitted himself only one form of pleasure, attendance at the House of God. The theatre knew him not, the interior of saloons saw him only when on business bent; but at the synagogue he was a regular attendant, never missing the early morning services or the evening gatherings, in which the rabbi expounded the Talmud and its commentaries to a group of attentive "learners."

Apart from his natural piety it had gradually become a matter of pride with him to be regular

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and punctual in his attendance at the synagogue, and consequently he felt considerably mortified when on the morning of our tale he found that he must either be absent or late at service. On his way to the house of worship he tried to console himself with the sneaking hope that perhaps his watch was fast and that the hour was not really as late as it indicated. But his hopes were doomed to disappointment. As he entered the little snyagogue the mourners were just repeating the last *Kaddish*, and most of the other worshippers were folding and putting away their *Tallithoth* and *Tephillin*, preparatory to leaving for the work of the day.

Poor Moses! A pang went through his heart at the thought that he, whose punctuality and zeal had become proverbial, should be so culpably remiss as to appear in *Shool* when services were practically over, and a keener pang yet pervaded him when he noticed the expression of wonderment with which his companions and fellow-members gazed at him. Nor did they confine themselves to looks of amazement; but, being finished with their devotions, they gave free expression to their astonishment in questions. "What's the matter, Levinsky?" he was asked from all sides. "Aren't you well, or are you getting lazy, or are you turning *link?* To all these

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interrogations Moses returned no answer; indeed, he felt morally too much crushed to defend or even to palliate his shortcoming. Gloomily he proceeded to put on his prayer-shawl and phylacteries and with much less fervor than usual he recited the morning prayer. By the time he had concluded his devotions every one else had left except the *Shammas*, who, obliged by his office to remain, had waited impatiently to lock the synagogue, and who felt considerably aggrieved at Moses for having caused him to lose so much of his valuable time, which might have been utilized for collecting a bill or arranging a *Shidduch*. Listlessly Moses left the room and directed his feet street-ward, but not too listlessly to feel the withering glance of reproach which the *Shammas* shot after him as he departed.

The street was thronged and bustling with the full tide of activity which had now begun, but Moses paid no attention to its appearance. He did not even notice the friendly greetings of several acquaintances whom he passed on his homeward way. His mind had only room just then for one thought, that of mortification at his inexplicable tardiness and the humiliation which that morning had brought him in the opinion of his fellow-congregants. He reached the huge tenement he called his home and began me-

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chanically to climb the narrow and interminable staircases that led up to his room. The building was comparatively quiet. Most of the male inmates and of the children of school age had already departed, the former to take up their daily tasks, the latter for the immense public school a few blocks away. No one met him on the stairs to draw his mind from its gloomy abstraction. But as he reached the fifth floor he perceived something which at once arrested his attention and turned his thoughts to matters outside of himself. It was a strong and pungent smell, the smell of smoke. He stopped, all his senses at once keenly alert. Like all tenement-dwellers he realized well the meaning of smoke. It meant fire, and fire all too often meant death in those lofty and crowded edifices, from whose upper portions escape was always difficult and sometimes impossible. Even as he stood, the noise of uneasy motion in the apartments at the side of the hall where he was and a sudden clamor of voices within betokened that their occupants too had smelt the smoke and were seized with sudden dread. Doors were flung open; the white, anxious faces of frightened women, followed by wondering little children, peered out. There was a rush of feet in the hall below and quavering voices screamed

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"fire! fire!" By this time (a very brief interval only had passed) Moses Levinsky had located the direction whence the smoke proceeded. It came from the sixth story, and was already quite dense at the head of the stairs. As he gazed, Levinsky thought he could hear children's voices, faintly crying, as if half stifled.

What should he do? For a moment he thought he would rush downstairs to the street and start the fire-alarm at the next corner. But he realized instantly that quicker action was necessary in this case, that human lives, children's lives probably, were in imminent danger, and that he must do something himself to rescue them, leaving to others the task of notifying the fire department. With a few swift bounds he was at the next landing, clearing three steps at every leap. The fire was evidently in the apartments on the left side of the hall, where lived the Shapiros with their three children, for dense smoke was pouring from their rear door and children's voices were heard from within, feebly wailing. The rooms on the other side of the hall, occupied by the Arnowitzs, a young married couple, were still and evidently empty. With one rush Levinsky was at the door through whose interstices the smoke pro-

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ceeded and endeavored to open it. It was closed and resisted his efforts. He kicked at it frantically. It did not yield. In the meanwhile the smoke was pouring forth in denser clouds, paining his eyes and his lungs, and the children's voices were growing fainter and feebler. With mad frenzy Moses Levinsky threw his body against the door; it shook and quivered but did not yield. Again he tried to kick it in, striking his right foot in his thin boot against the door with all his strength, and with utter disregard for the pain and possible injury to himself. In vain. The door was strong and firmly locked, while Levinsky was but an indifferent specimen of muscular development (his athletics had all been of the intellectual variety), and all his efforts to break it down were of no avail. Several precious minutes had now passed and Levinsky was almost in despair. He was hesitating what to do, and half inclined to rush downstairs in quest of additional help when his eyes, aimlessly wandering about the hall, chanced to light in the opposite corner, and lo and behold! there stood an axe. It was the axe with which Shapiro was accustomed to chop wood in the yard. Usually he kept it in his rooms, but that morning had left it, by a providential chance, in the hall. Instantly

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Moses Levinsky seized it. A few vigorous blows, launched with all his strength against the door, brought it down and he rushed into the smoke-filled room. In the corner he saw dimly three little figures. Two were clinging to each other and one was lying prostrate on the floor. They were Sarah and Ikey, the five-year and three-year-old daughter and son, and little Josey, the eighteen-months-old baby of the Shapiros. The older ones were still conscious, but wee little Josey had been overcome by the smoke and had fallen to the floor. In the middle of the room stood the large family bed, the bed-clothing fiercely burning and emitting dense volumes of black smoke. Levinsky's first thought was of the children. Lifting up and holding the unconscious child with his right hand and taking a hand of each of the other children in his left, he rushed from the room.

By this time the whole house and all the neighborhood had taken alarm. As he hastened down the stairs, in an effort to find a place where the unconscious child might have fresh air, there came rushing toward him a throng of neighbors; among them several firemen, with a portable extinguisher, and a physician. Moses Levinsky's task had been accomplished. The firemen proceeded to deal in systematic manner

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with the fire, which had now grown large enough to threaten the whole house. The physician took charge of the unconscious infant and in a few minutes had brought him to. But who is this whose agonized screams are now heard, and who comes rushing through the dense crowd, frantically crying, "My children! O my children!" It is the mother, Mrs. Shapiro, who had gone out to do her marketing, together with her neighbor, Mrs. Arnowitz, and, in the manner customary in that vicinity, had locked her children in the room until her return. When she saw that her children were alive and well, she kissed and hugged them frantically, and drew them to her breast as if she half doubted the evidence of her senses. Then she asked who was their brave rescuer; and when all pointed to Moses Levinsky, she fell on her knees before him and kissed his hands and called him a *Malach* of God, sent directly from heaven to rescue her dear ones. But Moses Levinsky did not grow at all conceited nor take the praise to himself. His face was lighted up with the gleam of intelligence, with the satisfaction of a problem solved. All he said was: "Now I see that God is good and His plans are wise. He made me late at *Shool* so that I should be on time to save these poor *Nefoshos*.

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I was too late for one *Mitzvah*, but just in time for another, and that is quite in accordance with the *Halachah;* for does not the Talmud tell us, 'He that has to perform one *Mitzvah* is exempt from another'?"

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THE PROSELYTE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

About fifty years ago a group of street-idlers and passers-by were standing at the corner of one of the narrow and old-fashioned streets near the old harbor of Marseilles, amusing themselves at the plight of a short, dark-complexioned man who stood in their midst, and who was evidently a foreigner and a stranger in the town. It was a typical early summer day in one of the busiest spots of the metropolis of southern France. The sun shone with a brilliance and a radiance characteristic of the region and the season, and was just a little too warm for comfort; and the streets were crowded with a motley throng partly composed of Frenchmen, among whom the natives of northern France and the provençals or inhabitants of the south could be easily distinguished from each other by their diversity of type, and partly by representatives of various races and nationalities varying in shade from the olive-skinned Span-

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A GROUP OF STREET-IDLERS WERE AMUSING THEMSELVES AT THE PLIGHT OF A SHORT, DARK-COMPLEXIONED MAN WHO STOOD IN THEIR MIDST *Page 142*

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iards, Italians, and Greeks to the coffee-brown Arabs and Moors from northern Africa, with here and there among the throng a negro of ebony blackness.

The great press upon the streets was due in part to the normal activity of the town; but more to the fact that three of the great sailing vessels which, in those ante-steam-navigation days managed the freight and passenger traffic between the Levantine ports, had that morning discharged their human cargoes at three of the principal wharves in the neighborhood, and the stream of released passengers was flowing through the adjacent streets before becoming commingled with the general human flood of the city. There were many strange figures among the new arrivals, but they all appeared fairly at home in their new surroundings. Some may have been in Marseilles on previous occasions, and others were met by relatives or friends who guided them to their respective destinations. Thus all were cared for in the strange city except one, and he the woe-begone individual whom we have seen standing at the street corner amidst the knot of street *gamins* and loiterers. They had fine sport with him, commenting on his outlandish appearance, and asking him all sorts of facetious questions

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in the vulgar *argot* they spoke; but he understood nothing, and only looked helplessly from one unsympathetic face to the other, saying only occasionally in a dazed sort of way, to the one or the other, in what seemed to them an unintelligible gibberish, the mystic words, "*Yehudi Attah? Yehudi Attah?*" Every such utterance would be greeted with a shout of laughter; that is to say, by all except one.

Benjamin Dalinsky, a Jewish peddler, whose cradle had stood on the banks of the Dnieper, but whom fate had carried to the land of the Gauls, and who found his subsistence as an itinerant merchant in the southern French metropolis, chanced to pass the spot where these scenes were being enacted, and paused a moment to ascertain the cause of the excitement. The stranger noticed the newcomer, and addressed to him the query he had so often fruitlessly repeated: "*Yehudi Attah? Yehudi Attah?*"

A thrill went through the whole body of Benjamin Dalinsky. He understood the mystic words. He heard in them an echo of the voices of his childhood, and of the spirit of his home, which he missed so sadly in this strange, un-Jewish France. He felt in them the yearning of a Jewish soul for the companionship of a

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brother in faith, in sympathy, and in affection. His soul went out in sudden attraction to this dark-hued stranger, whom he had never seen before; and in the same ancient tongue, the Hebrew, in which the stranger had made his inquiry, he answered: "*Ani Yehudi bo immi achi.*"

Great, overwhelming joy lit up the dark face of the stranger. With mingled love and deference he bowed low and kissed the hem of the coat of Dalinsky, who quickly drew him from the midst of the throng; and the wondering French idlers stepped aside as this strangely assorted pair, the fair-haired son of the North and the swarthy Oriental walked away together. Dalinsky's lodgings were but a short distance away—he had a room with a Jewish couple who eked out their scanty earnings with the small amount he paid them and thither he quickly led the stranger. After he had given the latter an opportunity to wash himself and eat something, which he did ravenously after he had satisfied himself of its ritual purity, for on the ship he had tasted hardly anything of the food of the Gentiles, he asked the stranger what had brought him to this unknown country, whose language and manners were alike unfamiliar to him. In classic Hebrew, which he spoke with

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perfect fluency and with great animation and vivacity, the stranger told the following tale:

"I am a Jew; and it is the pride and glory of my life that I belong to the faith first proclaimed by Abraham, and whose sacred laws and ordinances I endeavor faithfully to fulfil; but I am not native-born in the houshold of Israel. I am only an adopted child therein, although, I trust, my love for the people which is now mine is none the less warm and true on that account. By origin I am a Greek. I was born on the beautiful island of Corfu, the pearl of the archipelago, where grow the finest and choicest *Ethrogim*, most suitable of all species for the solemn ceremonies of the Feast of Tabernacles; and the name upon which I was baptized was Dimitri Aristarchi. To-day I am known in Israel as Abraham Ger-Tsedek. The manner in which I came to seek entrance into the congregation of the Lord was most extraordinary; and my statement may seem to you but little worthy of credence, but I solemnly assure you it is true. It happened in this wise. My family was an old and distinguished one in the island; but my father, in consequence of ill success in various business ventures and a series of other misfortunes, lost all his wealth when I was a lad of about fifteen, and shortly afterward

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died. My poor mother, overwhelmed by the double loss of her dearly beloved husband and all her earthly possessions, did not survive her life partner long, but within a few short weeks followed him into the grave. I was thus thrown entirely upon my own resources; and as I was an only child, without either brother or sister, and had learnt no trade or profession, having been reared in the luxurious and careless fashion usual in my country in well-to-do families, my condition was indeed desperate. There was nothing left for me to do except to seek a position as a domestic servant, in which no special skill is required and in which industry and goodwill may supply the place of training. It was a most humiliating necessity, which drew many tears from my eyes. I, the pampered child of wealth, must seek my daily bread as a menial! But there was no alternative; and as the saying is, 'Necessity can neither be praised nor blamed.'

"It so happened that I found employment in the house of a Jewish physician, Moses Allatini by name. He was a man of considerable prominence, handsome and distinguished in appearance, extremely skilful in his profession, but learned as well in Hebraic lore. His wife, Esperanza by name, was radiantly beautiful,

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with the pensive, thoughtful beauty that marks so many of the daughters of Israel, and as kind-hearted and pious as she was beautiful. Their family consisted of seven children, all well-bred, polite, and lovable. At the time of my entrance into the household there was a baby, a sweet boy of two years, with curly black locks clustering around a face of alabaster whiteness, and eyes in whose liquid black depths an infinity of sentiment was revealed. As I was not good for much else, Raphael, for so the youngest was called, was assigned to my care, at which I greatly rejoiced, for I had fallen in love with the sweet child when first these eyes lighted upon his angelic countenance. I devoted myself to his care with the utmost zeal. I washed, bathed, and clothed him, took him out daily in the fresh air, gave him his meals, and tucked him in his little bed nightly when he closed his beautiful eyes in sleep. I learnt the little Hebrew prayers which Jewish children recite when they lie down to rest at night, or when they rise in the morning, and the benedictions which they pronounce on various occasions in order that I might dictate them to him, and that no one should come between me and my dearly beloved charge. Raphael reciprocated my attachment; no doubt because he perceived its

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sincerity and we grew inseparable. As he grew older our love for each other did not diminish; on the contrary, it increased and grew deeper and more intense. Next to his parents Raphael loved best his Dimitri; and as for me, I had no one else in the wide world for whom I need care, and I concentrated upon him all the intensity of love of a naturally warm and affectionate heart. I continued to have the exclusive charge of Raphael, participated in all his sports and games, and accompanied him whenever he went out. Indeed, he always insisted that I must be his companion, and refused to go anywhere unless I was with him. Our great love for each other became generally known and excited great interest, especially among the Hebrew inhabitants—the Greeks were not so well pleased—and the Allatini family were universally congratulated upon the possession of such a faithful and devoted servitor. When Raphael was four years old his parents began to take him to the synagogue on holidays and Sabbaths of special importance; and as he insisted upon my accompanying him, a request which excited great amusement among the family and the others who learned of it, I was one of the party on these occasions. Thus was I first introduced to the ancient Hebrew worship as it is con-

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ducted in the Jewish House of God. I was deeply impressed by the melodious chanting of the *Hazan*, in which the congregation joined harmoniously from time to time, and I listened with great interest to the learned and pious discourses of the venerable rabbi. But there was no thought in my mind at this time of allying myself to Israel; and as for the Allatinis and the other Hebrews, they never even dreamed of such a thing.

"When Raphael had attained to the age of five, Dr. Allatini declared that it was now time to teach him the Hebrew language, and to begin to initiate him into the knowledge of the Bible and the rabbinical writings. But now a new and unexpected difficulty arose. Raphael insisted stoutly that I must take the lessons, too, and declared that he would learn nothing unless I was his fellow-scholar. This was a little too much for his good parents. They tried to make him comprehend that it was absurd to make a Gentile study the Hebrew language and religious literature; and to me, too, the thing appeared exceedingly dubious; but he would have nothing of their arguments and, with the unreasoning obstinacy of childhood, insisted that I must participate in the instruction. 'Dimitri does everything with

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me,' he said, 'and he must learn with me, too. If Dimitri will not learn, Raphael will not learn either.' There was no help for it. His youthful mind was fixed in the idea that I must be his companion in study as in all other things; and his parents, seeing that it was impossible to change his view, yielded, half in amusement and half in vexation, to his wish. Thus I became a student of the Holy Law; and I bless God for the hour when He separated me from those that are in error and brought me near to Him, by enabling me to become acquainted with His Torah and to recognize the wisdom and holiness of His teachings. A teacher was engaged, the ablest Hebrew scholar of the town, and he began to instruct what he declared was the strangest pair of pupils he had ever had, the Greek Gentile youth of eighteen and the Hebrew lad of five. Both of us learned zealously.

"Now that I had begun I was eager to learn all that I could of Hebrew lore; and Raphael, pleased that his wish had been gratified, and possessing a bright and acute intellect, learned rapidly and well. We began with the Hebrew alphabet and the rudiments of the sacred tongue; but soon we had mastered these elementary portions and took up the reading of

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the Scriptures, at first in the simple text and afterward with the commentaries of various learned rabbis. I cannot find words with which to describe the profound impression which this course of study made upon me. What had at first been a mere good-natured compliance with the whim of a child became afterward a most fascinating and absorbing pursuit, the most important part of my intellectual and spiritual life. At first I was charmed with the Hebrew tongue as a vehicle of thought and expression, with its pronunciation, at once sonorous and melodious, with its symmetrical and harmonious grammatical construction, with its brief and yet richly expressive phrases and sentences; then the sublimity and grandeur of the Biblical teachings stirred and moved me. I wondered at the divine wisdom of the creation; I admired the grand and heroic leaders, God-inspired prophets and teachers who spread the knowledge of the universal Master among men; I began to understand why Israel existed on earth; I followed with deepest interest the checkered history of the chosen people; I triumphed with Solomon when the holy house was dedicated on Zion's height, and I wept and sorrowed with Jeremiah when it sank in ruin. The wisdom of the Torah impressed me deeply, its numerous

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statutes and ordinances, all designed to bring about the one end, the happiness and well-being of mankind revealed clearly to my mind the ineffable goodness of the Author of all, and with David I exclaimed, 'The law of the Lord is perfect restoring the soul.' In a word the spirit of the All-holy entered into me, and I understood, as I never understood before, and as millions do not understand to-day, that He desires the happiness of mankind; and in order to promote that happiness and to diffuse universal blessing, He hath chosen the Torah and Moses His servant and Israel His people.

"Thus the years flowed away, bringing ever-increasing knowledge and happiness to us both, for Raphael and I were like two brothers united by love such as brothers seldom know. When we had finished the reading of the Bible, which took us about five years, we began to study the *Mishnah*. Here I found new subjects for admiration; the acuteness and profound scholarship of the *Hakamim*, their methodical order and system, and also their stern piety and unyielding devotion to principle. In two years we had concluded the *Mishnah* and took up the intricate discussions of the *Gemara*. But now Raphael had entered upon his thirteenth year, at the conclusion of which, as you well know,

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every Jewish boy becomes *Bar-Mitzvah;* that is to say, attains his religious majority, and is accounted fully responsible for all his acts in the sight of God and man. The *Bar-Mitzvah* day is considered everywhere in Israel a most auspicious and happy occasion. The youthful celebrant is treated with distinguished honor, is permitted to read the *Sedrah* and the *Haftarah*, and even to deliver an address in the synagogue, and is made the recipient of rich gifts and marked attentions. As these ceremonies require special study and preparation, it is necessary to train a youth some time in advance of the happy day. Such was the proceeding followed also in the case of Raphael. The teacher who had instructed us both suspended temporarily the regular course of instruction in which I had taken part, and concentrated his efforts upon teaching Raphael the proper method of chanting the portions of the law and the prophets which were to be read on the great Sabbath of the *Bar-Mitzvah*, and also aided him in the preparation of a learned and profound discourse which he, though a mere youth, was to deliver on that auspicious occasion.

"As these matters did not concern me, I was necessarily left out of consideration and had now no part in the studies of Raphael, except

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that of a mere occasional listener and looker-on. For the first time in over seven years Raphael and I were separated, no longer joined in study nor much together otherwise, for the preparations for the *Bar-Mitzvah* absorbed most of his time, and he did not find leisure for our accustomed walks and pleasures. The change grieved me deeply. I realized now as I had not realized before the distinction between us ; that he was one of the chosen people whose history and religion we had been studying, while I was an outsider, a stranger, not privileged to enter into close connection with the covenant brethren, nor to share in their most intimate concerns, their truest joys, and deepest sorrows. I cannot describe to you the melancholy which filled my soul at this thought; but it must have showed itself in my countenance or demeanor, for Raphael noticed it, and with true fraternal sympathy tried to soothe and console me. But his well-meant efforts were in vain. Nothing could assuage the keen pain which rose in my soul whenever I reflected that there existed an invisible but nevertheless real and undeniable dividing wall between me and the human being I loved best, a wall that would probably grow thicker and stronger as the years rolled on, until it would at last keep us utterly asunder, except, perhaps, as

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regards the superficial relations of mere formal friendship.

"For months this dull pain gnawed at my heart until one day, when the *Bar-Mitzvah* day was no longer far distant, there came to me, all unexpectedly and sudden as a lightning flash, a thought that promised redemption. 'Why need I permit this wall to grow up between me and my beloved?' I asked myself. 'Why can I not become Raphael's brother in the covenant of Israel? Israel is God's holy nation, but it does not jealously restrict its membership to those born in the fold. Its gates open gladly to welcome those who seek entrance because of true union of sentiment with the hereditary guardians of the covenant. As Isaiah says: "Let not the stranger that joineth himself unto the Lord say, verily the Lord will separate me from His people." I, too, may join myself to Israel, may share the burdens and the privileges of the Holy people, and take upon myself their name.'

"Thus did my love for a dear Jewish lad suggest to me to enter into Israel; but nevertheless I did not determine upon the step until I had examined my mind and my soul to ascertain whether I was fit for this great change. I knew that to become a proselyte for any personal mo-

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tive alone, no matter how high or ideal it might be, were sin. But my self-examination taught me my real beliefs, showed me that, spiritually if not formally, I already belonged to Israel. I recognized that the theological dogmas I had been taught in my boyhood no longer possessed any charm or validity for my soul, which for seven years had drunk deep draughts of life-giving water from the fountains of Israel's law and tradition. I saw that in Israel was the spiritual home where my soul desired to dwell. Encouraged and inspired by this recognition, I went to the rabbi and communicated to him my desire to enter the fold of Israel. He was surprised at first and rather displeased; but when I told him my story, and informed him that I was well instructed in Hebrew lore and familiar with the ordinances of Judaism, he declared that he could not refuse to accept me as a proselyte.

"I now unfolded to him an idea which I had conceived in relation to my reception into Judaism, which pleased him well, and to which he at once gave his approval. Under the plea of desiring a vacation, which was readily granted, for Raphael was busy with his preparations and my services were not really required, I secured a leave of absence for several weeks from the Allatini household. I went to a little town

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some few miles distant, and there in the presence of the rabbi and ten Hebrew brethren I was circumcised and the name I now bear in Israel conferred upon me. I remained there until I had thoroughly recovered when I returned to the Allatini home. No one knew of the change which had taken place, for I had requested, for reasons of my own, those present at the ceremony to divulge nothing for the time being; and my wishes had been respected. All noticed that I had lost the melancholy air which I had borne for several months, and was looking contented and happy; but none knew the reason for the improvement in my appearance.

"At last the great day, the Bar-Mitzvah Sabbath, arrived. The synagogue was densely packed, for the interest in the event which concerned so closely the most prominent family in the congregation and its well-beloved son was universal. On the main floor the noblest and best men of the community were assembled, and from the galleries the matrons and maidens of Israel, arrayed in splendid robes, beamed radiantly down. When the time for the reading of the Torah arrived Raphael ascended the *Tebah*, or altar, and at once began to chant from the sacred scroll. He was a picture of youthful beauty as he stood there; and his voice, pure

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and clear as the sweetest of song-birds, filled the synagogue with melodious resonance as he chanted the solemn sentences of Holy Writ. A hum of admiration ran around the synagogue; and all eyes, after feasting with pleasure on the beauteous form of the youthful celebrant, turned with silent congratulation to the happy father and the joyous mother, who showed in their beaming countenances what joy dwelt within their hearts. Raphael was summoned as the third person to pronounce the benediction over the law, which he did with great dignity and devoutness. His father then ascended the altar and made generous offerings for the benefit of the congregation; and the rabbi, leaving his seat and ascending the altar, placed his hands upon Raphael's bowed head and pronounced over him the threefold priestly blessing. Thus far everything had been conducted in the manner usual on such occasions, but now a deviation took place. Instead of summoning the next person to the Torah, which would have been the usual proceeding, the rabbi turned to the people and addressed them thus:

"'Brethren of Israel! It has been now our privilege to witness the acceptance into full membership in the covenant of our beloved young friend, Raphael Allatini, to whom and to

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whose respected parents we offer our sincere well-wishes. It will now be our pleasure to behold another Bar-Mitzvah, one who is a true believer in our holy faith, and who has been for many years a friend and comrade of our young celebrant, and desires not to separate from him on this happy day.'

"All were amazed at the enigmatical words of the rabbi; for no one had heard of another Bar-Mitzvah, and the fact of my conversion had been kept a profound secret. The *Chazan*, however, had been let into the secret, and in a loud voice he proclaimed: 'Let there arise Abraham, son of Abraham, the proselyte of righteousness, to read the Torah. May his rock protect him.'

"Profound astonishment reigned in the synagogue as I, the full-grown man of twenty-five, whom all had known as Dimitri the Greek servant, arose in my place and ascended the Tebah in a character belonging usually only to Hebrew youths of thirteen; and in breathless silence they listened while I pronounced the benediction over the Torah and read my portion with correct accent and melody. When I had finished I blessed the Lord with a loud voice; and according to the words of the benediction, 'Blessed art Thou, O Lord, our God, King

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of the universe, who hast permitted me to live and attain to this day,' and all the congregation shouted 'Amen!' The rabbi then blessed me with tears in his eyes; and Raphael fell about my neck and embraced me, with radiant smiles, for to him my act meant most of all. The rest of the service was conducted in the usual quiet and solemn manner; but when the last chant had been concluded, the excitement broke forth. The vast congregation crowded around the Allatini family, Raphael and me, congratulating us most warmly on the remarkable and auspicious event which had just taken place. I had almost as great a share of popular approval as Raphael, and my fidelity and loyalty both to the family I served and the religion I had embraced, my devotion to my young master, and my attainments in Hebrew lore were greatly admired and commended. Oh, that was a glorious day in my life; and, however long the Most High may permit me to remain on earth, I shall never forget it. The Allatinis, too, when the first shock of surprise was over, acted toward me with the utmost love and kindness. I was treated in all respects as the equal and comrade of Raphael. I sat next to him at the festive board during the splendid banquet given the same afternoon in

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celebration of the event. After he had delivered his address, I, too, was asked to speak to the guests, who included the most respected people in the community; and the rabbi, in his remarks, referred to me in the kindest terms, praising greatly my fidelity and piety and the learning I had acquired, and comparing me with Shemayah and Abtalion, the distinguished proselytes who became heads of the Sanhedrin during the period of the second Temple.

"After the Bar-Mitzvah festivities were over, Raphael took up again the interrupted course of studies and I was again his companion. I was very, very happy. I felt that I had entered into the haven of peace and joy in the blessed study of God's holy law and the willing fulfilment of its precepts, while enjoying also the love of my young master, the kindness of his family, and the respect of all my newly gained Jewish brethren. I asked for nothing better on earth, though I did hope that in course of time I might be able to ask some well-born maiden of Israel to be my life partner and settle down as a worthy *Baal Ha-baith*. But, alas! while I was basking in the bright sun of happiness, the black clouds were gathering which were destined to cover with inky pall the fair sky of my well-being.

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"The romantic incidents of my conversion and my public reception as a Bar-Mitzvah had excited great public interest among the Jewish inhabitants of the island generally and were spoken of everywhere. In this way the facts came also to the knowledge of the Greek Gentiles and aroused their deep anger and resentment. Great as was the enmity which they bore the children of Jacob, they hated with a still intenser hatred the one from their own midst who had cast in his lot with the ancient people. I soon noticed that I was regarded with great ill favor. When I went abroad through the streets of the town on my accustomed walks with Raphael, I noticed that the men and women gazed at me with black, scowling looks, while the children put no restraint on their tongues, but yelled after me, 'Apostate, renegade, traitor!' This discovery, while it was certainly not pleasing, did not disconcert either me or my friends. There had not been any uprising against the Jews in many years, and none of us thought that I was of sufficient importance to be honored with a special uprising, exclusively on my account. Soon, however, rumors began to be heard that the lower orders of people, incited by virulent agitators, in particular by a fanatical priest of the

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neighborhood, were planning an attack on the Allatini house for the purpose of seizing me and visiting upon me condign punishment—that is to say, death—for what they were pleased to call my apostasy. This report did cause us some anxiety; but we all, in particular Dr. Allatini, looked upon it as an idle tale and took no precaution to ward off any possible calamity.

"A few nights later the blow fell. Our house was in silence and darkness, all having retired to rest, when some time after midnight a violent knocking and beating at the massive gates of the high stone wall, which surrounded the garden in which stood the Allatini residence, was heard. We were all aroused by the clamor and hastening to the windows beheld in the road outside the gates a great, raging multitude with hate-filled countenances, and bearing in their hands, besides weapons, flaming torches which cast a lurid light over all the scene. No sooner did they behold the frightened faces at the windows (I was not among them, for, realizing at once that the clamor had reference to me, I kept in the background) than with terrible cries and yells they demanded that I be delivered to them. 'Give us the apostate, the renegade,' they yelled. 'We mean no harm to you that are born Jews, but we want the blood of the

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traitor; and unless you surrender him to us, we will destroy the house and slay you all.'

"Our people held a hasty consultation. I will not detain you with all the particulars of our debate, but the result reached was that it was possible for me to be saved. Dr. Allatini took a hasty leave of me and then went forth to parley with the mob. I hastily dressed myself and packed together a few necessary articles. A purse of money was pressed into my hands. I embraced and kissed my beloved Raphael and bade all good-by, then entered a subterranean passage-way which led to an adjacent street. When I emerged in the next street, the shouts and noise of the mob had died down and I realized that Dr. Allatini had succeeded in quieting them. I subsequently learned that he had assured them that I was not in the house, and had given them permission to enter it and search for me. I reached the harbor early the next morning in safety and took passage in the first ship leaving which chanced to be bound for Marseilles.

"With a soul filled with mingled feelings of sorrow and gratitude I left my native land, sorry that I must leave my dearly beloved one, the companion of my youth and early manhood, and gratitude to the God of Israel, who had

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saved me from the hands of my enemies and from the perils of the sea, and brought me in safety to a new home. And I thank Him also that in this strange land He has led me to a brother who has shown himself possessed of true fraternal, Jewish love and kindness. And I doubt not that He who maketh a path in the fierce waters and who protected His servant David from the hostile sword, will care for me, His humble worshipper, in this strange land and grant me His peace and blessing. The words of Abraham are finished."

When the stranger had finished his tale, Benjamin Dalinski, who had listened in wonderment to the singular narrative, said to him: "Truly, thy tale is strange and interesting; but dost thou not think that thou didst act foolishly? Hadst thou remained in the faith of thy forefathers thou wouldst not have lost the friendship of thy Jewish benefactors, nor have aroused the hatred of thy Gentile neighbors. Thou couldst have remained in peace in thy native land and perhaps have become in later years a great man among thy people; whereas now thou art an exile and a fugitive, and who knows what will be thy lot here in this land?"

Abraham gazed at him a moment as though he did not understand his words and then an-

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swered with indignation as one who repudiates a sinful and unworthy suggestion. "I would rather eat bread with salt and drink blank water as a *Yehudi* than be a prince and a great man among the Gentiles."

"Ah," said Dalinski, "thou art indeed a proselyte of righteousness."

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ISAAC AND ALICE.

They were good friends and true, were Isaac and Alice. To be sure, they were not exactly what most people would consider a well-assorted or naturally allied pair; for Isaac was a great strapping fellow of about thirty, who could speak Yiddish much better than English, while Alice was a sweet little girl of not quite five, whose childish prattle had a decidedly Yankee twang, and whose cradle had stood many thousands of miles from the spot where Isaac's infantile eyes had first opened upon a strange and troublesome world. Yet that they were close friends was an undeniable, if somewhat unaccountable, fact. People who saw the stalwart young Lithuanian Hebrew carpenter, with the dark ringlets and raven beard and the golden-haired and blue-eyed little Down East maiden as they sat together and conversed during the midday hour when Isaac was eating his frugal lunch, or as they sauntered hand in hand through the streets of the little Massachusetts town, would

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often smile and wonder and make comments, sometimes jocular and sometimes sarcastic to each other; but neither Isaac nor Alice cared what anybody said. They were not afraid of scandal and were sublimely indifferent to public opinion. They were just good friends and that was all about it. They had been good friends from the first moment they met, several weeks after Isaac had set foot upon the hospitable shore of America, and had exhausted the greater part of his physical energy and about all of his financial resources and of his store of courage and hope in the effort to persuade the land of the free and the home of the brave to provide him with a livelihood. He had entered at the port of New York and tried for a week or so to find employment at his trade in the metropolis. But there must have been a plethora of carpenters in the great city at that time; for wherever he applied, the answer was the same, "No one wanted." He had then determined to try the smaller towns and cities, and had wandered on foot through Connecticut, and had applied at hundreds of shops in the many industrial communities of that State, all the time growing fainter and weaker and more discouraged; and had never heard any other response to his request for work than the same monot-

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onous refrain, which had now grown terrible in its suggestion of despair, "No one wanted."

"At last he had drifted, he hardly knew how, into Massachusetts and had entered the little town of Atbury. Hope had almost left him, and grim thoughts of suicide filled his mind while he wandered aimlessly through the neat and well-kept streets of the town. In the course of his wanderings he saw a wooden building, upon the front of which a large sign proclaimed that within was a carpenter shop, and that the owner's name was Thomas Jones. Mechanically Isaac entered the large open doorway on his usual quest. He had no anticipation of success; and when Mr. Jones, who was a handsome middle-aged man of typical Yankee appearance and very brusque and short-spoken, returned the usual answer to his timid query, he turned to go away with a sinking heart, in which the dull pain was not perceptibly keener than it had previously been.

But this time an unprecedented incident occurred. A pretty little blond-haired, blue-eyed girl, a mere tot, was standing next to the proprietor when the stranger entered the shop, and she gazed at his handsome though careworn features while he made his pitiable appeal for work, with an expression of evident liking,

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mingled with sympathy and pity. When he turned to depart, surprise and sorrow showed themselves plainly in the face of the child; and turning to her father—as you have, no doubt, already guessed, sweet reader, it was Alice, Thomas Jones's only and dearly beloved child—she said: "Why, aren't you going to give the poor man work, papa? Just see how sad he looks. Don't let him go."

"Do you want me to keep him, little one?" asked the father, gazing at the pleading face of his little daughter with amused parental fondness.

"Yes I do, papa," said Alice. "I think he is a very good man and I want you to keep him."

"Well," said Thomas Jones, "for your sake I'll give him a chance."

Isaac was not yet out of the shop and the loud voice of the master carpenter at once brought him back. He speedily demonstrated his ability in his trade and was retained, his employer impressing upon him that it was the intercession of the little girl which had given him his opportunity. Isaac bowed low before the child with reverential gratitude and imprinted upon her tiny hand a grateful kiss. Thus began their friendship, and it became very warm and sincere indeed. Alice took naturally to the broad-

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shouldered, pleasant-faced young foreigner; and Isaac, who was not only deeply grateful to the child for having steered the almost shipwrecked vessel of his life into the safe harbor of employment and bread, but was also thoroughly social and companionable by disposition, did all in his power to amuse and entertain his young benefactor. They were not allowed to meet during work hours, for Father Jones, though a loving and indulgent parent, was a strict and uncompromising task-master, and would tolerate no unbusiness-like interruptions during the time allotted to work; but during the noonday intermission for meals, when Alice would seek Isaac in whatever part of the town he happened to be employed after the close of work in the late afternoon, when Isaac returned to his master's house where was his home, they were sure to be together, and would romp and "carry on" to their heart's content. Nothing pleased them better than a "horsey-back" ride, when Isaac would act as the fiery though remarkably docile steed, and Alice rode her mount in greater security than the most practised equestrienne. Isaac would trot and gallop, and pace and paw, and prance and snort, and whinny and neigh, like the very war-horse of Job, all the time holding his little rider in a firm and loving grasp; while

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NOTHING PLEASED THEM BETTER THAN A "HORSEY-BACK" RIDE

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Alice, with streaming locks and flashing eyes, would cry "Gee-up!" and "Whoa!" and pull his hair for reins and belabor his shoulders with her tiny fists, according to the most approved rules of the equestrian art. There were plenty of other forms of amusement as well. Sometimes they would play "blind-man's buff," when Isaac would begin the game by permitting himself to be tightly bandaged across the eyes, and would then grope around the room in an endeavor to catch Alice. But somehow or other he was always very clumsy in this game; and Alice never had the least trouble to avoid his aimless reachings out, and would enjoy herself highly, slipping in and out right in front of his very face and touching him on all sides. And when finally his hand would land on Alice, apparently by accident, and capture her, and it would be her turn to submit to be bandaged and to try to capture him, he seemed even clumsier in his movements. He never seemed to know how to evade the "blind man," but was continually getting in the way; and in two or three minutes at the utmost, Alice's tiny hands would seize him in their firm grasp, and her shrill cry of triumph would proclaim that he was a prisoner. He also taught Alice some queer Russian games, which were a source of never-failing amazement and

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amusement (about equally divided) to all the boys and girls in the neighborhood. Then sometimes on a holiday, or when work happened to be slack, they would go out together berrying, and would come home with big canfuls of blackberries, or blueberries, or huckleberries, or raspberries, or some of the other sorts of berries which grew at the roadsides or in the fields, Alice looking very happy, and Isaac rather tired and scratched about the hands; for it was an open secret that while Alice had most of the fun, Isaac had most of the trouble, and worked his very hardest to fill the can with the ripest and finest berries that could be found, so that the expedition should be properly fruitful of results. In these and a hundred other ways Isaac endeavored to please his employer's little daughter, and his efforts were highly successful, so successful, indeed, that the child grew to look upon him with warm affection, and was never so happy as when in his company.

Nor was Alice the only one who regarded Isaac with affection. Her parents were almost equally warm in their sentiments. Thomas Jones thought much of him because he was a thorough master of his trade, tremendously strong, and absolutely faithful and reliable. Any task assigned to him, however arduous,

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was always performed with scrupulous exactness and conscientiousness, and no complaint or objection ever escaped his lips. Mrs. Jones liked him because he was sober, polite, and cleanly in his habits, and because he took such pains to please and amuse her little daughter. To be sure, there were some points about him which they did not exactly like, but his many good qualities counterbalanced these defects. One of these points was that he would not labor on the Sabbath or Jewish holidays. This difficulty had arisen the very first week of his employment, but the superior character of his work had induced Mr. Jones then to retain him, and afterward he had grown accustomed to dispensing with the services of Isaac on Saturdays or on any other day when he declared the rules of his religion required abstention from labor. Another matter which seemed very peculiar to both Mr. and Mrs. Jones was that, although Isaac boarded with them, he never ate flesh in any form and refused to partake of many other dishes which appeared on their table. But, as the Joneses were kind-hearted and tolerant people, and had besides a genuine liking for Isaac, they overlooked these matters, and, if they reflected on them at all, merely thought them the natural result of his religious views.

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Many were the arguments which the Joneses had with some of their neighbors on account of Isaac and the peculiar position which he occupied in their household. Bigotry and narrow-mindedness are not unknown even in free America, where, theoretically, a man's race and religion should have no influence, favorable or unfavorable, upon the opinion which is held concerning him, and where, if anywhere, the principle enunciated by the rabbis in the Talmud should prevail—"Thy deeds shall recommend thee, thy deeds shall condemn thee." Some of the good Christian people of Atbury, who thought, like Sancho Panza, that the most essential characteristic of a Christian was a sound hatred of the Jews, could not conceal their amazement, nay, their righteous indignation, that a Jew should be a favored member of a Christian household, and, worse yet, the trusted friend and companion of a little Christian maiden.

"How can you permit an unbeliever to dwell in your home?" they would say, with much show of holy horror. "Aren't you afraid that in course of time he may seduce you or your little daughter, with specious reasoning, away from the true faith, and lead you into the error of Judaism?" But the Joneses would only laugh at these pious apprehensions and answer

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that Isaac never spoke to them on religious subjects; that, while he was undoubtedly sincerely religious in his own way, he never obtruded his views on others; and that, in fact, it would not have been a bad thing if some people whom they knew would have imitated him in this particular.

The neighbors would then try another tack, in which they hoped to be more successful. "How can you trust Alice to such a person?" they would ask, with the solemn air of those who warn friends against impending dangers which they are rashly incurring. "Aren't you afraid that he may do her some harm? You never can tell what such a Jew might do. Why, in some parts of Europe they even accuse them of slaying Christian children in order to use their blood for the Passover. It isn't safe to leave Alice in his charge."

But when they came with this argument they received a fitting response, which was not lacking either in clearness or emphasis. The Joneses, particularly Mrs. Jones, told them that they might be at better business than calumniating one of whom they knew no evil; that Isaac was the kindest, best-hearted, most devoted fellow in the world; that he was deeply grateful to Alice because she had been the means of sav-

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ing him from starvation, and, as for her being in any danger at his hands, why they, the Joneses, were convinced that he would at any time be ready to give his life rather than see a hair of her head harmed.

Sooner than any one anticipated the opportunity came which demonstrated that Isaac was indeed ready to lay down his life to save his little friend from harm. A few days after an unusually warm debate of the kind outlined above between Thomas Jones and an especially zealous neighbor, who had warned Isaac's employer that all kinds of dreadful things would certainly happen if this unholy friendship were permitted to continue, Jones summoned Isaac to him. "Come here, you Jew!" he said half jocularly, half angrily, for the remembrance of the uncharitable words of his officious neighbor was still strong in him. "I want to show you what I think of you." Isaac at once advanced and waited with deferential air for the further words of his employer. "I've got a job in the outskirts of the town," continued Jones, gazing with satisfaction at the brawny figure and submissive attitude of his most reliable workman, "and, as I can't spare any men from the other work, I'm going to put the whole thing in your hands. There's a little cottage on the Prentice

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place that's got to be jacked up to make room for the masons to build a new foundation, and then all the board work and carpentering generally must be renovated and fixed up. I've sent up all the necessary wood already, so you can go right up and attend to the whole job alone. When you get there you can see for yourself what is to be done, and if you don't understand anything, why, just ask old man Prentice, and he'll tell you what to do."

Isaac picked up his box of tools and was about to depart when little Alice, who had been listening to the words of her father, skipped up and, laying her hand on Isaac's arm, asked eagerly: "Won't you take me along, Isaac? I want to be with you when you're doing the work."

"Ask your papa, Alice," said Isaac, smiling pleasantly at his little friend. "If he will let you go, then I'll be glad to take you."

Alice did not need to ask her father, for the latter, without giving her the opportunity to speak, at once gave her the desired permission. "Yes, indeed, you can go with Isaac," he said, with rather more emphasis than was apparently necessary. "I'll just show those numbskull bigot neighbors of mine what I think of their fanatical suspicions and insinuations. Just trot

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along, little one, and I wish you lots of pleasure seeing Isaac at work."

Thus duly authorized and permitted, Isaac and Alice went off together to the scene of his solitary task, which they reached in about half an hour. The Prentice place was a little farm of two or three acres, in the centre of which stood the cottage. It was not a very large structure, but Isaac's practised eye at once perceived that his employer had set him a task sufficient to try the strength of three men. Old man Prentice was of the same opinion, and very emphatically expressed his dissatisfaction that Jones had sent only one man to do the work of three. Nothing daunted, however, Isaac at once set about the performance of his task. The first thing to do was to lift the structure, which was done by means of appliances called jacks. Isaac inserted one of the jacks under each of the four corners of the house and screwed it up until that part of the building was elevated to the desired height. In the mean while Alice stood near her favorite and watched him at his arduous task, chatting and prattling all the while with the careless innocence of childhood; and Isaac, though engrossed in his labor, did not fail to answer her childish queries, and kept his little friend interested and

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amused. All went well until Isaac came to the fourth and last corner and proceeded to jack it up as he had done the others. Here, by some miscalculation, he raised the corner a foot or so more than was necessary. At once the frame structure began to careen. Isaac instantly perceived that the building would certainly topple to the ground, and a pang of agony shot through his heart as he thought of the loss which his mistake, unaccountable even to himself, would cause. His next thought was to save himself from harm; but, as he turned to flee from under the falling structure, what horrible sight met his eyes! Little Alice, petrified apparently by fright, was standing motionless under the tottering building. A sickening picture flashed up instantly before his mental retina of her little body lying crushed and bleeding under the ruins of the building, its life crushed out by the overwhelming weight. How could he save her? She was too far away for him to seize her and flee with her to safety, neither would it avail aught to shout to her to flee. Before she could have recovered control of her faculties and impelled her limbs to motion, the blow would have fallen and all would be over. There was but one way to save Alice, and, though Isaac knew it meant almost certain

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death for himself, he instantly determined to do it. Placing his powerful shoulders under the tilting woodwork, he shouted in a great and terrible voice to Alice to run—run for her life. For a minute or so he stood, like fabled Atlas upholding the world, supporting with his tremendous strength the falling structure, while his muscles stood out like whipcords and the sweat of agony poured all over his body. In that minute Alice recovered herself and toddled out of harm's way. A second later the heavy framework crushed out the man's strength and bore him to the ground with a sickening thud, while the harsh crackling of the beams and boards as they were torn from their fastenings mingled with his awful shriek. He did not need to lie there long. Poor little Alice, with an intelligence beyond her years, ran to seek help from the neighbors; but her frenzied efforts were not necessary. The frightful crash of the falling building and the fierce, agonized shriek of the stricken victim had aroused all the neighborhood, and from all sides assistance speedily came. The united efforts of old man Prentice and a number of laborers who hastened from a neighboring field speedily succeeded in removing the mass of beams and boards and odds and ends of woodwork from

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the body of Isaac, and tenderly they laid him upon a temporary couch formed of their coats. He was crushed and maimed and bloody, every limb broken, and his features disfigured almost beyond recognition, but he was conscious and a happy smile played upon his face when he saw that Alice had escaped all injury and was safe and sound.

"Come to me, little darling," he said, in barely audible tones, gazing wistfully at the child-friend for whom he had given his life; "come and bid me good-bye, for I feel that I must go. I do not complain because God is calling me away, but I am glad your young life is spared to be a joy to yourself and your dear parents for many years to come." And his young friend, with strangely grave and solemn face, went to her dying protector and clasped his hand and kissed his blood-stained and distorted features, and called him her own dear Isaac, and begged him not to die, while the strong men who stood around bowed their heads in reverent sorrow and silently wept. Then they bore him home, and Alice's parents, when they heard the story of what he had done, knew not of which feeling their hearts were fuller—of gratitude that their darling daughter was safe or of admiration for the pure and self-

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sacrificing friendship which Isaac had so heroically displayed and sorrow for his untimely end. He had relapsed into semi-consciousness and lay for several hours without speaking on his couch. Then he stirred uneasily and feebly beckoned to his employer, indicating that he desired to communicate something to him. Thomas Jones, who had not left the room since first Isaac had been brought home, at once went to the bedside, and putting his ear to the mouth of the dying man, heard him say in a feeble voice: "Dear master, promise me one favor. I die a Jew. Have me laid away among my people."

And Thomas Jones answered: "Isaac, I promise."

A look of infinite content and gratitude lit up Isaac's face. Then, rising slightly on his side, he recited in Hebrew, in a clear though feeble voice, the words of the Jewish ritual for the dying: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Blessed be the glorious name of Thy kingdom for ever and ever. Into Thy hands I deliver my spirit. Thou hast redeemed me, O Lord, God of truth." And so he passed away.

Every year, on the anniversary of Isaac's death, Alice, now a maiden ripening into wom-

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anhood, visits Isaac's grave in the Jewish cemetery in Boston in which he rests; and if sincere tears and true sorrow are acceptable in the sight of God, then is her offering indeed acceptable and holy.

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THE SCISSORS-GRINDER

"Scissors to grind! Knives, axes, or saws to sharpen! Everything made as sharp as new!" This is the cry, uttered in a clear and cheerful voice, which is frequently heard in the alleys and back yards as well as the streets and avenues of that vast and densely populated section of the American metropolis known as the great East Side. The man who utters it is an unusually agreeable, as well as active and energetic, representative of the classic trade of scissors-grinding. He is a pleasant-faced, good-humored young fellow, with light-brown hair and rounded, open countenance, from which a pair of bright blue eyes gaze at you with a frank and sympathetic expression. His shabby clothes hang most gracefully on his lithe and erect, not over tall figure; his motions have a sort of trained elegance about them, and when he stands before you with his grinding machine on his back, he seems not so much an humble sharpener of domestic utensils, but rather some strange sort of soldier, and the machine upon

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THE SCISSORS GRINDER

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his back some peculiar and unusual engine of warfare. He is very well liked in the entire district, and his popularity brings in sufficient trade to insure him a very fair living. When his clear and musical cry is heard anywhere in the neighborhood, the customers pour forth from the many-storied tenements, the cellar dwellings (I had almost written cave dwellings, which term would hardly have rendered me liable to a suit for libel if I had used it), and the little shops and stalls which abound everywhere in the vicinity. Soon he is surrounded by a motley throng—Jews, Italians, Poles, Bohemians, men, women, and children, all sorts and conditions of mankind—who bring him a miscellaneous collection of invalid table knives, dilapidated carving knives, superannuated scissors, and antediluvian saws, all of which he is expected to heal and to restore to their pristine brightness and sharpness.

But, though our friend is well known and popular in the district, he is nevertheless unknown. By this paradoxical statement is meant that, although the scissors-grinder is personally a familiar and well-esteemed figure, nothing is known by the vast bulk of his constituents and customers of his connections, his history, or his antecedents. This is nothing strange or un-

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usual in that section. People are not, as a rule, curious concerning each other on the East Side. The inhabitants are mostly not native to the soil, but are a chance aggregation from all the countries of the civilized world, driven from their native habitats by the storm and stress of harsh experiences and brought together in the New World by the glittering attractions of the Golden Land. It is not always advisable under such circumstances to be over-inquisitive concerning the past history of one's neighbors and friends, and therefore the dwellers on the East Side are discreetly devoid of curiosity, and are quite content if the people with whom they associate are, in their present stage of life, decent and well behaved. That is why no one knows (or knew until recently) anything about the scissors-grinder—his history, his family, or even his name. Nevertheless his story came out some time ago, and it proved to be, what no one would have anticipated from the scissors-grinder's blithe and pleasant appearance, a real moral tragedy, a tale of blind, mediæval oppression, of high ambition suddenly blasted, of strange and sublime heroism. It came out through Mendel Greenberger.

Mendel, who keeps a little optician shop in Orchard Street near Grand, is considerable of a

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character himself, and, unlike the majority of the denizens of the region, is gifted with a lively curiosity concerning the persons with whom he comes in contact. Mendel has travelled pretty much all over the world, and has acquired in the course of his wanderings the knowledge of a dozen or more languages and of at least three trades. But what he most prides himself on is his *menschenkenntniss*, that is, his ability to recognize at a glance the origin of strangers when he sees for the first time, and to classify them according to the racial, religious, and social elements or subdivisions thereof to which they belong. This he infers from the appearance, conduct, and speech of the individuals concerned, and, in particularly interesting cases, he manages to have them reveal their names and other personal details of interest, but without asking direct questions, which he thinks impertinent.

When the scissors-grinder began to come into the neighborhood and Mendel began to give him employment in his vocation, he at once recognized that here was an interesting and extremely puzzling personality. It was a real problem of the kind Mendel Greenberger loved to solve, but it defied his powers of analysis and classification. For the life of him he could not

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make out who or what the handsome, pleasant-spoken young man, with the lowly trade apparently so unsuited for him, was. His type was absolutely non-distinctive. As far as appearance went there was no telling whether he was Jew or Gentile, and no reason to assign him to any one European nation rather than another. His conduct and manner were just as little guide, for, though polite and manifestly well bred, he had no mannerisms of any kind. Baffled by his inability to "locate" his new acquaintance by these usually infallible indications, Mendel resorted to the expedient of addressing him in various languages. But here Mendel "tripped up," so to speak, even more emphatically than before. The scissors-grinder spoke, with one exception, every European language which Mendel did, but with superior accent and correcter grammar. His English was that of one to the manner born, though devoid of either Cockney accent or Yankee twang; his French would have done credit to any *boulevardier;* his German was as faultlessly exact in construction and pronunciation as that of any compatriot of Goethe or Schiller; and as for Italian, Spanish, Russian, Polish, and Hungarian, to say nothing of the minor tongues, Bohemian, Roumanian, Servian, Greek, Turkish, he spoke them all with

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perfect ease and fluency. It mattered not in what tongue the puzzled Mendel addressed him, the scissors-grinder always answered in the same, but without betraying any surprise and as though it were the natural and to-be-expected thing to speak any and every idiom in existence. But, as already stated, there was one exception to the polyglot ability of the scissors-grinder. He did not know Yiddish, for when Mendel addressed him in that tongue, he did not understand him well and answered in German, the tongue most nearly related to the dialect of the Jews of the Slavonic lands, and without using any Hebrew words or phrases with which even the German Jews habitually interlard their speech. Mendel had to confess to himself that the scissors-grinder was an enigma, which even he, with his great knowledge of human beings, could not solve. Of two things, however, he felt certain: first, that the scissors-grinder was originally of far higher social station than his humble vocation would suggest, for his manners and bearing, and, above all, his extraordinary linguistic attainments, were only explainable on the ground of refined surroundings and the best of education; secondly, that he was no Jew, for his ignorance of Yiddish and Hebrew and his manifest unfamiliarity with Jewish ideas and

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usages showed conclusively that he had had no Jewish bringing up nor had ever associated intimately with Jewish circles.

Mendel at first conjectured that the scissors-grinder was a nobleman of some European nation, who had been compelled to leave his native land for a political or other reason, and was obliged to support himself by his own labor in exile. Noblemen in exile do not, however, usually select a vocation requiring as much skill and industry and withal so low in the social scale as scissors-grinding, so on second thought Mendel abandoned this conjecture as untenable, and, not being able to set up any more satisfactory one, found himself, as far as this question was concerned, *vis à vis de rien*. Not feeling able to remain in this condition, he cast about for other means of solving the problem and gratifying his curiosity. He determined to ask the scissors-grinder's name. Names, it is true, may be assumed, but Mendel thought that even an assumed name would be some sort of clew to its bearer's identity, for it would, at least, indicate to what nation or class the bearer considered himself and desired to have others consider him as belonging. Accordingly when next the scissors-grinder appeared in the neighborhood of Mendel's shop and was bringing back finely

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renovated the penknife which Mendel had given him to sharpen, the latter remarked: "Fine weather we are having to-day, Mr. ——!" and paused with expectant air.

"My name," said the scissors-grinder quietly, "is Eliezer Schwartzfeld."

Mendel gazed at him in undisguised astonishment. "That sounds extremely Jewish," he said. "You are not one of the chosen people, are you?"

"Yes, I am a Jew," answered the scissors-grinder, with just a suggestion of a smile at Mendel's evident surprise; "a Russian Jew at that, too."

Mendel's astonishment increased to a degree that was absolutely comical. Here was an utterly inexplicable case. It was not that the scissors-grinder's physiognomy did not contain a feature that suggested the Semite—that was common enough, especially among Russian Jews; but what might be called the psychology of the case was utterly baffling to Mendel. He had often met Jews that were well educated and spoke a number of languages with fluency, but in all his experience he had never come across one who had not at least some, however slight, acquaintance with the Jewish mother tongues, Yiddish or Hebrew. He had frequently come

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in contact with Jews, well and gently reared in their native lands, who had been forced by adverse circumstances to earn their bread by humble labor in America; but they had invariably found employment in some one of the so-called "Jewish" branches of industry, tailoring, cloak-making, cigar-packing, or the like, which open at least the door to a future as an independent manufacturer or merchant. But something so plebeian and hopeless as scissors-grinding, and embraced, too, by a man of evident refinement—why, that was utterly anomalous, unheard of! He gazed at the scissors-grinder without uttering a word, but with eyes which told unmistakably their tale of amazement.

"You are surprised," said the latter, "I suppose, because I, though a Jew, do not speak Yiddish, and because I found nothing better to do than to sharpen scissors and knives. Let me tell you my story and you will wonder no longer. I can recollect very little of my earliest childhood. My mother must have died, I think, when I was hardly more than an infant, for all I can recollect of her is a picture, very dim and faint, of a sweet, motherly face bending over me and of a tender, loving voice calling me darling and dove. My father, too, must have left this earth when I was only about four or

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five years of age. My memories of him, too, are few and indistinct. I can recall that I was a very small child in charge of an old, cross-tempered woman, a Jewess, I think, who treated me with a strange alternation of cruelty and kindness. My father used to visit me at rare intervals in this place, and bring me sweetmeats and little presents, and I can remember that on these occasions he was always dressed in a brilliant uniform, which filled my childish heart with admiration and awe. My most distinct recollection concerning my father is of the circumstances attending his death. He was brought to the house one day with blood-stained bandages around his head and breast and with face ghastly pale. They laid him upon a couch, and for several days physicians came to treat him, and men dressed in even brighter and finer uniforms than his came to visit him, and some of them chucked me under the chin and called me a fine little fellow. Then one day he called me to his bedside and said to me, in such a faint voice that I had to put my ear to his mouth in order to catch his words: 'Eliezer, my darling boy, I am going to die and must leave you alone in the world. But I have spoken to good people, and they have promised me to care for you and to see

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that you are educated to become what your father was—a soldier—but a higher and nobler one than he could be. Always be good and honorable in all your doings, and above all, my son, never forget, wherever you may be or whatever you may become, that you are a Jew, as your father was, and never permit anything to swerve you from your faithfulness to the holy traditions of our religion and people.' Then he kissed me on my brow, and, child though I was, I knew that something dreadful was going to happen, and burst forth into an agony of bitter weeping that shook my little frame convulsively. That same night he died, and the day after the next he was taken away in the midst of a great concourse of people, among whom were many Jewish men and women whom I knew not, and who wept and cried aloud as they accompanied the funeral procession. There was also a long line of soldiers, who marched with flags draped and guns reversed, and in front of whom went musicians and drummers with crape-covered drums, who played together a sad, funereal strain as they marched. I was left behind, gazing out of the window at the funeral procession as long as it was in sight, weeping as though my very heart would break and feeling that I was left all alone now in the world, with-

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I WAS LEFT BEHIND, GAZING OUT OF THE WINDOW AT THE FUNERAL PROCESSION.

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out friend, protector, or well-wisher. But the same afternoon a kindly spoken, friendly looking officer, attired in a brilliant uniform, came to my lodgings, told the old woman who had charge of me that he was Col. Ivan Mentchikoff, and that he had been appointed legal guardian of Corporal Schwartzfeld's son and had come to take me away. I noticed that the old woman did not seem satisfied, and grumbled something to herself with a discontented air, but she did not audibly object, but took the money which the colonel offered her. She then packed together my little belongings, carried them down to the carriage which was waiting at the door, and the colonel and I entered and drove off to the railroad station, whence we left for the colonel's home, which was in the town of Yellisavetgrad, many miles away. I remained with the family of the colonel for eight or nine years. I was treated with the utmost kindness—in fact, in all regards, except one, exactly like the children of the family. Colonel Mentchikoff was very particular in regard to the education of his children. He kept the best of private tutors for all subjects, and was especially insistent that they should learn all the chief European languages, a knowledge of which, he declared, was essential

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to a Russian gentleman. I had, of course, the advantage of all this, the same as all the others, and I quickly discovered that I had a special linguistic talent, and, while I easily kept pace with the Mentchikoff boys and girls in all the subjects of instruction generally, as regards the acquisition of languages I was so superior that I could not be compared with them at all. It was no trouble at all to me to acquire a new language; the forms seemed to impress themselves naturally on my mind, and my memory retained with the greatest ease the multitudes of new terms and expressions which each tongue presented.

"The point in which my education differed from that of my companions was that of religion. Colonel Mentchikoff was a zealous adherent of the Greek Church, and insisted that his children should be instructed in its doctrine, and also that they should attend worship regularly in the beautiful church of the town. I was exempted from both these requirements, but, as he did not forbid my attendance at them, I formed the habit of being of my own accord present at the lessons in religion which a certain pope gave them twice weekly, and I was frequently present at service in the church on Sundays and feast days. Hebrew instruc-

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tion I did not receive, and was, to my shame I must confess, utterly ignorant of the teachings of the religion in which I was born and to which my father, on his dying bed, had adjured me to be faithful. I did not, however, feel at all attracted to the teachings of Greek Christianity. My attendance at church and lessons was induced solely by curiosity, and I often found myself smiling contemptuously at the things my companions were obliged to learn and believe. As I knew and kept nothing of Judaism either, I suppose I must have been classed at that time as a youthful heathen.

"After I had been about two years in Colonel Mentchikoff's house he told me my father's story and the reason why he, the colonel, was so friendly to me. My father, it seems, had been a soldier in the Russian army most of his life, and had attracted attention because of his gallantry and fidelity. He had taken part in many battles in the Caucasus and had risen to the rank of corporal, which was as high as an uneducated man and a Jew could aspire. In a fierce hand-to-hand struggle in one of those battles he had saved the life of Colonel Mentchikoff, who had then, impelled by gratitude, asked him in what way he could recompense him for the great service he had rendered him.

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My father, blessed be his memory, who was as unassuming and modest as he was brave, answered that he desired no recompense for himself, as he had only done his duty in defending his commander, but that he had an only child, a son, whose mother had died while he was yet an infant, and that he, my father, desired, in case he met his death in the war, that the colonel should see that the boy was cared for and properly educated, and if in future years the intolerant laws should be changed and it would be permitted to Jews to become military officers, that he should endeavor to have him admitted to the military academy and prepared for the martial career. All this the colonel had willingly promised, and thought it but a slight reward for the saver of his life.

"Shortly after my father received his death wound at the hand of one of the savage warriors of the Caucasus. He was brought, at his own urgent request, to the house where his little son was living in charge of an old nurse, to pass the few remaining days of his existence; and when he had died he received, in consideration of his exceptional merit, the distinguished honor of a great military funeral. The colonel had then taken formal charge of me, and ever since I had resided in his home. The colonel assured me

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that he loved me dearly, for the sake of my father, whose memory he held sacred, and that he would do all in his power to promote my welfare and to assist me to embrace the military career as my father had desired. He was as good as his word. Until my fourteenth year he cared for me in the most liberal and kind-hearted manner, providing equally well for my physical and intellectual needs, and then, since I had reached the age when youths, intending to take up the military career must begin their studies, he procured my admission into the Imperial Military Academy at St. Petersburg. The illiberal laws prohibiting the conferring of commissions on Hebrews had not, it is true, been formally abrogated, but the spirit of tolerance was abroad in the land; it was in the days of the good Czar Alexander II., who had in so many ways alleviated the lot of all the oppressed peoples of his realm, and so my kind protector and guardian met with no difficulties or discouragements in seeking my admission into the academy. On the contrary, the officials of the institution were exceedingly kind and sympathetic. They received me with open arms as the orphan son of the gallant Corporal Schwartzfeld, of whose heroic record they were well aware, and as the ward of the well-con-

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nected and influential Colonel Mentchikoff. The fact of my being a Hebrew was hardly referred to, or, if any casual mention thereof was made, it was accompanied with the statement that that would undoubtedly make no difference in my case, and that, in view of my exceptional recommendations, I need anticipate no difficulty in obtaining a satisfactory appointment when once I had completed my course.

"I took leave of my benefactors with tears and embraces—and to this day I cannot think of Colonel Mentchikoff and his good, kind family without being deeply moved, for they were noble, true-hearted people, and very good to me—and took up my studies at the military academy. I will not refer at length to my career at the military academy, for now it makes no difference whether I did well or poorly, and, besides, it were foolish for the poor scissors-grinder to boast of the past glories of his life. Suffice it to say that I more than held my own in every branch of instruction, and made, besides, a specialty of three subjects. I devoted myself with great zeal to the pursuit of military engineering and languages, and also sought to acquire an expert knowledge of the manufacture and preparation of weapons, both of those which cut and those which discharge projectiles.

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The latter two branches of knowledge I pursued with the idea that they would be particularly useful if ever I became a member of the general staff or obtained some high military political post, when a knowledge of languages, particularly of the Slavonic tongues, and ability to criticise the quality of weapons furnished to the army would be invaluable. I thought of myself as a soldier, and a soldier only. To other matters I hardly devoted a thought, so absorbed was I in my preparations for my prospective vocation—least of all to religious loyalty or Hebraic traditions. During all the seven years of my attendance at the military academy I never entered a synagogue—in fact, I would not have known what to do had I gone there, for I was utterly ignorant of Hebrew and knew nothing of the mode or manner of worship among the Jews; I never kept a Jewish holiday, never was present at a religious gathering of any kind, for I had given up also my former curiosity concerning Christianity; I did not associate with or even know any Hebrew; in short, to all intents and purposes, I forgot that I was a Jew or had any need to consider the question of my relation to my ancestral faith, and my friends and colleagues at the academy, who were all very liberal-minded and tolerant, did not re-

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mind me of it in any way. Personally I was popular with both teachers and students, and, when the last year of the course began, I received an unofficial intimation from the faculty that, on account of my exceptional proficiency in technical matters, I would be recommended for appointment after graduation as a captain of engineers.

"At last the day of days, long looked for—commencement—arrived. I had passed a splendid examination and was designated valedictorian of the class. The great *aula* or hall of the academy was filled to overflowing with a brilliant and distinguished assemblage, among them brave men and fair women, bearers of the proudest and most ancient names in Russia. At the front of the hall facing the stage sat, in two long rows, the graduates, in their natty uniforms, among them myself. At the front of the stage, at a table on which were flowers, the graduates' diplomas, and other papers, sat the venerable General Popoff, president of the academy, and behind him the faculty and a large number of honored visitors. Just before the hour appointed for the beginning of the ceremonies, an orderly entered the hall, strode up to General Popoff, saluted in regulation military fashion, handed him a note, saluted again, and retired. I do not know why it was, but a shiver

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of apprehension went through me as I saw this action. I felt instinctively that it concerned me and boded me no good. The General opened the letter, my eyes mustering him painfully the while, and I could see him start as he read its contents. For a moment he sat with his head resting on his hands, evidently plunged in deep thought. Then he summoned an attendant and spoke a few words to him. A moment later the attendant stood at my side.

"'The General desires to speak to you in the room at the side of the stage,' he said.

"The hot blood surged impetuously to my head and my heart beat violently as I entered the room whither I had been summoned. General Popoff was already in and looked at me pityingly as I entered. 'At your command, General,' I said, concealing my agitation with a mighty effort and saluting stiffly. The General did not answer, but handed me a paper, evidently the letter which he had just received. It was an official communication, bore the governmental seal, and read as follows:

"'MINISTRY OF WAR.

"'*To General Alexei Popoff, President of the Imperial Military Academy.*

"'SIR: The receipt of your report certifying to the cadets entitled to graduation and recom-

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mending the same to various appointments in the army is hereby acknowledged. The same is approved, and you are authorized to issue certificates of graduation to all the cadets therein named, with the exception of Cadet Schwartzfeld. In his case there appears to be some doubt whether he has been properly baptized in the Orthodox Church, and you are hereby ordered to withhold his certificate until you have convinced yourself that such is the case.

"'In the name of the Minister,

"'KRASNEWITZ, *Secretary*.'

"I read the note through two or three times. Its contents seemed to burn themselves with letters of fire into my brain. I looked at the General. He did not say anything and appeared deeply agitated. At last I forced myself to address him, and my voice sounded strangely harsh and metallic as I spoke:

"'What is to be done in this matter, your Excellency?' I said.

"'My dear boy,' said the General, and the true note of sympathy rang in his voice, 'I sent in my report over a month ago, and, not receiving any answer, I thought everything was well and that I could go ahead. I did not think this would happen. There is only one thing that you can do. You must go and have yourself baptized in the orthodox faith, or else you can

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receive neither your certificate nor your appointment, and your career is at an end.'

"'But how about this evening's affair?' I said, and the whole world seemed reeling about me. 'Am I not to receive my certificate? Am I not to deliver my valedictory?'

"'Strictly speaking, you should not be permitted to do either,' said the General, and his voice sounded even more sympathetic than before; 'but I should be sorry to see you suffer public humiliation. I will tell you what I can do. If you will promise me that to-morrow you will go and be baptized, I will accept your word of honor and you shall receive your certificate and deliver your address. But you must answer me at once,' and he glanced at his watch, 'for the hour is growing late and the proceedings must soon begin.'

"My brain seemed to become paralyzed and to lose all power of thought as I listened to the General's words, kindly spoken, but, oh, so bitter to me. My heart struck at my breast as though it would burst its confines. I longed to give the answer the General desired, but the figure of my dying father, lying outstretched upon his couch of suffering, rose suddenly before me; again I saw his pale face and blood-stained bandages, and again I heard his faint voice say-

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ing, 'Above all, my son, never forget that you are a Jew, and never permit anything to swerve you from your faithfulness to the holy traditions of our religion and people'—and I could not.

"'I cannot give you that promise now, your Excellency,' I said, in a broken voice, whose agonized groaning was perceptible even to me. 'I must have time to think over the matter.'

"'In that case,' said the General, and his voice sounded distinctly harder, 'I must ask you to leave the hall, where your presence has become improper; and any time you are ready to take the necessary steps you can notify me, and I will see to it that you receive your certificate and appointment.'

"I saluted and retired. I went to my seat, took my military cap, and, without saying a word to my fellow-students, at once left the hall, though I could not fail to notice the buzz of astonishment from both cadets and audience as I strode through the aisle toward the door. That night on my couch I fought a fiercer battle than any in which I could ever have taken part had I been privileged to enter upon my projected career. Two opposing forces were arrayed against each other and contended fiercely—on the one side self-interest and the

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disappointment, naturally intense, at seeing an ardently desired career thus cruelly cut off, nipped not even in the bud; on the other side filial devotion and a newly awakened sense of racial and religious loyalty. The one said: 'Why ruin yourself? What does Judaism concern you? You have never observed its precepts. Let them sprinkle the three drops over you. It is only the ticket of admission to your future. Inwardly you can remain as you are.' The other said little. It was only the pale face of my dying father and his faint voice speaking: 'Above all, my son, never forget that you are a Jew, and never permit anything to swerve you from your faithfulness to the holy traditions of our religion and people.'

"All night long the battle raged, while I tossed on my weary couch and never closed an eye; but when the early morning light stole through my lattice, my father had won the victory. I rose, hastily made my toilet, and wrote a letter to the General, informing him that my decision had been made to remain loyal to my faith, even at the cost of my career. On the same day I packed together my belongings and left forever that Russia that had grown hateful to me. I sailed at once for America, the land where men are free and where the State does

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not ask what is a man's descent or religion before permitting him to consecrate his services to it. In New York I found that my talents and knowledge did not avail in securing a position. Every place seemed filled and there was no lack of people of education looking unsuccessfully for work. But, fortunately, I understood the art of sharpening and tempering steel blades, and thus I became a knife-sharpener and scissors-grinder, and manage to support myself. Now you know why I am in New York, a scissors-grinder and a Jew, instead of being in Russia, a captain of engineers and a Christian. Can I sharpen anything else for you to-day? No, next time; all right, good-bye."

And the scissors-grinder went forth in search of other customers, merrily whistling the while and leaving Mendel Greenberger behind, plunged in deep reflection.

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THE SHLEMIHL.

NOVO-KAIDANSK was a most *shlemihlig* sort of place, and Yerachmiel Sendorowitz was the most *shlemihlig* of all its inhabitants. Indeed, his character as such was so pronounced and universally known that he was seldom referred to by his proper cognomen, but usually spoken of as "Yerachmiel Shlemihl," or, in shorter form, "the *Shlemihl*." For the benefit of those of my readers who are not familiar with the Judæo-German idiom, I will explain that the noun "*Shlemihl*" is generally supposed to be a corruption of the first name of Shelumiel ben Zurishaddai, one of the princes of Israel in the wilderness, of whom Heine has sung, and who, according to Jewish tradition, was a most awkward sort of fellow, who was continually getting into all sorts of scrapes. The noun "*Shlemihl*," accordingly, signifies an aggravated sort of ne'er-do-well, a hopeless incapable; and the adjective derived therefrom is synonymous with all that is utterly unprogressive and wretched.

Both Novo-Kaidansk and Yerachmiel Sendo-

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rowitz were deserving of these appellations in fullest measure. The town was a collection of miserable huts and shanties, irregularly scattered over the dull expanse of a Lithuanian plain, with unpaved streets that were ankle-deep in dust most of the summer, and knee-deep in mud and slush and snow most of the winter. The man was a woe-begone specimen of humanity, with hungry eyes gazing at you out of a careworn, furrowed countenance, the lower part of which was surrounded by a neglected-looking, reddish beard; clad in an aged suit of many colors—a man who was ready to do any and every work for a few kopecks, and who was rarely so fortunate as to see a whole rouble. He was not a bad sort of fellow at all, nor stupid. On the contrary, he had somewhat of a smattering of Hebrew education, and he endured with patience the unceasing chidings and naggings of his wife Shprinze, who, despite the auspicious significance of her name—a Yiddish corruption of the melodious Spanish appellation Esperanza—Hope—and thus also a far-off reminder of the sojourn of the children of Israel in the beautiful Iberian peninsula—did nothing to inspire the spouse of her bosom with courage or confidence, but was enough to break down the resolution of any man. He

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THE MAN WAS A WOE-BEGONE SPECIMEN OF HUMANITY, WITH HUNGRY EYES GAZING AT YOU OUT OF A CARE-WORN, FURROWED COUNTENANCE

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was never known to answer her revilings with a single harsh word. No doubt much of his patience was due to his knowledge of the fact that Shprinze had ample provocation, for, whatever might have been the reason, Yerachmiel simply could not earn a living. But, though Shprinze had provocation for her ill-temper, justification she had none. Yerachmiel did the very best he could, and it was not his fault but only the cruelty of unfeeling fate which prevented him from extracting even "bread of adversity and water of affliction" from the world. He tried to earn a little by being a porter or burden-bearer for one of the merchants of the town at very scanty wages, but just as he was about to get the place, along came a younger and stronger man and offered to do the work for even less. Needless to say, the latter was selected. He thought he could earn his livelihood by being a *Mithassek*, that is to say, one who watches at the bed of the dead and performs the funeral ablutions and rites; but it was provokingly healthy that season. No one died for a long time; and when at last the angel of death did claim one of the Hebrew residents of Novo-Kaidansk—a wealthy *Baal Ha-Bayith* he was, too, whose family always paid liberally for all services rendered to any of its members

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—it just happened that they had a poor relative, an aged man of greater learning and stricter piety than Yerachmiel; and so, of course, he was preferred, and Yerachmiel was not considered at all. At one time he dealt in fruit, purchasing a small stock with a sum of money which a pitying philanthropist had given him in order to set him up in business; but the demand for fruit was very slack just then, and in a short time Yerachmiel decided to retire from that line of commerce with the capital which he had originally possessed, that is to say, nothing. He made a dozen other attempts to coax the unwilling world into providing him with sustenance, but each attempt ended with the same result—failure, and caused him to sink appreciably lower in the estimation of Shprinze, whose temper grew bitterer and whose tongue sharper with every new proof of her husband's *Shlemihligkeit.* In fact, the term *Shlemihl* no longer harmonized with her conception of her husband's worthlessness; it was too mild, too utterly inadequate. She began to address him by no other term than *Shlamazzalnik*, that is, one doomed and predestined to perpetual misfortune; and soon the neighbors and the other townspeople, and even the children on the streets, took up the cry, and "Yerachmiel Shla-

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mazzalnik" resounded from one end to the other of the dusty highways of Novo-Kaidansk whenever the poor fellow made his appearance. Poor Yerachmiel! He used to console himself by saying that he was the equal in some respects of the great Ibn Ezra, the renowned Hebrew exegete and poet of the Middle Ages, for the latter was also an incurable *Shlemihl* and *Shlamazzalnik*. Yerachmiel used to think he was readirg of his own experiences when he read the complaint of Ibn Ezra:

"Were I to deal in candles,
The sun would shine alway;
And if 'twere shrouds I'd handle,
Then death would pass away."

But poetry, though it may be a good consoler, is a poor substitute for substantial food and the other requisites of a comfortable life; and so Yerachmiel was not entirely satisfied with his lot, even though the great Ibn Ezra was a companion in misfortune. Finding that his attempts to earn a living by work were not crowned with success, Yerachmiel did what other unsuccessful persons have done under similar circumstances—he took to religion. He became an assiduous attendant at the local Beth Hammidrash, was present at all services, morning, afternoon, and evening, and remained

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in the sacred edifice during the greater part of the day and night. He would pray with great fervor, particularly the "prayer for sustenance" at the end of the morning service, would listen attentively to the rabbi or the other learned Talmudists expounding the Holy Law, and would sometimes try to learn a little himself from some of the bulky tomes. He was, no doubt, sincere in his new-found fervor, but candor impels the statement that one of the motives of his fondness for the sacred place was a desire to have a refuge in which the sharp tongue of Shprinze could not reach him; and another was a desire to participate in the doles which were distributed on certain occasions, such as the beginnings of months or the memorial days of the death of the parents of well-to-do members to the poor persons who regularly attended. In this way he managed to exist in a precarious fashion, at least without being a burden to his wife; for whenever he had a little money he gave it to her, and when he had none he simply did not eat. It is true, he was sometimes obliged to go without food or with next to none for several days at a time; but, like all other things, semi-starvation becomes a habit, and Yerachmiel was so used to it he did not even complain.

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One afternoon he was poring over one of the volumes of the Talmud, trying to interest himself in a particularly intricate disputation between Abaye and Raba, and thus forget the unidealistic fact that he had not eaten a substantial meal in three days, and that there were no visible prospects of obtaining any in the near future. He had fallen into a light doze, and was just dreaming that he had been invited by the *Parnass* to take dinner with him on the Sabbath, and that the Sabbath goose, juicy and savory and appetizing, had just been carried to the table, when he was aroused by a hearty whack on his shoulders and a loud voice exclaiming, in boisterous though friendly tones, "Wake up, old *Chaver!* What are you doing here?" Yerachmiel awoke with a start. The vision of savory goose disappeared into thin air, and he was about to protest angrily against the rude disturbance of his entrancing dream when he recognized that the man who stood before him with a broad smile upon his countenance was none other than Shmulke Aronowitz, his old-time friend and boyhood comrade. It was Shmulke, sure enough, but strangely altered. He was dressed in an elegant suit of foreign make; his hair and beard were closely trimmed, and his whole appearance, including his ruddy

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countenance and his cheerful smile, indicated prosperity. All of these characteristics were strange enough in Novo-Kaidansk, heaven knows, but they were hardly to be wondered at in Shmulke, who had emigrated to America some twenty years previously and had amassed wealth in the liquor business in the classic vicinity of Baxter Street, New York. He had Americanized his cognomen into Samuel Aarons, and had incidentally acquired local fame by pugilistic ability so that he was sometimes referred to as "Sam, the Hebrew slugger." He was now on a visit to his native town, where his parents still resided, and was unfeignedly glad to see Yerachmiel, who had been a real chum to him in boyhood days. The latter sat gazing dazedly at his old friend for a few moments, utterly unable to speak, so overwhelmed was he by the unexpected sight and also by the manifest contrast between his own condition and that of his friend.

Shmulke recalled him to himself. "Come, come, old comrade," he said with good-humored impatience. "Don't sit staring at me as though I were a curiosity in a circus. Speak out and tell me how you are getting on." Thus encouraged, Yerachmiel lost no time in pouring his sad story into the ears of his friend. Shmulke

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listened attentively until the tale was all told, including the present hunger and the dream goose, and then said: "That is too bad, Yerachmiel. I am really sorry that you are so unfortunate. Come with me now to the inn of Reb Yankele, where, if you can't get the roast goose of which I deprived you, at least you can get *something* to eat, and there we can consult as to what can be done for you." Yerachmiel complied with alacrity.

Reb Yankele was more than surprised at the unexpected apparition of Yerachmiel the *Shlemihl*, who had never in all his life been rich enough to be a guest at the *Kretchm*, although he had been glad to get an occasional meal or drink there in return for odd jobs, boldly entering his establishment as the companion of a manifestly prosperous *Deitch*. He stepped forward with an obsequious bow and a deferential "What do the gentlemen wish?"

"The best your house has of food and drink," answered Shmulke, "and be quick about it. A rouble or two more or less makes no difference."

Thus encouraged the innkeeper performed his task with alacrity; and in a few minutes Shmulke and Yerachmiel were sitting down before a very fair meal, consisting of beet soup, roast chicken, boiled potatoes, black bread,

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onions sliced in vinegar, and a large bottle of *vodka*. Yerachmiel almost imagined himself in *Gan Eden*, and was convinced that if dreams were not prophetic, they were certainly closely akin to prophecy. The roast chicken, if not equal in quality to the dream goose, was not much inferior; and the *vodka*, while undoubtedly not as good as the wine which is stored up for the righteous since creation's dawn, was yet abundantly satisfying to a poor sinner in the cheerless present.

Shmulke watched Yerachmiel's enjoyment of the meal with a quiet smile of satisfaction, and said to him: "What is the best way to provide you with a permanent *parnoso?* Yerachmiel did not exactly know. He suggested half a dozen different sorts of business, from banker to butcher, but was most inclined to favor the occupation of innkeeper, of whose delights he had just had emphatic demonstration.

Shmulke rejected all these propositions with scorn. "To tell you the truth," he said, "I don't believe you could succeed at anything in Russia. You are too much of a *Shlemihl*, and you could never get along without some one to look after you. What do you say to going with me to America? I would set you up in business and help you along with my advice."

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The magnificence, as well as the unexpectedness, of this proposal fairly took Yerachmiel's breath away. Indeed, it made him feel a little faint. He did not really want to go to America. He admired America as a land of extraordinary and incomprehensible prosperity; but he also feared it as a land which corrupted Jewish piety, and made the holy people faithless to their ancient heritage. He would rather have remained in his native place and continued to live in his accustomed manner could he have been assured of even the most modest sustenance. But in his heart he knew that Shmulke had spoken the truth; that he was too much of a *Shlemihl* to succeed without friendly aid and sympathetic guidance, and that he could not expect to receive those from any one except the old friend of his youth. He therefore murmured a confused assent, adding, however, faintly that he was afraid Shprinze might not be willing to have her husband leave her and go to so distant a land.

"Don't worry about that, old friend," said Shmulke, with a broad smile. "I'll guarantee that she will not put any obstacles in the way of her own prosperity. And now that you have agreed, we will go and see her at once."

Shmulke was right. Shprinze assented at

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once to Shmulke's proposition, which was that he would take Yerachmiel to America and assist him to become self-supporting, that he would provide her with sufficient money to maintain her for several months until Yerachmiel would probably be able to send her of his own earnings; and that if Yerachmiel proved unable to adapt himself to the conditions of America and find his way in his new home, at the end of three years he, Shmulke, would send him back to his native place with a substantial gift. Indeed, her assent was so willing, and given with such manifest pleasure, that it jarred disagreeably upon Yerachimel, and was not altogether pleasing even to Shmulke.

Thus did Yerachmiel Sendorowitz become a resident and a respected citizen of the metropolis of America. It is not necessary to enter into the details of his career in the New World, which did not differ essentially from that of many of his Russian Jewish compatriots. At first he was a peddler, Shmulke providing him with suitable goods and initiating him into the mysteries of the profession. He did not fail. The mysterious something in the American atmosphere which confers energy and shrewdness and practical sense seemed to be even more potent than usual in his case. This may have been due to

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the fact that the *Shlemihligkeit*, which had hitherto been his distinguishing characteristic, had been more apparent than real, and that he had really possessed innate qualities of courage and astuteness which only had lacked the opportunity of manifesting themselves. However that may have been, he certainly became a different man under the invigorating influence of America. He toiled early and late with untiring assiduity and industry; he purchased his little articles of merchandise wisely and sold prudently. In six months he had developed into a customer peddler, and no longer wandered through the streets with a pack upon his back, but went with samples only to the numerous customers whose friendship and trade he had gained, and received their orders. A year later he had given this up also, and was the proud and happy possessor of a peddler's supply store in one of the little streets which abut on the main thoroughfare of the Jewish East Side, Canal Street, and had purchased a tenement house. Success even affected his personal appearance favorably. The old slouchy, unkempt, ne'er-do-well, with the hungry eyes and hopeless air, had disappeared forever, and in his stead had come a bright, alert, neat, active man. Yerachmiel the *Shlemihl* had given way to Mr.

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Sendorowitz, the prosperous wholesale merchant and real-estate owner. Nor had he failed to keep his promises to Shprinze. He wrote to her regularly, every week, telling her in detail and with great pride about his doings and his successes, not failing either to give due credit to Shmulke for the large share which the latter had had in bringing about these gratifying results, and always inquiring solicitously about her health and welfare. Once a month he sent her money, at first only a few roubles, afterward larger sums, but always sufficient to enable her to live in proper comfort in the little Russian town of her residence. He often wrote her, too, of his intention to go out and take her to his new home as soon as business would permit, she having expressed a strong aversion to crossing "the great sea" alone. In all this he was thoroughly sincere, for he was naturally the soul of honor, and really loved his wife in a simple, unreflecting way, despite the slight cause she had ever given him for affection. Besides, his Talmudic studies had given him a clear conviction that a Jewish husband was under many obligations to his wife; but his ideas of the counter duties of wife to husband were much less distinct. Despite the slight demands which he made upon the conjugal sentiment of his life

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partner, he had, however, to confess to himself that the letters of Shprinze were not satisfactory. They were excessively brief, not very frequent, expressed very little interest in his personal welfare or his doings, and invariably contained a demand for a larger amount of money. Yerachmiel tried to obey the rabbinical precept, "Judge every one leniently," and to find excuses for Shprinze's unsympathetic demeanor. He told himself that women are naturally inclined to scold, and that Shprinze was merely following the rule of her sex; that she did not put full faith in his tales of prosperity, and was demanding money as a test of their truth; that women are naturally less expressive of the affection they feel than are men, and a half-dozen other excuses for her apparent coldness and mercenariness. But none of these excuses seemed really adequate, and gradually Yerachmiel found a great dissatisfaction with the conduct of his wife toward him rising in his breast. Finally, a most painful question began to torture him. "Did Shprinze love him at all, or was her interest in him purely mercenary, and limited to the material benefits which she could derive from him?"

Simple-minded as Yerachmiel was in wordly things, untutored in romantic concepts and

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affairs of the heart, his whole nature revolted against the idea of marital relations with a woman in whose soul burned no flame of love for him as her husband. But how could he ascertain the truth; how find out whether his wife really loved him or not? Gradually a plan matured in his mind. He did not permit Shprinze to have any inkling of the doubts and the conflicting emotions by which he was agitated. He wrote her as frequently and regularly as hitherto, and sent her monthly remittances of money with unfailing punctuality. After some five years of absence he wrote her that he had found it at last possible to withdraw his constant personal attention from business for a few months, and that he would come out and take her with him to his new home in America. When Shprinze received this letter it did not fill her with the joy which the prospect of reunion with a beloved and long-absent husband might be expected to inspire in the heart of an affectionate and devoted wife. She would have preferred the indefinite continuance of the condition which had now lasted upward of five years, and which she had found very agreeable. It had been very pleasant to receive constant remittances of money, to live in comfort and ease, and to be looked up to on all

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sides as the fortunate and happy one. When she had entered the women's gallery in the synagogue all the women had hastened to make way for her with the utmost deference; and many a highly esteemed *Baal Ha-bayis* had looked upon her with favor, and would not have spurned to ask her hand in marriage if her incumbrance on the other side of the Atlantic would only have been good enough to make a polite exit for a better world, leaving her a substantial fortune in American dollars. And now all this was to cease; and she must leave her native place for a strange land, and live again with one whom in her heart she still despised as a *Shlemihl*, despite his unexpected good fortune in the New World. Besides, she had a dim presentiment of evil, a feeling that the advent of Yerachmiel meant some undesirable change in her tide of fortune, why or what she could not think. At last a despatch came from Yerachmiel, informing her that he was in Hamburg, and would reach Novo-Kaidansk with the train due at such and such an hour. At the appointed hour she was at the station, accompanied by quite a throng of Jewish townsfolk bent on giving their long-absent townsman a hearty welcome. Speculation was rife as to his appearance. Some thought that his long ab-

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sence in a foreign land would have removed his Jewish looks; that he would have shaved off his beard and assumed in every way the appearance of the Gentile. Others thought such a thing impossible of Yerachmiel Sendorowitz; that he was far too pious and God-fearing to fall away so utterly from Jewish ways, and that the only change probable was that he would be elegantly attired in fine clothing, and would show in his prosperous and beaming aspect the possession of much America-gained wealth. The grimy train, drawn by the ugly, soot-covered locomotive, swept into the low-roofed Russian station. The swarm of passengers, of all kinds and degrees, flowed from the narrow openings of the cars; and then a shock came over the waiting throng. From amidst the crowd of passengers emerged one who was unmistakably Yerachmiel; and, horrible to relate, the Yerachmiel of old, Yerachmiel the *Schlemihl*. To be sure, he was not exactly the same in appearance as of old, for the hat and suit that he wore were of American make; but they were shabby and dusty, and ill suited to a prosperous man. His hair and beard were unkempt and neglected, and his face bore an expression of anxiety and care. All were surprised and shocked; but the most pitiably shocked of all was Shprinze.

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Yerachmiel at once recognized his townsmen and his wife, and advanced with a sort of wan smile to greet them. The former, of course, returned his greetings, and inquired how he had fared in America; but their embarrassment was only too manifest, and cutting short his answers to them, Yerachmiel turned to his wife, who had been standing all the while as if petrified, and said: "Come, Shprinze, let us go home." Mechanically she led him to her home. Hardly had the door of the little dwelling closed behind them when all the animation and energy which had left Shprinze when she beheld her spouse in such unexpected and unwelcome guise suddenly returned.

"What is the meaning of all this?" she demanded fiercely, while flames of wrath blazed from her piercing eyes. "Why do you come to me from America looking like a beggar and a ragged saint fresh from the benches of the Beth-Hamidrash instead of a prosperous New York merchant, as you had made us all believe you had become? Was it all a lie, your oft-repeated tale of your success in business and your progress? Did you steal the money you sent me, and have you fled from the officers of the law, who, perhaps, are after you now? Oh, you are still the same old *Shlemihl*, the same old good-

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for-nothing! Why did the Most High curse me by making me your wife?"

"My dear Shprinze, do not rave so!" expostulated Yerachmiel. "How can you say such things before you have heard any explanation from me? I am not a liar nor a *Shlemihl*. Whatever I wrote you about my business success in America was strictly true; and the money I sent you was my own, and all honestly earned. I have come to take you with me to America; and I already have the steamship tickets for us both, and plenty of money for railroad fare and necessary expenses."

"Then why are you dressed so shabbily?" continued Shprinze, with undiminished fierceness; "and why do you look so down-hearted? Is that the appearance and the bearing suitable to a wealthy merchant, such as you have claimed to be?"

"I suppose I am not very particular about my appearance," answered Yerachmiel; "and then, I admit, I have had considerable trouble and losses in business lately, and that may have given me a worried look. But what need that concern you? I have learned the art of getting on in America, and I do not fear but that I shall soon be able to recover whatever I have lost. In the mean while I am here. I am your

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husband, and I ask you to come and make your home with me."

"You are *mechulleh*," said Shprinze, suspicion gazing out of every line of her excited countenance. "I can understand from what you admit that you have lost all you had, and you want me to share your poverty, or perhaps to give you the money that I have saved from what you sent me! I shall not do it! I do not want to go with you! Give me a *Get*. I do not want to be the wife of such a *Shlemihl*."

Yerachmiel's pale face became fiery red when he heard these harsh and heartless words; but again he endeavored to bring his wife to a better frame of mind. "Shprinze," he said in appealing tones that might have melted a heart of stone, "is this my welcome home? Have I deserved this of you? Have I not always been faithful to you, even when I was a poor *Shlemihl* in this town, and did I not give you every kopeck I earned? Did I not send you money abundantly from America? You may trust me. I still have the means to support my wife, and therefore I again ask you to come with me to my home, as beseems a good and true wife in Israel."

"I will believe you are not *mechulleh*," said Shprinze, in a tone of calculating shrewdness,

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"if you will give me a thousand roubles now. If you do that I will go with you."

"That I shall not do," said Yerachmiel, a manly anger getting the better of his usual extreme mildness. "I do not need to buy my wife. Have you no love for me at all? I ask you to go with me because I can support you; and as a wife you can ask no more."

"Then I see you are *mechulleh*," answered Shprinze, "and I will not go. Divorce me, I say; give me a *Get*. I want none of you or your money. All I want is a *Get*."

Again and again did Yerachmiel appeal to Shprinze's better nature. It was of no avail. She persisted in her demand and could not be induced to alter it. Seeing that her determination was unalterable and that her one wish was to be separated from him, Yerachmiel, although according to the Jewish religious law he could have refused to consent to the desired divorce and thus have effectually baffled any other matrimonial plans that Shprinze might have entertained, decided to accede to her wishes. "I shall do as you ask, hard-hearted and ungrateful woman," he said; "for even now that you treat me thus cruelly I wish you no evil. But one thing I must tell you. In order to show that this divorce is not in accordance

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with my wish, I shall pay neither the rabbi, nor the scribe, nor any of the other expenses. Whatever outlay there is you must defray. Thus shall all know that you are the one who seeks to undo the bond that has bound us together these many years, but that I am satisfied to keep you as my lawful, wedded wife."

Shprinze eagerly agreed to this; and having further agreed that they should meet on the morrow in the house of Rabbi Israel, the spiritual guide of the Jewish community of the town, they separated, Yerachmiel leaving the house without word of farewell.

Great was the surprise of Reb Yankele, the inn-keeper, when Yerachmiel, whom he had assisted in welcoming at the railroad station a few hours previously, entered the inn and gloomily inquired whether he could be accommodated with food and lodging for the night. He wondered greatly why Yerachmiel was not staying in his own home on the first night after his arrival from a distant land; but the latter volunteered no explanation, and Reb Yankele did not venture to ask for any. However, he did not need to remain long in ignorance. No sooner had Yerachmiel left his wife's house than Shprinze rushed to the nearest female neighbor

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and told her the news, adding many dreadful details about the repulsiveness of Yerachmiel's appearance, his poverty, and his hopeless *Shlemihligkeit;* adding, however, that in spite of all she must be grateful to him for his willingness to grant her the divorce she craved, and assuring her (the neighbor) of her unutterable joy at the prospect of being at last free from an incurable *Shlemihl* and *Shlamazzalnik*. The neighbor, of course, had no more imperative duty to perform than to put her shawl over her head and rush to communicate to her nearest neighbor the news, still fresh and hot, of the impending divorce of Yerachmiel and Shprinze Sendorowitz. In this way not two hours had passed before the whole *Kehillah* of Novo-Kaidansk had learned the news. Reb Yankele had learned why Yerachmiel was his guest; and even Rabbi Israel had been informed, at evening service in the synagogue, of the function which he was to be asked to perform on the morrow.

At nine the next morning Yerachmiel and Shprinze were in the large front room in the rabbi's dwelling, which served as his office, and whither repaired whosoever in Novo-Kaidansk had a religious question to ask or a ceremony to be performed, or that was in need of spiritual counsel or guidance of any kind. Shprinze was

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gayly attired, and chattered constantly with a group of female acquaintances by whom she was surrounded. She was in high spirits, and cast occasional contemptuous glances at Yerachmiel, who sat, moody and abstracted, in a corner and spoke to no one. Besides these the room was crowded with the most notable members of the congregation, drawn hither by the exceptional interest which this extraordinary case had aroused. The side door opened, and a hush fell upon the assembly as the venerable Rabbi Israel, accompanied by two coadjutor rabbis and several other persons who were to take part in the solemn function of pronouncing the divorce, entered and took their places in seats which had been reserved for their occupancy, behind long tables at the head of the room. The *Shammas* then asked in a loud voice whether there was any one present who desired to consult the Beth Din on any matter. At this Yerachmiel arose, and, addressing Rabbi Israel, said: "Venerable rabbi, I desire to divorce my wife, Shprinze, daughter of Moses; and I request of you to ordain the issuing of such a divorce, according to the law of Moses and Israel."

"I hear your request with sorrow," said the rabbi, while an expression of pain passed over

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his venerable features. "Is it the desire of your wife also that your marriage be dissolved?"

Yerachmiel bent his head in assent; and the *Shammas*, in response to a motion of the rabbi's hand, called in a loud voice: "Shprinze, daughter of Moses, step forward." Shprinze did so, and the rabbi put to her the question whether she consented to the dissolution of her marriage to Yerachmiel, son of Isaac, to which she responded with a loud and distinct "Yes." Summoning them both before him, the rabbi now addressed to them a long and earnest plea to give up their intention of divorce. He pointed out to them that, although the holy Torah permitted the dissolution of a marriage which had been polluted and desecrated by gross and abominable sin, or which had grown utterly intolerable to either or both parties, and left it to their decision whether it should be dissolved; yet it did not approve, but, on the contrary, severely condemned, the tearing asunder of the holy bonds of wedlock, and that in the words of the sages the altar shed tears over husband and wife who became recreant to the covenant of their youth. He therefore entreated them most earnestly to become reconciled to each other, and to remain faithful to the pledges which they had once taken upon each other. To this

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touching plea they returned no answer. Yerachmiel gazed at the floor, his face alternately flushed and ashy pale. Shprinze gazed at the rabbi with firm eyes and shook her head in the negative. Seeing that his efforts at reconciliation were useless, the rabbi then announced "the giving of the *Get* must, therefore, take place."

These words were the signal for the commencement of the divorce ceremonial, which was now performed with all the solemn and impressive formalities with which it has been carried out since time immemorial in Israel. The rabbi appointed an expert and skilful scribe to write the bill of divorce, which must be written in strict accordance with many minute and detailed rules, the neglect or violation of any of which would render it invalid. He also designated two pious and trustworthy men, both proficient in the art of writing the square Hebrew script, to act as the official witnesses to the document. The scribe seated himself at his desk and produced his paper, quill pen, and ink, all of them specially prepared, in accordance with fixed rules, for this purpose. To him Yerachmiel, acting under the instruction of the rabbi, now spoke and directed him to write a bill of divorce for his wife, Shprinze, daughter

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of Moses. Amidst breathless silence the scribe now began to write the document which was to sunder two lives hitherto joined. The writing lasted a considerable time; and during all its continuance not a sound, save the steady scratching of the scribe's pen, was heard, for it is strictly forbidden to make a noise of any kind while a *Get* is being written, lest the sound disturb the *Sopher* and cause him to err in some particular, thus necessitating the rewriting of the document. At last the bill of divorce was finished and the two witnesses appended their signatures, written in the square Hebrew script, and without title of any kind. The rabbi then designated two other men of religious standing and good repute to be the official witnesses of the delivery of the *Get.* Summoning Shprinze, the rabbi bade her uncover her face, which hitherto during the proceedings had been covered with a heavy veil, and said to her in solemn tones: "Shprinze, daughter of Moses, art thou willing to accept a bill of divorce from thy husband, Yerachmiel, son of Isaac?" Shprinze responded with a firm "Yes." Turning to Yerachmiel, the rabbi asked him whether he still desired to divorce his wife, to which Yerachmiel answered in the affirmative. Turning again to the woman, the rabbi said in a stern voice: "Give me thy *Ketu-*

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bah. Thou no longer hast any use for it." At this, the most feared part in the divorce ceremony, Shprinze's face grew slightly pale; but she drew forth her marriage certificate, which she had brought along for this purpose, and gave it to the rabbi, who laid it aside, to be destroyed immediately after the completion of the divorce proceedings. The rabbi then bade her remove her marriage ring and extend her hands to receive her bill of divorce. Yerachmiel then took the bill of divorce, placed it in the outstretched hands of Shprinze, and said: "Behold, this is thy bill of divorce. Accept thy bill of divorce, and by it thou art released and divorced from me, and free to contract lawful marriage with any other man." With a few earnest words from the rabbi pointing out the duty of living their separate lives in peace and righteousness, and of avoiding in the future the sins which had led to this sorrow, the ceremony was concluded.

Yerachmiel and Shprinze were no longer man and wife. At once a clamorous buzz of conversation arose all over the room. The excitement which had been suppressed so long now burst the bonds of enforced silence and found relief in vociferous exclamations of wonderment and emphatic expressions of approval

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and disapproval. Some of the women congratulated Shprinze; others held aloof. The men were unanimous in their condemnation of the hard-hearted woman who had taken her husband's money for years and then induced him, when grown poor, to give her a divorce.

The excitement was at its height, when suddenly a tremendous rap on the table drew the startled gaze of all toward the spot whence the sound had proceeded. What they saw caused a hush to fall over the assemblage. Yerachmiel stood at the side of one of the tables, his cheeks ashy pale, his eyes blazing with a furious light that no one had ever seen in them before, fiercely rapping with his cane in an effort to procure silence. As soon as his voice could be heard he began to speak.

"Jewish brethren and sisters of Novo-Kaidansk," he said, with painfully labored yet distinct utterance. "You have come here to see Yerachmiel the *Shlemihl* give divorce to his wife, Shprinze. I know most of you are good people and have pitied me for being such a *Shlemihl* that I could not keep either my money or my wife. But, perhaps, I am not such a *Shlemihl* after all. I have not desired nor sought this divorce, but I have tried to find out the truth about an old wrong and to right it;

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and I believe I have succeeded as well as some who are considered wiser and cleverer than I. *Shlemihl* though I may be, I have always tried to do my duty toward my wife. Even before I went to America, when poverty and wretchedness were my lot in this town, I gave Shprinze every kopeck that I earned. From America, where God blessed me and made me prosperous, I sent her regularly all that she could properly require. But in return for this I asked wifely love. I knew that a husband must honor, cherish, and maintain his wife; and that a wife must, in true marriage, return love for love, affection for affection. Shprinze never showed the least trace of love for me. My soul hungered and thirsted for love. Shprinze gave me, at worst, bitter revilings and beratings, tongue-stabbings that pierced my soul like the thrusts of a sword; at best, cold indifference. In the beginning, when I could not, because of poverty, properly support her, I excused her. I said to myself that I deserved nothing better. But when from America I sent abundance of gold and loving words, and showed in every way I could that I was a true and loving husband, and when, in return for all this, I could not get an affectionate word, a loving sentence, I resolved that I would find out whether in

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Shprinze's heart dwelt a spark of love for me, or whether it was only my gold she loved. The rest you know. I came here, dressed in shabby clothing, looking the olden *Shlemihl.* Her evil heart made her quickly conclude that I had lost my all, and without questioning me or offering, like a true wife, to share my lot, she demanded a divorce. I saw that she loved me not, that she had never been to me more than a wife in name, and to-day I have granted her wish. But let me assure her and you, friends, that she is mistaken in thinking that she has now got rid of a *Shlemihl*, of a poor, never succeeding unfortunate. She has freed herself of a successful, of a wealthy man; she has deprived herself of a splendid home in the greatest city of free America; she has deprived herself of luxury and riches, and, what is more, of the love of a man who was deeply attached to her, and who would have given his all for a kind word or a loving kiss from her lips. See, here are the presents I had brought here for her, and would have given her had she treated me rightly." So speaking, he drew forth a magnificent diamond necklace and a beautiful, richly ornamented gold watch and chain. "And here is the proof that I am a man of means and no deceiver—a letter of credit on a Berlin banking-house for ten thou-

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sand marks"—and here he drew from his wallet the precious document and flourished it triumphantly yet sorrowfully before the eyes of his hearers. "As for me," he continued, "I thank the All-Merciful that He has opened my eyes to the truth, and that He has freed me from a serpent that would only have devoured my substance, and with its icy touch have frozen my heart. Now farewell, friends, and farewell, false and heartless woman. I go to my home beyond the sea, where I shall try to forget this long, sad dream of misplaced love and cruel ingratitude and heartlessness."

Having thus spoken, he turned and left the room. None ventured to detain him or to restrain his departure. As he went out of the door, Shprinze, who had been listening with strained attention to his words, and whose countenance had alternately flushed and paled as he spoke, rushed forward as if she would have held him back, then paused, uttered a piercing, heartrending shriek, and fell in a deathly swoon to the floor. The cry reached the ears of Yerachmiel as he strode down the dusty street. An expression of pain crossed his features as he heard it, but he did not turn and he came not back.

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A VICTIM OF PREJUDICE.

FRANZ FRIEDRICH LEVY sat on his high stool before his desk in the office of the Second Secretariat of the Anhalt-Diesterburg-Rickershofen State Railroad and reflected discontentedly on his lot. He had rather an important position, it is true, that of chief bookkeeper of the Second Secretariat, an important subdivision in the management of the railway, which was a prosperous governmental institution, binding together a rich and beautiful stretch of country in middle Germany. He was in receipt of a very fair salary, occupied a comfortable house in the suburbs of the town, and was wedded to a rather good-looking wife, with quite a store of fashionable though useless accomplishments, but still he was not happy. The cause of his unhappiness was a grievance which he had against the Ober-Direction or supreme management of the railway, a grievance for which he thought—and his wife agreed with him in this opinion—there could be only one explanation. He believed that his promotion was unduly slow. He had

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entered the service of the railroad in his twentieth year as clerk, and now in his forty-fifth, when his once raven black locks were already heavily streaked with gray and more than a suspicion of baldness was showing itself on the top of his poll, he was only chief bookkeeper of one of the numerous subdivisions of the great concern. He thought that by length of service and capacity he was fitted to be general manager of the road; but while admitting that he had no right to aspire to that exalted position, he considered that by this time he should have attained at the very least to the post of division chief or superintendent.

"Why is it that I do not advance?" he asked himself as he sat gloomily revolving on the high stool. "Am I incapable? Have I been idle, negligent, or inattentive to my duties? Do I not know all the details of the business from beginning to end? Do I not know by heart all the statistics of the road, the number of passengers and the weight of freight carried, the condition of every station, the receipts and the expenditures to a pfennig? No, the fault is not mine. It is owing to *rishus*, to anti-Semitic prejudice. My only fault, as far as I can discover, is that I am a Jew. To that I owe all my misfortune. This accursed accident of my birth

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prevents my talents being appreciated, prevents my attaining the success which I should naturally reach; and, I suppose, as long as I am marked with this badge of disgrace and social inferiority I shall always remain an unimportant, insignificant individual. That Ober-Director von Meinken, he is, I am sure, the chief cause of keeping me down. He always looks at me with such a dark, unfriendly glance whenever I have to enter his office. He is the very picture of a *Rosho*, although he talks smoothly enough. I don't doubt but he would be glad enough to get rid of me altogether if he only knew how to bring it about."

"Aha, friend Levy, why are you plunged in such deep thought?" suddenly said a deep, hearty voice at his side. "I have been standing here a whole minute and you have never even noticed my presence, so absorbed were you in your reflections. Did I not know that you were a married man of virtuous principles I would say that you were in love. But then the expression of your face shows that you have not been dreaming sweet dreams of love delights. If I am any judge of physiognomy at all, your thoughts have been disagreeable ones. May I ask what they were?"

Levy turned around with a startled jerk of

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the high stool. It was the Herr Ober-Director, Baron Adalbert von Meinken himself with a good-humored smile on his broad, handsome, Teutonic face, the lower part of which was covered with a neatly trimmed brown full beard. Levy blushed guiltily. He felt as though the keen blue eyes of his superior were gazing into his very soul and reading the thoughts that had just occupied him. He stammered forth a half apology.

"The Herr Ober-Director will pardon my preoccupation," he said, "but I can assure you that I was not thinking of any outside matter. I never permit myself to think of outside matters in business hours. I was thinking of a method of reducing the expenses of the station Weizenhofen on the Blauberg-Schoenthal branch. That place costs a great deal more than it ought to, considering the small amount of business done at that point, and I hope soon to be able to lay a project before your Excellency which will materially reduce the cost of maintenance of the station."

"Ah," said the Ober-Director, with a pleased expression, "I might have known that you, Levy, were not wasting your employer's time in idle ruminations. You have always been a faithful, industrious worker, devoted heart and

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soul to the interests of the road. I shall be glad to receive your proposal in the Weizenhofen matter and I shall give it full consideration."

And the Ober-Director passed on and entered his private office. Levy bent over his books as soon as his chief had passed, and was careful not to fall into another fit of reflection that afternoon. The words of the Ober-Director had pleased him but he did not altogether trust them. He feared that he was under close surveillance, and that all his actions were being rigidly scrutinized, with a view to finding some flaw in his conduct. He devoted himself, therefore, with redoubled assiduity to his routine work until the welcome sound of the bell, announcing the closing hour, relieved him from further labor for the day. He put on his hat, exchanged his light office jacket for his street coat, and with a pleasant word of farewell to his fellow-clerks sallied forth into the street. As he sauntered down the beautiful Kaiser Strasse, the finest thoroughfare of the town, through which he always walked both in his daily journeyings to and from the office and on his Sunday and holiday promenades, he was greeted by so many friends and acquaintances that his hand was continually busy raising his hat in response to their salutations. His social equals, both Chris-

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tian and Jewish, saluted him with easy and unaffected cordiality, his humbler acquaintances with great deference. These manifestations of friendship and respect, instead of pleasing him, added to his discontent and his resentment against the authorities of the railroad. He said to himself that it was a crying shame, indeed an outrage, that a man so generally esteemed and honored by his fellow-townsmen should be kept in a subordinate position because of the religious prejudices of his superiors; and should be prevented by such a reason, so repugnant to the culture and civilization of the century, from attaining to the rank and emoluments to which he was clearly entitled. In this frame of mind he reached his handsome dwelling, which was charmingly situated in the Schoenberger Allee, a new and fashionable street in the suburbs of the town. To the effusive greetings of the spouse of his bosom, Frau Ottilie, *née* Kahn, he returned a curt answer and threw himself, in an attitude of utter disgust and weariness, upon the sofa.

Frau Ottilie Levy was a worthy counterpart of her partner in life. If harmony in marriage is secured by similarity in tastes and disposition, theirs should have been an ideal union, for their characters and views were almost

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exactly alike. Like her husband, Frau Levy was intensely ambitious. Her sole aim in life was to secure the greatest possible measure of wealth and social prestige. She shared her husband's grievance to the fullest extent; but, womanlike, she was inclined to put the blame on him for his failure to advance, and continually nagged and pestered him with her complaints, and the expression of her discontent at not being able to shine as much as Frau Geheimräthin So-and-So or Frau Commerzienräthin Somebody Else. Seeing the discomposure under which her husband was evidently laboring, her woman's instinct told her that now was not the time to nag and scold, but to sympathize and console. She therefore relinquished, or rather postponed to a more favorable opportunity, the caustic lecture combined with a demand for a larger allowance which she had been preparing all day for the special benefit of her life partner, and began inquiring, with great solicitude, concerning the cause of his disturbed condition.

"What is the matter, Franz dear?" she asked, in the same tone of winning gentleness which she had lately so greatly admired in the celebrated stage heroine, Adele de Pompadour, as played by Madame Graetzinger, the re-

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nowned *Erste Dame* of the Stadt Theater. "Why are you so upset? I trust that nothing serious has happened."

"Yes and no," answered Franz dejectedly; "that old Von Meinken caught me to-day, when I was thinking about the shameful slowness of my promotion, or rather my lack of any promotion, and was neglecting my work. I was so absorbed in thought that I never noticed him, although, as he told me, he stood by my desk over a minute. Of course I gave him as good an excuse as I could get up in a hurry to account for my absent-mindedness; but how can I tell whether the old fox believed what I said or not? Confound him, he's always sure to be around when he isn't wanted. You can rely on it that I worked extra hard all the rest of the afternoon."

"You don't think that can hurt you any, do you?" asked Otillie, dropping her theatrical manner, and with just a shade of anxiety in her voice. "What harm is it if an old, trustworthy employee like you is idle for a minute or two in the day?"

"It oughtn't to be any harm," answered Franz. "But then you know how stiff and exacting these Prussian officials are. They think men are nothing but machines, and they make no

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allowances for anything. A number of men have been discharged of late, and then, you know, there is so much anti-Semitism nowadays. I, as a Jew, have to be particularly careful."

"There's the root of the whole matter," said Frau Ottilie, pouncing with avidity upon her favorite argument. "It's only because you're a Jew that you have any trouble. Don't tell me that an experienced, faithful official like you, if he were a Christian, would be trembling with fear of losing his place because he had been thinking of something for a moment or two. No such trivial thing would have been of any consequence in his case. It is only we Jews who must be continually alarmed, continually alert lest we commit the slightest error; because, in our case, any fault, sometimes even only imaginary, means ruin. Yes, Heine was right when he said: 'Judaism is not a religion; it is a misfortune.' It certainly is your misfortune, and therefore mine. As long as you are a Jew you will never advance. You might as well try to jump over the moon as to overcome the deep-seated prejudices of Christians against Jews. You simply cannot do it."

"But, my dear," said Levy, who had heard this sort of talk very frequently, and was rather weary of it, "what is the use of telling me all

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IT'S ONLY BECAUSE YOU'RE A JEW THAT YOU HAVE ANY TROUBLE

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that again and again. I know as well as you that being a Jew is the chief hindrance to my progress. But what is the use of continually harping on it. I cannot change what I am; so why kick in vain against the unalterable?"

"But it is not unalterable," said Frau Ottilie, with even more acerbity than the sense of her old and keenly felt grievance usually aroused. "You talk as though to be a Jew was the same as being a negro, or a Chinaman, or blind, or lame. The negro cannot make his black skin white, nor the Chinaman his complexion or his features resemble those of the Caucasian; neither can the blind nor the lame alter their physical deformities. But the Jew needs only to speak a meaningless formula and permit three drops of water to be sprinkled upon him and presto, change, he has ceased to be a Jew and become a Christian. All his former blemishes and shortcomings are forgotten, and he is received with open arms into Christian society. Instead of being an outcast and a pariah, an individual barely and unwillingly tolerated, he becomes a beloved brother. Then, why stupidly submit to a load of inherited, unneccessary trouble? Why not rather take the one bold step which will make an end of them all at once and forever?"

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"But, my dear Ottilie," said Franz, who, though used to this line of argument, was surprised by his wife's unusual bitterness. "What is the purpose of all this? You don't want me to be baptized, to be a *meshummad*, do you?"

"That is just what I do want," answered Ottilie, vehemently. "I want you to cease being a stupid martyr and begin to be sensible, and I want to be sensible with you, too. I am not afraid of the word *meshummad*. That is only a harmless term which stupid and fanatical Jews use to condemn people who are more sensible than they. Baptism will not hurt you. It is only the key which will unlock before you the gates of prosperity and happiness in life. Besides, if you look honestly into your heart you are no Jew. A Jew must have a faith, must believe in Judaism, and practise a lot of senseless ceremonies. You do not care a straw for the whole Jewish religion, nor bother your head about the Sabbath or the dietary laws, or any of the other absurdities which they call religious practices in Judaism. I don't believe you have been inside of a synagogue in ten years. I am just as little of a Jewess as you are of a Jew. Yet, by keeping up the name of Jew, without any real reason except a blind clinging to you know not what, you expose yourself and me and

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our only son to all the trouble and disadvantages which result from connection with a despised and hated people. Again, I say, be sensible. Pay the price of admission to civilized society, that is, accept baptism and be done with it."

Thus did Ottilie reason and plead with her husband to renounce his ancestral faith. The argument, thus seriously begun, lasted long, and was carried on with intense earnestness on both sides. The thought of accepting Christianity was no new one to Franz. His wife's constant persual of that theme had made it familiar to him, but he had never yet seriously contemplated the step. The memory of pious parents and of the religious zeal and piety of youthful days, though long since discarded, had had force enough to render the thought of apostasy utterly repugnant and prevent its serious consideration. But Ottilie's nature was stronger than his; her's was the masterful character, his the subordinate. Before the evening was over, her persistence and adroit reasoning had overpowered his feeble and illogical resistance. They retired for the night with the understanding that on the morrow Franz was to inform Herr Ober-Director von Meinken of his determination to seek salvation in the arms of the

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church, and to request the Herr Ober-Director to act as his godfather at the solemn rite of baptism.

The following morning Franz awoke in a state of high exhilaration. Now that he had made up his mind he was thoroughly content, and wondered a little how he had ever been able to pass so many years with the awful burden of Judaism resting upon him, hindering and impeding his progress, which he now pictured to himself as rapid and uninterrupted, bringing him from step to step to the highest rank in his vocation. Ottilie was even more jubilant than her husband. She rejoiced that her influence over her husband was so great as to induce him to take so important and decisive a step, and she rejoiced particularly when she thought how grandly she would enter the *salons* of her distinguished acquaintances, no longer the merely tolerated Jewess, but the equal and co-religionist of them all. She pictured to herself with especial delight how solemnly she would enter the beautiful church, only two squares from their home, which was so holy and so fashionable; and what a sensation she would create with her reverent demeanor and her Paris gowns!

As soon as Franz reached the office he in-

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quired whether the Herr Director had arrived. As he had anticipated, the Herr Director had not yet arrived. He did not usually come until about eleven o'clock, and this morning was no exception. Franz waited with great impatience the arrival of the great man. He thought it rather inconsiderate of him to stay away so long when he, Franz Friedrich Levy, desired to make him so important an announcement. At last, about a quarter of an hour later than usual, the Herr Ober-Director put in his appearance and went at once to his private office. He had not been in his sanctum five minutes when a somewhat diffident knock at the door was heard, and upon his deep-voiced "Herein!" Franz entered. "Ah, is it you, Levy?" said Herr von Meinken, with a pleasant smile. "I think I can imagine the reason of your call this morning. It is, I presume, in reference to that Station Weizenhofen matter you spoke of the other day." Franz hesitated. Now that the decisive moment had come, he grew a little uncertain in his conviction of the spiritual beauties and material advantages of Christianity, and would have more than half liked another chance to think over the matter. But only for a moment.

"No, your Excellency," he answered. "It is

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not in reference to the Weizenhofen matter that I have taken the liberty to request a brief interview with you this morning. I am still engaged in working out that matter, but I am not as yet prepared to make any definite proposition on the subject. The cause that has brought me before your Excellency this morning is of an entirely personal nature, but of the highest importance to me, and I trust that I shall have the benefit of your Excellency's kindness and courteous sympathy in connection therewith."

Herr von Meinken's eyebrows rose slightly and his lips tightened just a little when he heard these words. He did not answer, but continued to eye Franz with the somewhat cold and dubious gaze of one who expects to be importuned for a favor and does not feel inclined to grant it. "What I desire and would respectfully request," continued Franz, "is that your Excellency might kindly consent to act as godfather at my baptism, and that the highly honored baroness might graciously deign to act in the same capacity for my wife. I do not doubt that you are somewhat surprised," he added, noticing the expression of genuine astonishment upon the Herr Ober-Director's face, "at this request but the fact is, my wife and I have contemplated this step for some time. We are no

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longer in sympathy with the faith in which we were born. We have come to recognize that it is a presumption for an insignificant, retrograde minority to cling to a religion different from that of the great, cultured majority. Our tastes and views are all in close accord with those of the Christian people of the land. In a word, we feel that our place is in the church rather than in the synagogue, and, therefore, we have finally determined to seek our true spiritual home, the church, and to request most respectfully your Excellency and your Excellency's worthy lady kindly to assist at the solemn rite which joins us with our fellow-citizens in the close brotherhood of religion, as we have always been joined to them in the brotherhood of patriotism and love of the fatherland."

The Herr Ober-Director was surprised. There could be no doubt of that. The expression of his countenance showed it plainly. But another emotion of a less definite nature was also suggested on his features. It seemed something like amusement; but one could not be sure, for he did not explain it. He answered Franz very graciously, congratulated him on his resolution, which did equal credit to his head and heart, assured him that the true unity of citizens could only be found in their adherence to

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a common faith, and wound up by accepting, in the kindliest and most condescending manner possible, for himself and the Frau Baronin the honorable functions of godfather and godmother to Franz and Ottilie.

Flustered and confused by the extraordinary courtesy of the Herr Ober-Director and overwhelmed with happiness, Franz retired from the august presence. The baptism took place, with all due formality, about a week later. The minister of the fashionable Erlöser Kirche, which Ottilie so greatly admired, Pastor Boecker, had been more than satisfied with the intelligent and modest manner in which Franz and Ottilie had applied for baptism, and had seen no reason to refuse their request for a speedy performance of the ceremony. At the rite itself, which took place in the presence of a small but select group of Christian acquaintances, Franz and Ottilie conducted themselves with due humility and reverence; and the Herr Ober-Director and spouse performed their parts with perfect dignity and solemnity, while the Herr Pastor showed, by the unusual impressiveness of his address, that he considered the act one of exceptional importance. After the ceremony there was a charming little supper in a private room of the Hotel zum Blauen Adler.

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Never before had the Herr Ober-Director shown himself so affable. He proposed the health of their newly-made Christian brother and sister in the warmest and most eloquent terms, alluded in words of sincere appreciation to Franz's many years of useful service to the Anhalt Diesterburg-Rickershofen State Railroad, presaged for him a still more distinguished career in the future, and wound up by extending to him, metaphorically, of course, the hand of friendship and brotherhood. As for the Frau Baronin, she was as charming as she could be to Ottilie, whose right-hand neighbor at table she was. Our newly-made Christians were touched to the heart by all the kindness and sympathy that were shown them, and could hardly refrain from open manifestation of their joy. When the delightful feast was over and Franz and Ottilie had reached their home, they gave full vent to their exultation.

"Now, Franz," said Ottilie, "you see what it means to be numbered among the Christians. What cordiality, what sincere friendship they all showed us! Did you notice how extremely courteous the Frau Baronin was to me? She never used to do more than barely notice me, with a merely formal bow. But then I was only a Jewess, while now I am one of her own faith;

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that is the difference. I hope now, Franz, you understand how much you are obliged to me for having urged and finally brought you to consent to this step, which means so much to both of us. Ah, I shudder when I think of the time when I was numbered among the despised, wretched Jews. The church in which we were baptized is rightly called Erlöser Kirche, for it has redeemed us both from the bondage of Judaism."

"You are right, Ottilie," answered Franz, his face beaming with delight. "This has been a great day for us. I have no doubt now but I shall rapidly advance. Did you notice how the Herr Director praised my services to the railroad and predicted for me a brilliant future? That is what they call a hint with a fence rail; that from now on I am to advance. The only obstacle to my progress was my Judaism; and that hateful stumbling-block being now removed, there is no reason why I should not rapidly forge ahead in my career."

In this edifying and truly spiritual manner did our worthy couple discuss the advantages of Christianity until a late hour, when they retired to dream sweet dreams of financial blessings and social joys to come. The next morning, bright and early, Franz was at his post in

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the office of the railroad. He felt it incumbent upon him, so to speak, to show that he did not presume to take any liberties because of his new religious status, but that he still intended to merit promotion through faithful performance of duty. About the usual time the Herr Ober-Director appeared and, with a friendly nod to Franz, went into his private office. As his tall form passed through the door, Franz speculated as to how soon there would come through that door the welcome message announcing his elevation to the next higher post. He did not anticipate that it could come very soon; and when a half-hour later the Herr Ober-Director's special messenger approached his desk and deposited upon it a huge envelope addressed to him and bearing the official seal of the railroad, he was greatly surprised. "So soon," he said to himself, as with trembling hands and palpitating heart he tore open the portentous missive. "This is far speedier than I could have expected. How overjoyed Ottilie will be when I bring to her already to-day the welcome news of my preferment. I wonder what the post is for which I am selected." Hastily he read; and as he grasped the contents of the missive, his gaze hardened into a stare, his breath came in short, quick gasps, all the color fled from his

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cheeks and left them ashy pale. This is what he read:

"ANHALT-DIESTERBURG-RICKERSHOFEN
STATE RAILROAD,

"BUREAU OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

"*To Herr Franz Friedrich Levy, Chief Bookkeeper of the Second Secretariat.*

"DEAR SIR: We regret to inform you that after the end of the present week your services will no longer be required. Thanking you for your faithful efforts in the past, and sincerely regretting the necessity of dispensing with your services in the future, we remain,

"Yours very truly,
"THE OBER-DIRECTION,
"SCHMIDT, *Sec'y.*"

Franz sat for a full minute as one petrified, glaring at the curt official note which announced the end of all his hopes and ambitions, hardly able to realize its significance. Then a sudden resolution came into his mind. He would face the Herr Ober-Director; he would demand the meaning of this utterly inexplicable and outrageous action; he would reproach him with his hypocritical professions of friendship at last night's celebration; he would shame him into continuing his services. He rose from his seat, went to the door of the Ober-Director's private office and knocked. His chief's deep-voiced

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"Herein!" was heard and he entered. The Herr Ober-Director was seated at his desk, and gazed at Franz with a grave countenance as he entered.

"Your Excellency," said Franz, in a voice almost choked with emotion, showing the fatal letter as he spoke, "I have just received this communication, which informs me of my discharge. Is it correct? Am I really dismissed from the road after a service of over twenty-five years?" The Herr Ober-Director bowed in corroboration. "Your Excellency will pardon me," continued Franz, "if I ask you, is this just? Have I not always done my duty faithfully? Am I not fully conversant with all the requirements of my position? I believe these reasons would have justified you in retaining me."

"What you say is true, Herr Levy," answered the Ober-Director, "and I regret extremely to have to dispense with your services; but the fact is, the business of the road has declined, and does not warrant us in retaining so many officials. The Government is urgent that I must reduce expenses. I am, therefore, obliged to abolish the second secretariat altogether; and since your post thus ceases to exist, there is no choice but for you to go."

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"Your Excellency will further pardon me," said Franz, with increasing agitation, "if I say that this action comes with especial harshness just at this time when I have joined your faith, and been initiated into the church under your kind patronage. It does seem strange, to say the least, that during all these years, when I was a Jew, I was retained, and no complaint or hint of prospective discharge ever reached my ears; and now that I have become a Christian, you immediately discover that there is no need for my services and I am summarily dismissed."

"That is the very reason, strange as it may seem," said the Herr Ober-Director. "You see, we had already contemplated dismissing you some time ago, as the need for your services had really ceased. But there is so much talk nowadays of official anti-Semitism, of anti-Jewish prejudice on the part of the Government, that we hesitated to discharge you, since you were a Jew and an employee of many years' standing. We knew that if you were discharged, it would immediately be made the basis of accusations of anti-Semitic tendencies on the part of the Government; and since the Government has no such tendencies, and does not wish to be considered as having them, we felt ourselves obliged to retain you. But now that you are a

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Christian, and a member of the State church, no such accusation of anti-Semitism can be made, and we therefore have felt at liberty to dispense with your services, which, as I have said, have really become superfluous. And, now, permit me to conclude this interview, which is time-robbing and unprofitable, and to wish you a very good-day."

As Franz went out through the Ober-Director's door he said to himself, with grim emphasis: "I think Ottilie will have to revise her favorite quotation from Heine. As far as we are concerned, not Judaism but Christianity has been the misfortune."

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THE RABBI'S GAME OF CARDS.

"RABBI, why do you not come to supper? Everything is getting spoiled; and if you do not come soon, your meal will not be fit to eat."

It was the voice of Rebecca the rebbetzin, or wife of the rabbi of Galoschin, in the province of Posen; and she was endeavoring to induce her lord and master, Rabbi Akiba Erter, to leave his sanctum, where he had been busy all afternoon solving profound intellectual problems, and to turn his attention to the less ideal but equally necessary task of eating his evening meal. It was nothing unusual for the good rabbi to be so absorbed in his studies as to be utterly oblivious to all other matters, and to disregard utterly such insignificant trifles as a call to a meal. Rabbi Akiba was a noble specimen of the old-time rabbi. He was a Talmudic scholar of extraordinary erudition and dialectic keenness, a pietist of rigidly scrupulous observance, and charitable in the extreme. Of the three elements which go to make up the ideal man, the head, the heart, and the soul, it was hard to say with which he was more liberally

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endowed. Whatever he did, he did with all his power. When engaged in study, his absorption was absolute and his concentration complete; when worshipping, his whole being poured itself out before his Maker; and, when engaged in performing an act of benevolence, he had no other thought in his mind until it was accomplished.

The problem which had engaged his attention on this particular occasion belonged to the last-mentioned category, and was knottier far than the most abstruse ceremonial, legal, or theological riddle he had ever been called upon to solve. So troublesome was it, and so greatly did it worry the good rabbi, that he presented quite a picture of despair as he sat before his study-table, upon which were heaped in picturesque confusion huge rabbinical tomes, some open and some closed, his black skull cup pushed far back upon his head, and his hair and long venerable beard sadly tousled and frowsed from the constant pulling he had given it during the past three hours, while his long *peoth* were from the same cause all limp and out of curl. Supper time had come, but the problem was apparently as far from solution as ever, for the servant maid of the household had summoned him four and five times to the evening meal and he had not answered or even seemed aware of the sum-

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mons; and it was only when the rebbetzin herself appeared that he seemed conscious that he had been called, and answered abstractedly, "Yes, wife, I am coming at once, at once." Impatiently muttering and grumbling to herself, the rebbetzin returned to the dining-room; and the rabbi, rising from his seat, directed his steps to the same place, his face clearly showing by its abstracted and absorbed expression that the same problem which had worried him all afternoon still engaged his thoughts.

Rabbi Akiba was usually a very pleasant companion at table. He was in the habit of telling amusing anecdotes and making witty remarks in the course of the meal, and it was his invariable custom to discourse learnedly on some theme of the law before the blessing of the food was pronounced, in order to fulfil the rabbinical precept, "a man shall always speak words of the law over his table"; but to-night he was very poor company indeed. He ate his food mechanically, taking everything that came along without examination, although his usual practice was to eat quite sparingly, and only such dishes as were favorites of his. He put snuff into his milk-soup and salt to his nose, and would have eaten the soup with its snuffy admixture had not Rebecca pointed out the error.

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To the remarks addressed to him by his better half he returned only incoherent answers. In a word, he was in a state of abstraction and perplexity which was plainly visible to all, so that not only his spouse and his three pretty black-eyed daughters, Leah, Miriam, and Taube, noticed it, but even the Russian *Bochur* Hayim, whom the rabbi kept in his house out of admiration for the latter's profound erudition and who was three-fourths blind, and as a rule totally oblivious to everything that went on in the world outside of the *Beth Hammidrash*, dimly perceived that his master was not the same as at other times. Suddenly the rabbi paused while drinking a cup of tea, with such a suddenness, indeed, as to make half of the hot fluid go down "the wrong throat"; and though sputtering and coughing, and with face fiery red from the resulting tracheal disturbance, managed to exclaim in triumphant gasps: "I have it, I have it."

"What have you?" inquired Rebecca with some acerbity. "As far as any one can notice, all you have is a fit of coughing which cannot do you any good. I hope what you have is worth having."

"Never mind, wife," said the rabbi with a pleasant smile. "What I have is indeed worth

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the while. When all is accomplished you shall know what it is. And now let us finish our meal, for I am in haste."

The rabbi then briefly discoursed on a religious theme in order not to deviate from his custom, and pronounced the blessing of the food, in which all joined. "Now, my good Rebecca," said the rabbi, when these ceremonies were concluded, "bring me my great coat, my Sabbath hat, and my cane, for I have a certain visit to make."

"Why, what possesses you?" said Rebecca in wonderment. "Why do you want to go out at night, although you have often told me that the disciples of the learned should not go out alone at night, and why do you wish to dress in your Sabbath state? Are you making a visit at court or the palace of a noble? I am afraid all is not right with you."

"Do not be afraid, wife," said the rabbi, who was now in excellent spirits. "Everything is all right. Now, quickly get me my things, for, as I said, I am in haste."

The rebbetzin was fain to be content with this not very satisfactory answer, and brought her husband his finest official robes, the great, heavy satin *jubitza* and his broad velvet *streimel* or Sabbath hat. Having arrayed himself in

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these, and taken in addition a stout stick, the rabbi ventured forth into the night, which, although the hour was not late, was already, as usual in those northern regions, intensely dark and quite cold.

While he is on his way to his destination, whatever that may be, let us see what was the matter which had so greatly troubled the holy man all day, and which had driven him forth into the darkness and rigor of a northern winter night. That morning there had come to him Mosheh Labishiner, one of the constant worshippers in the synagogue and an unfailing attendant at the rabbi's Talmudic lectures in the house of learning, and had poured into his ears a pitiful tale of woe. It was not exactly a story of destitution, but it was one which touched the rabbi's naturally soft heart, always open to every plea of distress and ever ready to sympathize with all that suffered and sorrowed, in a particularly tender and sensitive spot. Mosheh told Rabbi Akiba that his daughter Deborah (whom Rabbi Akiba knew as a dutiful and God-fearing maiden and pretty withal) had been betrothed to a poor but very worthy youth, Samuel of Kempen, for more than two years; that the two young people were ardently devoted to each other, and desirous, as were also the parents on

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both sides, of sealing their love by the sacred bond of wedlock, but that prudence forbade the union until the youth would be the possessor of a business of his own, and able properly to maintain a wife and family. He, Mosheh, in accordance with the invariable custom in all good Jewish families, had promised his prospective son-in-law a dowry of a thousand gulden, which would be amply sufficient to establish a modest business; but that owing to various misfortunes and losses he had been unable to accumulate more than two hundred gulden, which would barely suffice for the expenses of the wedding, but would leave nothing for the dowry. The young people were to have been married a year previously; but as Mosheh did not possess the requisite amount of the dowry, he had continually deferred the marriage, on various pretexts, until now it was impossible to defer it any more. His poor wife and his daughter, the *Kallah*, were in the utmost distress and wept unceasingly, while his intended son-in-law and *Mehuttanim*, who knew nothing of his financial embarrassments, were beginning to grow suspicious and to think that he was opposed to the marriage, and did not really intend to permit it to be consummated.

"And now, dear rabbi," Mosheh had said,

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"help me, I implore thee. Unless I can procure a thousand gulden within a day or two I do not know what misfortune will happen. My poor wife and daughter will surely die of broken hearts and my name will be blackened forever."

Rabbi Akiba was not intimately acquainted with Mosheh. All he knew of him was that he was an "honest Jew," a good, straightforward, religious man; but that was sufficient to gain his sympathy, and especially the sorrows of his wife and daughter touched him to the quick. He at once offered to go and collect the money for the dowry among the wealthy members of his flock; and he added that he was sure there would be no difficulty in obtaining the required amount for a young woman of such excellent repute, who was a daughter of such eminently respectable and pious parents. But here he struck an unexpected difficulty. Mosheh objected strenuously to any public collection in his behalf.

"You must not breathe a syllable of all this to any living creature, dear rabbi," he begged. "I could never endure the thought that all the Kehillah should know that I had been obliged to depend upon the charitable gifts of kind-hearted people in order to obtain a dowry for my daughter. I have always been an independent, self-respecting merchant, and have myself

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provided for all the needs of my family. I could not endure the thought of appearing as a *Shnorrer* for any reason. And then my wife and daughter, do you think that they would ever accept a dowry which had been thus gathered together from the offerings of pity? They would sooner die. They do not even know that my circumstances are so straitened. The mere report that contributions were being solicited in our behalf would destroy whatever happiness they have. No, rabbi, you must get the amount needed in some other way, in some way which will not even raise a suspicion that we are being helped, or else I shall have to ask you rather to do nothing and to leave it to the All-Merciful One to deal with us as He sees fit."

These words, while they greatly increased the respect which the rabbi felt for Mosheh, also added immensely to his perplexity. They seemed utterly to shut the door in the face of any attempt to obtain the required sum. Rabbi Akiba himself was not the possessor of any considerable amount of money. His income was not large and he never had any difficulty in disposing of it, there being plenty of claimants on his bounty outside of his own family. If, therefore, he could not go to the wealthy householders in the Kehillah and openly ask them for

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donations, he knew of no source whence he could derive the assistance needed. It would not do to request of them the gift of such a large amount without stating the purpose for which it was to be used. They might give it to him, such was their respect for his character and their trust in the purity of his motives, but they would be apt to speculate on the use to which he intended to devote it, and very likely they would find it out, too, and that would be directly contrary to the explicit desire and request of Mosheh. Hence the perplexity and the mental struggles by which the poor rabbi had been tortured all day until at supper he had found, as he thought, the solution of the vexatious problem. The simpler solution which would have suggested itself to many a modern cleric, to shrug the shoulders deprecatingly and politely to inform the suppliant that he regretted extremely that under the circumstances it was impossible to do anything for him, did not occur to Rabbi Akiba. He was narrow in many ways, limited both in views and experience to that which could be acquired in the secluded recesses of the Beth Hammidrash, simpler, indeed, than many a modern child in worldly ways; but on that very account his moral fibre possessed the old, unspoiled Jewish sturdiness. He knew that

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Mosheh was deserving of sympathy and help, and he determined to help him if there were any possibility of doing so; and believed he had now found a way to attain that wished-for end.

Rabbi Akiba hurried through the streets of Galoschin, brilliantly lighted with the bright illumination of early evening, presenting a singular enough figure, as he hastened along, to be the object of the wondering stares of many a passer-by. Galoschin was a city originally Polish, but which under the influence of Prussian culture and discipline had become thoroughly Germanized, and which strove to reproduce the manners and the external characteristics of the German metropolis. The Jewish inhabitants in particular had, as a rule, dropped all the old-time Polish characteristics. *Jubitzas* and *peoth* in particular were utterly banned, and were conceded only to the rabbi to whom, as an example of rigid conservatism and unswerving piety, they were deemed appropriate. As Rabbi Akiba hastened through the streets he presented, therefore, a most extraordinary contrast in his long, girdled robe, his strange broad-brimmed hat, with long, dangling ear-curls and the stout cane in his hands, to the ladies and gentlemen, attired in the height of modern fashion, who sauntered along the elegant thorough-

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fare, stopping before the brilliantly lighted windows of the shops or entering the theatres, concert halls, cafés, and other places of amusement which abounded in this vicinity. In front of a large and splendid edifice, through whose windows and great portal floods of light poured and loud strains of gay dance music were heard, the rabbi paused. Over the gateway was a huge sign, which bore, in letters composed of shining gas flames, the legend, "Galoschiner Casino und Vereinshaus." Rabbi Akiba glanced at this sign a moment and then boldly entered. His entrance was the signal for great excitement among the persons standing in the hall and among the visitors who were entering at the same time, and who had come to attend the annual ball and reunion of the Galoschiner Gesellige Verein, the fashionable club *par excellence* of the town, to which belonged all those who could lay claim to wealth and social station. It was an unheard-of thing that an old-fashioned, conservative Jew, who clung to Polish costume, beard and ear-locks, should set his foot within a place dedicated to the dance and the new social practices which had come from the West. To such a one they were all un-Jewish abominations; and the sight of swallow-tailed, bare-headed men and half-clothed women, shame-

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lessly exposing their naked bosoms and arms to the gaze of strange men, was hateful and loathsome. That Rabbi Akiba, the holy man, whose name was a synonym for all that was pious and austere, who stood for rigid and unswerving adherence to the olden Jewish life and stern religious discipline, and for uncompromising opposition to all new-fashioned vanities and worldliness, that he should actually in *propria persona* enter into precincts given over to empty gayety and folly, "the abode of scoffers," was more than surprising; it was bewildering, stupefying, paralyzing.

Rabbi Akiba did not seem to notice the excitement created by his entrance, but walked ahead to the door of the main *salon*. Here stood several gentlemen in evening dress. They were the reception committee, appointed to welcome the arriving guests. They gazed with amazement at the venerable figure approaching, and bade him good-evening in subdued voices. He answered their greeting and strode into the *salon*. The dance had just begun, and the floor was crowded with gentlemen in evening dress and ladies in handsome *décolleté* gowns and elegant coiffures. The appearance of the rabbi gave rise to a scene of extraordinary excitement and confusion. Both

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men and women had no other thought but that their venerable spiritual chief had come there to rebuke them for their pursuit of unseemly and impious fashions; that he would denounce them in fiery words as recreants to the faith, as sinners in Israel. In those days men and women still trembled when the rabbi uttered bitter words of reproof; and it was, therefore, only natural that a sort of panic seized those who knew that they had transgressed against the strict rules of propriety of their faith, and saw before them one who could call them to account. Some of the women fled to the other end of the room, followed by their escorts; others endeavored hastily to cover up their bare breasts and arms; others again stood as if rooted to the spot and unable to move. But Rabbi Akiba uttered no word of rebuke. He stood still, gazing with a benevolent smile at the scene of confusion which his advent had caused. Several moments of embarrassment and constraint passed before a few of the gentlemen present plucked up courage to approach the rabbi, bid him welcome, and inquire the reason of his visit to the ball. At their head was Herr Pringsheim, the banker and president of the community, who, by reason of his prominent station, acted as spokesman.

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"Peace be unto thee, honored rabbi," he said, with a low and reverential bow. "We welcome thee to our festivity. But may I inquire what has brought us the honor of thy presence this evening? We had hardly thought that festivities such as this met with thy approval."

"Curiosity, merely curiosity, friend Pringsheim," answered the rabbi, with a reassuring smile. "I wanted to know what our Jews are doing in these new-fashioned days. One must know everything. Our sages, of blessed memory, tell us: 'Know what thou shouldst answer to the Epicurean.' But how can one know what to say to the Epicureans unless one knows what they do? Just think: I have grown so old and have never seen a ball and know nothing, except by hearsay, of what is done in a casino or clubhouse. Now, let the dance go on. Do not interrupt your proceedings on my account. I shall not scold you to-night, although what I may do some other time I shall not say."

A gasp, indicating wonderment and only partial reassurance, escaped from the breasts of the rabbi's hearers at these words. There was nothing to do, however, except to follow his suggestion. Herr Pringsheim signalled to the musicians, who had ceased playing, to resume, and most of the dancers also resumed their

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places, showing, however, by their embarrassed air that they were ill at ease and not at all comfortable under the rabbi's gaze. It was a singular sight, the venerable rabbi whose whole appearance bespoke the house of worship and the study chamber, and recalled memories of centuries long past, standing in a modern ballroom, critically inspecting the motions of the gayly clad crowd, who bowed and *chasséed* and changed partners and swung around in the most approved style, but who could not help showing by their sheepish looks how keenly they felt the absurdity of their position.

The dance over, Herr Pringsheim asked the rabbi if he had now satisfied his curiosity. "Oh, no," answered Rabbi Akiba, "unless this is all that takes place here. But there must surely be more going on in a casino than merely dancing, or you could not use so many rooms."

"But there is really nothing else," answered Pringsheim, "except the card-playing. Those gentlemen who do not dance play various games of cards until supper-time, which comes at midnight. But I hardly suppose, worthy rabbi, that you take any interest in games of chance?"

"Ah, but I do," answered the rabbi, with sudden animation. "That is just what I want to see. I want to know what there is about

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games of chance which so fascinates men that they will stake their money, their health, the happiness of their families, even their lives, upon the issue of a game of cards. By all means bring me where they play cards."

With a gesture of despair and an illy suppressed groan, Herr Pringsheim led the way to the card-room. The entrance of the rabbi into the elegantly furnished card-room produced a sensation similar to that which had been caused by his appearance in the ball-room. A number of gentlemen were sitting around the green-covered tables, deeply engrossed in their hazardous and exciting pastime; but no sooner did the tall, venerable figure of the aged ecclesiastic appear amid the thick clouds of tobacco smoke which filled the atmosphere of the room than all paused in astonishment and rose to their feet in varying attitudes and aspects of amazement and consternation. Like their companions of the ball-room they were apprehensive of a fierce denunciation of their ungodly doings, and half expected to be peremptorily ordered home. Herr Pringsheim hastened to relieve their apprehensions.

"Retain your seats, gentlemen," he said, "and do not interrupt your game. Our honored rabbi has come here this evening impelled by a desire

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to see for himself how modern society amuses itself. He does not wish to disturb or interfere with you in any way. Resume your playing, therefore, and we shall remain here as mere spectators."

The effect of these words was that the players resumed their seats and began again their interrupted games. The ban of the rabbi's presence rested, however, heavily on all, and the playing, like the dancing in the ball-room under the same influence, became spiritless and perfunctory in the extreme. The players removed their cigars from their mouths, the erstwhile boisterous voices became subdued, and all animation departed from the scene. After silently watching the proceedings for a few moments the rabbi said to Herr Pringsheim: "Do you know, friend Pringsheim, I do not seem to gain any insight into a gambler's feelings from merely looking on. To me the whole thing seems a merely mechanical proceeding. One makes one move and the other another move. I cannot make out what it is all about, and I believe that I shall never have any conception of what card-playing is, or wherein the fascination lies unless I play a game or two myself. Would you mind playing with me?"

"Not at all, rabbi," said Pringsheim, highly

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amused at the request. "What game shall it be?"

"That is all the same to me," answered the rabbi. "I do not know one from the other. You choose any one you please and you will be kind enough to teach it me. I think I shall be able to learn it."

"Very well," said Pringsheim, laughing heartily. "I don't doubt but you will make a famous card-player. Where there is *Torah* there is *Chochmah*."

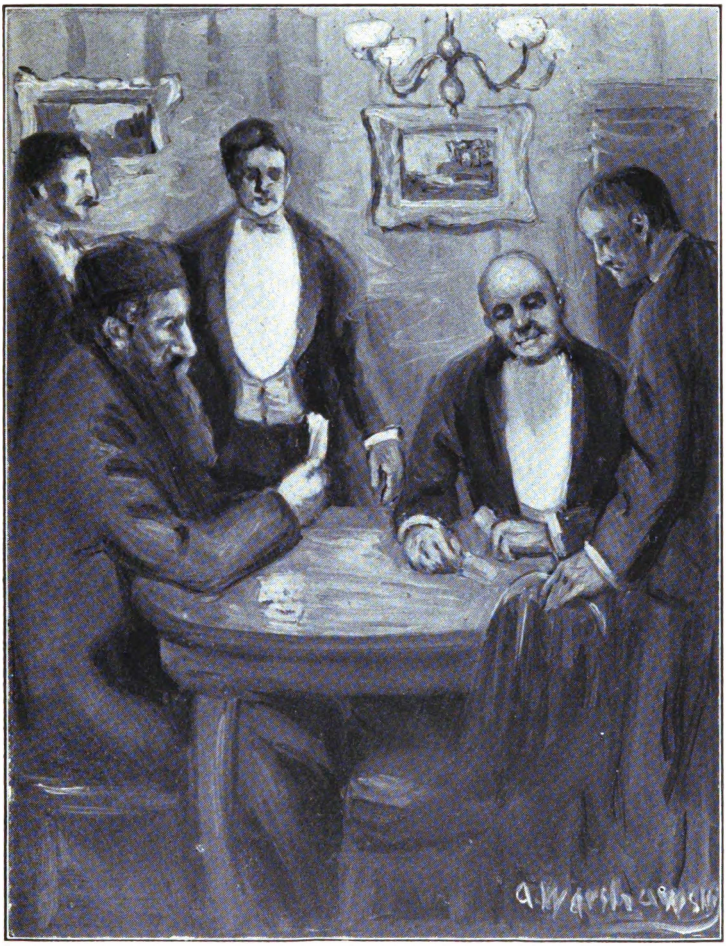
"But one thing I must tell you," said the rabbi. "We must play for money. I could never get the real feeling of the gambler, the thrill and the tension which he feels, unless there was the hope of gain and the risk of loss. So we must not play a mere formal game, but there must be a real stake involved."

"Very well, rabbi," said Pringsheim, still smiling. "How large shall the stake be, a gulden or five gulden?"

"Oh, that would never do," said the rabbi. "I could not get the right idea with such a trifling sum, which is of no consequence whether won or lost. Let us play for a thousand gulden. I shall put my five hundred gulden on the game and you put in five hundred gulden also."

The effect of this proposition was naturally

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THE GAME WHICH ENSUED WAS HIGHLY INTERESTING

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startling. Pringsheim stared at the rabbi for a moment as though he could not trust his ears. But he was, to put it in modern parlance, game. "As you wish, rabbi," he said, quietly. "We shall play for a stake of a thousand gulden."

The game which ensued was highly interesting. Writer deponeth not, nor is it essential to the purposes of this veracious history to state whether the game was klabberyas, pinocle, skat, euchre, or poker. Pringsheim taught Rabbi Akiba its rules and the game began. With one accord all the other players suspended their games to contemplate the spectacle of a rabbi in *jubitza*, *streimel*, and *peoth* engaged in a game of cards with a society gentleman in swallow-tail and bare head. Of the result there could be no doubt. Pringsheim, of course, had no intention of either defeating the rabbi or taking his money. After various more or less intricate manœuverings Rabbi Akiba won.

"Well, rabbi, you have won. Here are your winnings," said Pringsheim; and he took out his wallet, and extracting therefrom five hundred gulden notes, handed them to the rabbi, who took them with great complacency and stowed them carefully away in his purse. "I think you must understand now a gambler's feelings, at all events when he wins."

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"So far, so good, friend Pringsheim," answered the rabbi; "but this is not quite experience enough for me. I want to know how a gambler feels when he risks the possessions he has gained so easily. If you do not mind, therefore, I should like to play one more game, staking the amount I have just won."

"I shall have to beg to be excused this time, worthy rabbi," said Herr Pringsheim, with an amused chuckle. "You are too good a player for me. Let some one else take my place. Herr Commerzienrath Hamburger, perhaps you will oblige our honored *Rav* and play a game with him on the same terms as the first one."

Herr Commerzienrath Hamburger, a stout man with a bald head and a smooth face, who, like Pringsheim, was one of the *Vorstand* or trustees of the community, came forward, somewhat reluctantly, at these words and signified his willingness to do as requested. The issue of the second game was the same as that of the first. The rabbi's good luck did not desert him, and a few moments later he rose from the table with the handsome sum of a thousand gulden in his purse. He thanked Messrs. Pringsheim and Hamburger for the instructive experience which they had been the means of affording him, bade the other gentlemen good-night, and turned to

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depart. He was escorted to a private exit by Herr Pringsheim, who had him placed in a carriage, and the rabbi was whirled to his home, leaving behind him a much puzzled and mystified company of his congregants.

On the following day Mosheh Labishiner called on Rabbi Akiba. He was in a state of wretchedness bordering on utter despair. He had been forced to yield to the repeated entreaties of his wife and daughter, and had permitted the date of the wedding to be set, and had assured his intended son-in-law that the dowry would be ready a few days before the marriage. But he had not the faintest idea whence he could derive the needed funds; and he did not believe that Rabbi Akiba, in view of the restriction he had placed upon him, would be able to assist him. His visit to the rabbi was more with a vague idea of obtaining some comfort from the rabbi's friendly words than of anything more material. As soon as the rabbi caught sight of Mosheh's distressed countenance he cried out: "Mosheh, don't look so black. A man who is going to marry his daughter to a fine young *bochur* must look happy. Have you set the date of the wedding yet?"

"Yes, rabbi, but the *Neduniah?*"

"Oh, don't let that worry you. Here it

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is." And the rabbi drew forth his purse, and taking therefrom ten hundred gulden notes, placed them in the hands of the bewildered Mosheh.

"O rabbi, a thousand thanks! But how in the world did you get it, since you had not the money and I had insisted that you must not collect for us?"

"Oh, that was easy. I won it at cards."

"At cards!" and Mosheh stared at the rabbi with a look of blank amazement and non-comprehension.

"Yes, at cards," said the rabbi. "I am a famous card-player. "Whenever any of my good friends cannot find the dowry of his daughter, I go and win it at cards. Why not? Do I not cause the card-players to do a *Mitzvah?* And is that not in itself a *Mitzvah?*" And the rabbi laughed long and heartily.

"Rabbi, I do not understand thy words," said Mosheh; "but I know thou hast been my saviour, and the saviour of my family. I would fain show my gratitude. How can I thank thee?"

"I want no thanks," said the rabbi. "All I want is that thou shouldst respect my ability as card-player and give me the privilege of a *Mitzvah* dance at the wedding." And the rabbi laughed again.

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GLOSSARY OF HEBREW AND OTHER NON-ENGLISH TERMS.

ABAYE AND RABA, . . . Two distinguished rabbis of the Talmud.

ANGENEHME RUHE, . . . Pleasant rest.

ANI YEHUDI, BO IMMI ACHI, I am a Jew. Come with me, O my brother.

APOLOGIA PRO LIBRO SUO, . Apology or defence of his book.

AUF WIEDERSEHEN, . . . Good-by; au revoir.

BACHURIM, ... Talmud students.

BOCHUR, ... Talmud students.

BORUCH HASHEM, . . . Praised be the Lord.

BAAL HAB-BAYIS OR BAAL HA-BAYITH, ... Householder, burgher.

BAALE BATIM, ... Members of the congregation.

BAUERNGUT, ... Peasant estate, farm.

BETH HA-MIDRASH, . . . House of study, where the study of the law and worship are conducted.

CHAUSSÈE, ... Highway.

CHARIF, ... Sharp, keen-witted.

CHAVER, ... Friend, companion.

CHAZAN, ... See Hazan.

CHOCHMAH, ... Wisdom.

DEITCH, ... German: Polish-Jewish term for a Jew who has adopted Gentile dress and ways.

ETHROGIM, ... Fruit of the citra species, used on the Feast of Tabernacles, Lev. xxiii. 40.

EINGELEGTE GÄNSEBRUST, . Goose breast preserved in fat.

ERSTE DAME, ... First Lady; Prima Donna.

ETERNAL HOUSE, ... English rendition of Beth Olam, one of the many touching Hebrew names for the Jewish Cemetery.

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FULDA RAV, ... Officiating rabbi of Fulda.
GALOSCHINER CASINO UND VEREINSHAUS, ... Galoschin Casino and Club House.
GAN EDEN, ... Paradise.
GEBIRGE, ... Mountain range.
GEFÜLLTE FLANKEN, . . Stuffed flanks or navel pieces.
GEMARA, ... Main portion of the Talmud.
GESETZTE BOHNEN, . . . Beans placed in the oven on Friday and left there till the next day.
GESETZTES ESSEN, . . . Food treated as preceding.
GET, ... Divorce.
GRUESSE GOTT, ... Be greeted in the name of God.
GRUENKERN SUPPE, . . . Soup made from a peculiar kind of green kernels.
GUTEN MORGEN, ... Good morning.
GUTEN TAG, ... Good day.
GUT WOCH, ... Good week.
HAFTARAH, ... Prophetic portion.
HAKAMIM, ... The sages, the rabbins.
HALACHAH, ... Religious rule or decision.
HAZAN, ... Reader or Precentor.
HEREIN, ... Come in.
ILLUY, ... Bright scholar.
JUBITZA, ... Long robe worn by the Polish and Russian Jews.
KADDISH, ... A prayer recited by sons during the eleven months after the death of a parent.
KALLAH, ... Bride.
KEHILLA, ... Congregation.
KIDDUSH, ... Benediction by which the Sabbath or festivals are introduced.
KIDDUSH-BEAKER, . . . Cup containing the wine of the blessing.
KETUBAH, ... Marriage certificate.
KOSHER, ... Ritually clean.
KRETCHM, ... Tavern, inn.
"L'ETAT, C'EST MOI," . . The State, I am it.
LEBE WOHL, ... Farewell.

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LEF, ... A heart.
LINK, ... Irreligious.
LOEFFEL, ... A spoon.
MAARIV, ... Evening service.
MAGGID, ... Preacher.
MALACH, ... Angel.
MASSIG GEVOOL, ... Interference with the business of another.
MAZZOL TOV, ... Good luck, a form of congratulation.
MECHULLEH, ... A bankrupt.
MEHUTTANIM, ... Relatives by marriage.
MELAMMEDIM, ... Hebrew teachers.
MESHOLIM, ... Stories or parables.
MESHUMMAD OR MESHUMMED, ... A renegade, a pervert from Judaism.
MINCHAH, ... Afternoon service.
MISHNAH, ... Portion of the Talmud.
MISHPOCHOH, ... Family connections, relationship.
MITZVAH, ... Meritorious action, good deed.
NEDUNIAH, ... Dowry.
NEFOSHOS, ... Souls.
NIGGUN, ... Melody.
OVEL, ... A mourner.
PARNASS, ... President of the congregation.
PARNOSO, ... Livelihood, sustenance.
PEOTH, ... Ear curls.
PLETT, ... A ticket.
RACONTEUR, FEM.—*euse*, . Teller of tales and anecdotes.
RAV, ... Official or communal rabbi.
RISHUS, ... Wickedness, enmity; Hebrew term for anti-Jewish prejudice.
ROSH CHODESH, ... First of the Jewish month.
ROSHO, ... Wicked man, Jew-hater.
SCHEITEL, ... A cloth or wig with which religious Jewesses cover their heads.
SCHLAFE WOHL, ... Sleep well.
SCHNORRERS, ... Beggars.
SEDRAH, ... The part of the Pentateuch read in the synagogue.

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SHABBOS KUGEL, ... Sabbath pudding.
SHAMMAS, ... Synagogue attendant; sexton.
SHIDDUCH, ... Marriage.
SHIUR, ... A selection from the Talmud or devotional books.
SHIVAH, ... The prescribed mourning period of seven days during which the mourner sits on the earth and does not leave the house.
SHOOL, ... Synagogue.
SOPHER, ... Scribe.
TAANIS, ... A fast day.
TALLETHIM OR TALLITHOTH, Robes or shawls worn during services.
TEPHILLIN, ... Phylacteries.
PROSELYTE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, ... English rendition of Ger Tsedek, a Gentile who enters into the covenant of Judaism in all sincerity and lives a consistently pious and religious life.
TORAH, ... The Law.
TREFA OR TREFOTH, . . Forbidden food.
VIS Á VIS DE RIEN, . . . Over against nothing—*i. e.*, at a loss, unable to do anything.
VODKA, ... Russian whiskey.
YEHUDI, ... A Jew.
YEHUDI ATTAH? . . . . Art thou a Jew?
YESHIBAH. . . . . Talmudic Academy.
ZWIEBEL TÄTCHER, . . . Onion cake.

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