NUREMBERG
THE UNHOLY CITY

By

JOSHUA PODRO

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A CHAPTER IN JEWISH MARTYROLOGY

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CHAPTER I

The Chosen City

Some historic cities are symbols of human achievement; others of inhuman shame and infamy. While Jerusalem and Athens commemorate the wars which man has waged for the development of the spirit, there are other cities which are monuments to cruelty and retrogression, cities which have exploited human ability for inhuman ends.

Nuremberg is an "historic" city. She prides herself on her mediæval buildings. She boasts of the achievements of her craftsmen in iron, bronze, brass, copper, silver and stone. The tourist is constantly reminded that Duerer lived and worked there. Persistent self-advertisement has exalted Nuremberg as a city of art and mediæval charm. She parades under false colours, like a harlot with the dress and manner of an innocent young maid.

For the true symbol of Nuremberg is Nazism. All through the generations its misbegotten spirit has dwelt there. It was not chance that made Hitlerism choose this city as the Sinai of the new German Faith. There, in the city of the toy-makers, is being built the home of the new German god, the greatest dwelling-place a man-made god has ever had.

Nuremberg has shown how it was possible for a régime to last almost without interruption for eight hundred years. Neither the Reformation, nor the Thirty Years' War, not even the French Revolution, were able to change the city's life.

She called herself a "Free City," but freedom has never been known there. There was a permanent "leadership," appointed by "divine right." From

generation to generation, power was handed down from father to son, and by inheritance each generation of leaders assumed supreme authority over those in the classes " beneath " them.

From Nuremberg comes the far-sighted conception which permits a mortal human being to claim with certainty that he is settled on this earth for at least the next thousand years; when the Nuremberg Council issued an ordinance it invariably contained the phrase that " it is for all time." From Nuremberg, too, comes the example of borrowing money, as much as possible, from wherever possible, without the slightest intention of repaying. And from Nuremberg comes the Nazi version of " equality," which means degrading the best and most capable to the level of the worst and laziest.

It was in Nuremberg that men were sent to prison for inventing " labour-saving " devices. From there, too, comes the policy of " gleichschaltung," the method of the steam-roller against human beings and ideas. And Nuremberg broke all records in the art of the executioner. It was a characteristic boast of the Nuremberg executioner that he could cut off two heads with one stroke of his axe. And there could have been no better model for the torture-chambers of the " Brown Houses " than the " Hole " of the Nuremberg prison.

In a country where, for the Jews, the Middle Ages did not end until the close of the nineteenth century, Nuremberg was the last place to allow Jews the privilege of communal prayer.

Jew-baiting was always a favourite pastime in Franconia, and particularly in its capital, Nuremberg. It served instead of circuses to keep the populace amused; and it worked, invariably. It was in Franconia, as far back as the thirteenth century, that the legend of the poisoned wells was invented. A hundred years later, at the time of the " Black

Death," it provided a pretext for the extermination of most of the Jewish communities in Germany.

Only Franconia, where a Rindfleisch was able, in the thirteenth century, to incite the people to butcher a hundred thousand Jews, could also have produced a Streicher, who is now striving to emulate his primitive forerunner in these comparatively more adult and enlightened times.

Six hundred years separate Rindfleisch from Streicher. But only time divides them. In everything else they are one : the same methods, the same means, aiming at the same target—the Jews.

Yet there is one difference. Under Rindfleisch it was possible for Jews to purchase their lives at the price of a few drops of baptismal water. To-day Christianity means nothing in Germany. In olden times the crucifixion of Jesus was the main pretext for persecution. In old Nuremberg Jews were murdered in the name of religion, in the name of the love of Christ. Jewish blood was poured on the altar of Christianity, to atone for the " sins of the Jews." To-day even this attempt to justify persecution on religious grounds is dispensed with.

In those primitive days, when Nuremberg was still flirting with art, the " Lovely Fountain " was set up in the centre of the market place. Among the worthy and holy men whose effigies graced the fountain were Moses, " our Teacher," and other Hebrew prophets. They were still Christians in Nuremberg then, and it was not yet possible to jettison the Old Testament as if it were of no account. When the " Holy of Holies " is ready for the new German god, they will no doubt remove the heads of Moses and the other Jews from the " Lovely Fountain," and in their place put those of Rindfleisch and Streicher. It will be in keeping with the spirit of the time, and with the place.

CHAPTER II

RINDFLEISCH

ROETTINGEN is a small town in Franconia. It does not appear on the map, and will not be found in the ordinary reference books. It is probably of little importance, and perhaps it no longer even exists. It will not be missed ; but in Jewish history the name is written big in letters of blood.

From the small church of Roettingen, at the close of the thirteenth century, disappeared the " Holy Wafer,"—the " Host." The pious Catholic inhabitants could not imagine to whom the " Host " could be of use, except to the Jews. They had heard that Jews pounded the " Host " in a mortar, and were able to draw blood from it.* It was also said that this blood possessed marvellous properties, and if used in a certain manner, was an excellent remedy for the complexion. It was believed that this was why Jews had such fresh-complexioned cheeks ! It was therefore abundantly clear to the Christian townsfolk that the Jews of Roettingen had utilised an opportune moment to steal and desecrate the " Host," for the benefit of their complexions.

The " guilt " of the Jews became still more apparent when Rindfleisch, who, according to some opinions was a noble, and to others a butcher, as his

* Recent chemical researches have shown that the " Host " or " Holy Wafer," after lying for a long time in one place, produced microbes which in turn left red-coloured stains. The germs of the Micrococcus Prodigiosus (the " microbe of miracles ") exist in atmospheric dust and are capable of accidentally producing blood spots on different substances, particularly on wafers. These spots were interpreted as indicating the wrath of heaven and they gave rise to the belief in miracles of " bleeding hosts," " bleeding bread." They served as the basis of the accusations against Jews of their desecration of the sacred hosts, that the hosts showing " blood " stains were transfixed by Jewish unbelievers.

name indicates,—dreamed a dream. And in his dream he saw a vision, and a voice said to him: "Go and exterminate the cursed tribe of the Jews"; and told him thus to avenge the blood of Christ.

Vengefulness is deeply rooted in the German character. The Jewish God remembers unto the third and fourth generations, but the memory of the Germans persists to the fifth and sixth generations. They embraced Christianity somewhat late, but in compensation they took it up with great thoroughness. In the olden days, in certain parts of the country, one German in every twenty was a priest.

The news of Rindfleisch's vision swept the country like a flame. The huge army of priests stood by his side. The message of his dream was clear—Destroy the Jews!

Rindfleisch began with his own little town. On April 20th, 1298, every Jewish man, woman and child in Roettingen was burned to death. But their number was too small to quench the thirst for vengeance.

The story of the desecration of the "Host" spread with all the speed that the communications of those days allowed. All Franconia was ablaze. The call of Rindfleisch was obeyed with true German discipline. So anxious were the local groups to carry out his behest that in some towns they did not wait for the "leader" to arrive. When Rindfleisch reached Wuerzburg, which had a large Jewish community, he found that the work had already been completed by the local people. By the time he arrived there, the Jews were all dead.

There were no obstacles to his triumphal march. In town, village and hamlet, the "avengers" slaughtered and burned men, women and children, and destroyed and laid waste all the Jewish property they could not steal. For six months the slaughter continued, until it reached even beyond the borders of the Streicher country. Rindfleisch annihilated one

hundred and forty Jewish communities, and killed a hundred thousand Jews.

Nuremberg, the capital of Franconia, made a large contribution to the crusade of revenge in the name of "Christ's Blood." The *Nuremberg Jewish Memorial Book* gives an account of 698 martyrs who lost their lives on August 1st, 1298.

Nuremberg seems to have been the only town where the Jews made any attempt to defend themselves. They lived in the quarter adjoining the Imperial Castle. Was not the Emperor their paid protector? They had come there at his assurance to work and trade; and when they realised that the end was near, they took refuge in the castle. When they saw that they could hold out no longer, they built a huge pyre. Mothers tied their babes to their breasts, and gave themselves to the flames. With the age-old cry, "Shema Yisrael!" on their lips, many Jews destroyed themselves with their own hands before the enemy fell upon them.

Among the martyrs of Nuremberg were Rabbi Mordecai ben Hillel, one of the most famous scholars of his generation (author of the *Book of Mordecai*), his wife, and five young sons.

A few years before his martyrdom, Rabbi Mordecai ben Hillel had himself written an elegy on an earlier martyr, a Christian who had adopted Judaism, and was for that reason burned at the stake. In the light of Rabbi Mordecai's own fate, there is something ironic in his elegy, with its ardent belief that one day all suffering will be compensated . . .

> "How much goodness, Oh God, hast Thou still left
> For those who walk justly in Thy path,
> Who sacrifice themselves on the altar of Thine honour!"

Rindfleisch has been forgotten or overlooked by world history, although it has found room for murderers of much smaller calibre. But he has be-

come immortal in Jewish Lamentations and Memorial Books. This is the dirge of Rabbi Moses ben Eliezer Ha'Kohen :

Is our resistance of stone,
Or our flesh of iron ?
Can all this be endured ?
Let the echo of our agony
Ring through this world,
This outrage of our neighbours,
Our oppressors—full of hatred,
Who seek our destruction.

Once lions and tigers devoured us,
Our children were mangled by the cruel bear,
We were bitten in the back by hissing serpents. . .
But now we are trampled by a swine,
Who crushes us with his oppressive weight.

He devises all manner of tortures to destroy us,
The sword, and fire, and water . . .
Big and small are burned and slaughtered,
Women and children, bride and bridegroom, young and aged.
Ask all who walk upon this world,
If ever a people has been treated thus !

It has never been easy for Jews to write mere chronicles. What use is it to tell a deaf and blind world of their sufferings ? So instead they address their accusations direct to God, in song. Thus :*

I weep on the hardship of my fate,
And wail with a broken mood
On the ruins of my holy martyrs,
Burned before the eyes of the world.
My eyes are pouring tears
For the victims, the martyrs at the stake.
" My harp is used for lamentations,
And my reed for songs of pain."†
Maliciously they schemed against us
Over a sprinkled " Host."
And blacker still they showed their treachery,

* Printed in *Makhsor Salonichi*, reprinted in *Salfelds Martyrologium*, pp 341–343.
† Job 30, 31.

Saying to the purest of the holy race,
" You have stolen our poor God,
Pounded Him and ground Him in a mortar,
That you might take His flowing blood
To share amongst the wanderers of your tribe,
Scattered in the Diaspora."
In the year 58 of the Sixth Millennium,
Thou, O God, didst bring about our downfall.
Thou hast set us aside, forsaken us.
Now the dove (Israel) returns to Thee,
For she has found no peace,
And her children and her elders lie
Trampled in the midst of the streets.
How has this second month from the building of the Temple
Turned to affliction, anguish, and pain!
Our mourning began at Roettingen;
Our pearls, the noblest of our nation,
Were slain without pity . . .
Woe to you, town of blood,
I cry to Rothenberg,
A town stained red with blood!
How have your heroes fallen,
And weapons there were none,
A curse came upon the town,
The doing of the oppressors . . .
Is this the reward of the Torah,
For those who have taught it?
Mordecai Halevi, Treasure of Treasures,
Whose greatness illumined
The assembly of the wise,
How have we fallen into the hands
Of a no-people, a thorny race . . .

My heart takes heat and is melted
By the torch-bearing priest,
Who illuminated many fields and pathways
For posterity.
Who searched and accomplished, taught and explained.
How was the tongue used to the sweetness of Torah
Seared by flaming fire!
In the month of Ab came the misfortune.
I fling away my jewels,
And shave my head in mourning
For Wuerzburg,—the pleasant town
Consumed by flames and pillaged.

Plundered and mocked were Jacob's tents.
None was left in them . . .
They were all carried off to the slaughter.
My heart faints for the martyrs of Nuremberg.
My eyes shed tears
Like rainducts in heavy rain.
Too many are the victims,
I cannot count them . . .
For Thy sake, O God, have they fallen,
These men, and women, and children!

Heavy fell his fate on the son of Kish (Mordecai),
Son of the shining star, son of dawn . . .
The sources of his wisdom never failed,
It kindled the fire of Torah . . .
God chose him, the wise, the learned.
Sweeter than honey were his words . . .
Our wounds will long be open,
For you, our friend, our martyr!
How is the crown fallen from our head!
Like bees the people surrounded us,
And the jewel of the Torah was flung to the ground.
Array Thyself, Almighty, in Thy splendour,
And help those who are left!
For the dead cannot praise God,
Nor will the murderers in their rage.
Uproot them, O God, the instigators,
Who walk about this earth with so much certainty,
While the remnants of Thy people
Are naked, and fugitives . . .

In my anger I will accuse loudly.
Hast Thou rejected Judah?
Forsaken him utterly?
Why dost Thou withhold Thy peace,
Thy pity, Thy compassion?
Defend those who suffer for Thy sake,
Who melt like silver in the melting-furnace.
Once Abraham brought his only son
To Thee for a sacrifice . . . .
For this, O Lord of Creation,
Thou didst bless him.
How many thousands are now brought to Thee for sacrifice!
Therefore are our hands falling down,—
And our hearts are melted.

Fight, Avenger, against Edom!
Let Thy hands strike them!
Spare them not,
Nor shield them . . . .
Stain the earth red
With the blood of their lords and oppressors!

CHAPTER III

The Trade in Jews

There were few heirs left by the destroyed Jewish communities. Their possessions passed to the Emperor, the German Free Cities, the Princes, their debtors, the churches and the convents. When the Holy Roman Emperor, Albert I, realised that his Jewish property was being laid waste, he decided to make an end to the slaughter, and even to punish the guilty.

His action is understandable, considering that the Jewish property was—his. The Jewish tribute to Rome, which had begun with Titus's "Double Drachma," and was still earlier the tax which Jews paid towards the upkeep of the Temple, had been doubled, tripled, and further multiplied by the German Emperors, until it ceased to be a tax, and became a form of periodical confiscation.

The more "Christian" Germany became, the tighter the noose was drawn round the necks of the Jews. Gradually they became simply the Emperor's body-serfs,—his personal private property. They could be given away as a present; they could be pawned; they could be borrowed. Otto II gave the Jews of Merzburg to the Bishop of Gizeler, because his bishopric was poor. In 1263 King Richard presented the Jews of Speyer to the Bishop of Worms. Conrad IV pawned the Jews of Rothenburg to Count Gottfried von Hohenlohe for three thousand silver marks.

The price of Jews was subject to frequent fluctuation, and values were often at a low level. The Jews of Limburg, for instance, were pawned by Albert I for

only three hundred marks. The Jews of Wertheim seem to have been rated at a still lower value,—a mere hundred marks.

Nevertheless, they had a property value; and it was contrary to the Emperor's interests that Jews should flee from a district under his rule. When the Jews were apprehensive of impending massacre or robbery, and made preparations to leave the threatened areas, they were often compelled to remain, or even to return. When it was a question of confiscation, or of giving the populace a bloodletting and looting holiday at the expense of the Jews, it was considered preferable to give the local inhabitants priority rather than enable their neighbours to profit. That may be the reason why the Wuerzburg patriots did not wait for Rindfleisch and his imported help. They felt that they could deal with the matter themselves, without outside interference; and they saw no reason why they should offend local patriotic sentiment by waiting until the official " avengers " arrived.

So one of the reasons given for the arrest of Rabbi Meir (Maha'ram) of Rothenburg by the Emperor Rudolph, was that he had attempted to emigrate to Palestine.* The Emperor had cause to fear that other Jews might follow the Rabbi's example, and that there might even be the possibility of a large-scale Jewish emigration, with a consequent loss of revenue.

He therefore took various measures to prevent

* The Emperor demanded an exorbitant ransom for the liberation of the Rabbi. Jews everywhere instituted collections in order to free Rabbi Meir—the most important Jew of his generation—but when the Rabbi learnt of these efforts to secure his liberation, he ordered the collections to be discontinued. He decided that he would rather remain in prison for the rest of his life than provide the Emperor with a new and profitable method of extortion. He died in prison, and it was not until fourteen years after his death that the prison authorities surrendered his body to the Jewish community on the payment of a huge sum.

Rabbi Meir's life imprisonment was spent under fairly tolerable conditions. He was allowed to write his books, to see his disciples, and to answer the many questions on matters of religion sent to him by Jews throughout the world. The Emperor Rudolph evidently regarded Rabbi Meir as more profitable to him alive than dead.

Jews from going to Palestine. In one decree he ordered that any German Jew found in a ship sailing East should be thrown overboard.

Nuremberg proved an apt pupil. If the Jews were so useful to the Emperor, they might also be of use to the city. Nominally, the Emperor was the ruler, but actually Nuremberg was governed by its "noble and wise" town council.

And Nuremberg saw to it that she received an adequate share of the estate of the murdered Jews. After all, the town had earned it. Her citizens had done a good deal of the slaughtering.

In other towns in Germany Rindfleisch might have been able to work his will on the Jews even without the assent of the local authorities, but not in Nuremberg, where strict discipline prevailed. In a city where such exemplary order was maintained, it would not be correct to describe the upheaval as a "People's Revolt." The people of Nuremberg revolted only when they were told to do so; when they were ordered to lie low, they were quiescent for hundreds of years.

Even the brothels, from which the City Council derived a substantial revenue, were conducted with firm discipline. On one occasion, when their proprietors were incensed against a number of unlicensed houses, which were spoiling the trade by unfair competition, they first went as a delegation to the City Council, and asked for permission to make short shrift of the rival houses. The "noble and wise" Councillors admitted the justice of the honest brothel proprietors' complaint, and severely condemned the immoral practice of keeping houses of ill-fame without paying the appropriate taxes. They gave the indignant licensed bawds a free hand to deal with their rivals as they found fit, a judgment which proves conclusively that the city was ruled with every regard for discipline and decent public order.

Following the example of the Emperor, Nuremberg made every effort to retain as many Jews as possible for revenue purposes, and to fill the ranks depleted by the Rindfleisch massacre. The city's anxiety to retain a profitable quota of Jews is shown by an order issued thirty years after the butchery, stating that if any Jew left the town without special permission, his property would be confiscated. Furthermore, if any Jew desired to relinquish his privilege of "Nuremberg citizenship" he had first to obtain a permit from the Council, and to pay forthwith his tax for the following year.

There were by this time in Nuremberg two thousand Jews, who lived there by virtue of short-term privileges. Nuremberg found it advantageous to issue such short-term privileges, because every time they had to be renewed, it was possible to exact better conditions from the Jews. It was found that a period of living in fear and uncertainty from day to day had the effect of making them more liberal, and ready to yield to demands for more money.

Nevertheless, the city, and her partner, the Emperor, found it necessary to make some attempt occasionally to pacify the Jews, and to persuade them to remain. To this end, the Emperor Ludwig issued a new "privilege," which read:

> "We declare that we recognise the loyal and useful service rendered by our beloved Jews of Nuremberg on our behalf, and we therefore declare them to be free, and give them liberty to remain there, sitting in peace, free from special taxation, and that they will not suffer at our hands disabilities or imprisonment."

For this privilege the Jews paid one hundred gulden. It was a large sum for a plundered and pauperised community, and Ludwig knew that he could not have exacted more. This "privilege" to his "beloved Jews" was therefore granted only for three years.

Moreover, Ludwig knew his Nuremberg, and realised that his "beloved Jews" would not be allowed to live there long in peace if he did not share what he got from them with the noble Town Council, so he added the following note to his Declaration: "If the citizens of the Council find that the Jews have recovered, and that they can serve (!) more, then the Jews must obey such orders as the Council may issue to them." In other words, "As far as I am concerned, I give them freedom, but Nuremberg may do with them what she will."

At the end of this three years' respite, we find the Jews again fleeing from the city. The Council had apparently decided that the Jews had sufficiently "recovered," and that it was time they "served more." Ludwig was uneasy at the new exodus of the Jews, and in 1335 he issued a fresh decree that "For the benefit and the honour of the Reich, the fugitive Jews should be brought back, and the city should protect both those Jews who return and those who have remained."

The taxation imposed on the Jews at that time virtually took the form of confiscation. Nuremberg's revenue from Jewish taxation in 1342 amounted to 4,000 thaler, while the total revenue from all sources in Nuremberg, with all its legendary prosperity, was not more than 7,000 thaler.

Nuremberg may be considered a pioneer in the art of levying death-duties. In the middle of the fourteenth century Jews were forbidden to sell their immovable property, and on the death of a Jewish property-owner, one half of his estate went to the Emperor, and the other half to the city.

The city often showed much ingenuity in devising new Jewish taxes. There was, for instance, one tax imposed with the ostensible object of encouraging the maintenance of peace within the ranks of the Jews. If two Jews quarrelled, the one who began the dispute

was fined ten pounds heller, payable to the City Treasury. If, however, the one who was attacked retaliated more vigorously than the authorities considered desirable, he, too, had to pay.

If a Jew was denounced as having been involved in a quarrel, even though he had not been caught in the act the onus was on him to prove that he had taken no part in the dispute. If he failed to prove his " innocence " he was fined, and if he was unable to pay the fine he was not allowed to remain in the city until the money was found.

When the ingenuity of the city's revenue-seekers was exhausted, they fell back on the ordinary method used in those days—extortion.

CHAPTER IV

Competition in "Protecting" Jewish Money

The Emperor and the city of Nuremberg constantly vied with each other in trying to "protect" Jewish money. Ludwig was mainly concerned that the city should leave the Jews in peace until they had sufficiently "recovered" for him to be able to fleece them again; and Nuremberg was frequently alarmed lest the Emperor should extort too much from the Jews, since the more the Crown took, the less would be left for the Free City.

Because of this clash of interests, the Emperor frequently found himself handicapped during his periodical extortions, for he always had to bear in mind that Nuremberg would demand her share.

In 1347, when a special tax of one thousand pounds heller* was levied, to be paid to the Burgrave, on account of the Emperor, a further tax of two hundred pounds heller was imposed at the same time on the Jews, to maintain the equilibrium, and the latter sum was used to provide fuel for the imperial castle.

When Frederick III arrived at Nuremberg to receive a public welcome and honours on his accession to the throne, he sent word to the Jews demanding that their community, too, must pay him honour. There was only one way in which this "honour" could be "paid" to him, and his envoys accordingly demanded the sum of three hundred thousand gulden. But when they saw the genuine dismay and horror on the faces of the Jews, they reduced the sum to ten thousand gulden.

* One pound heller during the middle of the fourteenth century was equivalent to one gulden or three and one quarter thaler.

The noble and wise Council, however, realised the danger of allowing so great a sum to leave the city, when it could be much more useful to the Council itself. They therefore sent a secret representative to the Jewish community to urge it to persist in bargaining, and not to yield to the extravagant demands of the Emperor. The Emperor did not know what to make of this unwonted stubbornness on the part of the Jews, and he was fully prepared to adopt the usual course and imprison them all until they saw reason. Immediately, the Council took the Jews under its protection. There is a document that records that " When our Lord King sent his Chamberlain, Hans Ungnaden to the Burgomaster, that the Jews here, young and old, should be gathered in one house, and kept imprisoned there under guard, and that the Jewish houses should be occupied so that nothing might be concealed there, the Council said that it was only necessary for the Jews to give an oath that they would hide neither their bodies nor their possessions. Thereupon they actually took such an oath, as it has been recorded in the Book by the Court Scribe."

The Council held that this Jewish oath was sufficient guarantee that during the negotiations concerning the amount of the Jewish " honour " to be paid to the Emperor, they would not carry away any of their possessions. And later reports show that the Emperor finally said " Thank you ! " for a Jewish present of only 400 gulden, and an additional twenty-eight gulden which were shared among the members of his imperial retinue.

The amount seems small, and it is possible that it was merely an advance in respect of further payments. The historian Stobbe thinks that the real " honour " in connection with the Coronation was paid at a later date, and there is a document which appears to substantiate this. It relates the story of a Jew who

rebelled and refused to contribute to the Coronation Fund which was being raised among the Jews. The document states that " Jacob, Jew of Ciratel, has separated himself from all the Jews in Nuremberg who have promised to honour our Lord Emperor Frederick, and he has therefore been sentenced to ten months' imprisonment, and to be forced to pay."

Nuremberg had many disappointments from imperial promises. Although " scrap-of-paper " treaties are in the German tradition, Nuremberg frequently resented the Emperor's habit of pawning the Jewish taxes after he had undertaken not to do so. The pawning of these taxes was inconvenient to the city because while they were in pledge it was not possible to get at Jewish property except by giving the populace a free hand. Charles IV pawned the Jewish taxes only two years after he had solemnly undertaken not to do this.

Promises made to the Jews by either party, on the other hand, could be relied upon only when the interests of the Emperor and the city clashed. In that case each side would see to it that the promise was scrupulously kept by the other. If, however, there was no other clash of interests between the two, any promise or undertaking given to the Jews was null and void from the moment it was given.

In 1412 the Emperor Sigismund promised the Nuremberg Jews that they would not be worried, except for the ordinary taxes; yet one year later he extorted twelve thousand gulden from them in order to meet his expenses in connection with the Council of Constance.

Three years later, he published a long " privilegium " dealing with the " Protection of the Jews." " No one, not even the King," it reads, " may demand or take from them any monies against their will,—with the exception of the usual annual taxes." The document reads as if it were really animated by

friendly feelings for the Jews. It even forbids the forcible baptism of Jewish children "who are too young to know between good and evil," and at the end of the document there is a terse command that every Jew or Jewess who owned any business must surrender each year a tenth of his or her possessions, except personal clothing, personal jewellery, and bedding. The decree was made valid for three years only, yet in that short period a third of all Jewish property was virtually confiscated by means of a proclamation which had begun by stating that nothing must be taken from the Jews against their will.

Broadly speaking, the history of the Jews in Nuremberg is more or less a local version of the history of the Jews in Germany as a whole. Yet many things took place in Nuremberg which were characteristic of that city alone. Until late in the nineteenth century the laws concerning the Jews—or rather against the Jews—in Germany were extremely varied. As late as 1835 there was still in existence a body of 240 different Laws and Ordinances regulating the life of the Jews in the country. There was no common denominator to which could be referred the rights and wrongs of problems affecting the German Jews. The laws varied according to the mood of the Emperor, or the momentary feelings of the cities. What was just in one place was a crime in another.

The well-being of the Jewish community did not depend on their behaviour, their services to the country or their general usefulness. It depended on whether they could be of direct benefit to the rulers of towns, districts, or states. And if they could be of such use, there was a scramble for them.

It is related of the Emperor Albert I, who regarded himself as the heir to the Roman conquerors of Judaea, that he was of the opinion that not only the Jews in Germany, but also those in France, belonged to him.

When Philip le Bon heard of this claim, he placed

the matter before his legal counsellors, and asked them for their considered opinion. The counsellors found in favour of the German emperor, whereupon Philip announced that he proposed to return the French Jews to the German emperor, but that he would first confiscate their property, and send them back to Germany—naked.

The great and " free " city of Nuremberg had its own Jewish interests, which did not always coincide with those of the Emperor. When these interests clashed, each party sought to protect the Jews from the other. But whenever these interests coincided, it meant the end of Jewish property, and often of Jewish lives.

CHAPTER V

The "Wise and Noble" Council

The patricians had been the rulers and councillors of Nuremberg from the beginning of her history. The Council was a powerful and united body. Its members were closely knit together by class sentiment and common interest. Seldom were any of them found guilty of crimes or misdemeanours. They held firm by the pious dictum, "Do not judge, lest you yourself be judged." Those employed by the city, with the exception of the lower strata, all formed one happy community, and all of them had more or less "pull" in the City Council.

The patricians' share in the material benefits of citizenship began while they were still children. The endowments held in trust by the City Council for educational purposes were shared out as stipends among the sons of the Councillors. If there were more stipends than sons, a grant could then be given to some near relative of one of the Councillors.

When the young patrician returned to Nuremberg at the end of his studies, he regarded himself as a sort of demi-god, and expected everyone else to share his opinion. For had he not deigned to return from the great outside world to bestow upon the city the benefit of his knowledge and his experience of affairs? The return of a young patrician put the city under the obligation of providing him with a position commensurate with his exalted status. And if no such position was immediately available, the young nobleman would settle down on an annual allowance, paid from the City Treasury. In this way, the sons of the patricians were excellently provided for while they

sat and waited for something to turn up, or, as often happened, for special positions to be created for them.

In the meantime, there was no question of their parents providing them with an income. The life of an aristocrat in Nuremberg involved him in a huge expenditure. The frequent visits paid to the city by the Holy Roman Emperors had fostered in the noblemen of Nuremberg a taste for the good things in life, for the very best things. Their palaces were regal, with vast halls, where expensive entertainments and balls and dramatic performances took place. Aenius Silvius (later Pope Pius II), describing the luxury in which they lived, says " . . . the houses of the citizens are built in princely style. Truly the Scottish Kings would be glad to live in houses such as those wherein live the Burghers of Nuremberg."

The chronicler, Celtes, relates that the Nuremberg noblemen were in the habit of changing their clothes three times a day, each time after the fashion of a different country.

The overweening pride of the leaders of Nuremberg was particularly apparent in their resentment of the fact that the Jews wore beards as luxuriant as their own. The noble citizens prided themselves too much on their splendid beards to tolerate such a clash with an old Jewish custom. The Jews were of the opinion that they had some priority of right in the matter of beards, since with them the custom dated back to a time when the ancestors of the citizens of Nuremberg were still running naked in the forests. The Council, however, would not admit this claim, and issued an ordinance that Jews must henceforth be clean-shaven. Or at least, they were required to trim their beards in such a manner that there would be no difficulty in recognising them as Jews, and distinguishing them from the Aryans.

Eventually this compromise was reached, whereby the Jews were obliged to cut their beards as short as

possible. And to obviate any possible errors and misunderstandings, and to ensure that the question of length should not be left merely to the discretion of the Jews, a decree was issued in 1343 ordering every Jew in possession of a beard to cut it at least once a month.

In the matter of dress, the Council even prescribed a special Jewish fashion. It was decided that a flat red hat would be the most suitable for male Jews, and that Jewish women must wear a light blue ribbon round their veils as a distinguishing mark by which the passer-by might easily recognise them. It would seem that all these detailed regulations were necessary to avoid the danger of Jews dressing as elegantly as the noble citizens themselves, an act of provocation which could in no circumstances be allowed.

In view of the expensive personal requirements of the Councillors, in addition to the share expected by the Emperor in all available funds, it soon became evident that the Jews alone could not provide sufficient revenue. The poorer sections of the population were therefore required to make good any deficiencies by indirect taxation. The Councillors had no doubts about the poorer classes accepting this fresh burden. It was not even possible to tell whether they were discontented or not; they accepted everything in a quiet, meek and submissive spirit.

If the Council was at all uneasy, it was on account of the Guilds, which in Nuremberg were kept in subjection, while in other cities they enjoyed a certain amount of freedom. The Nuremberg Guilds had to submit to harsh and inflexible laws which practically kept the members prisoners in their own workshops. Every Guild activity was controlled by the Rugsamt, an institution created by the Council to spy out malcontents, and to deal with them.

A Guild Master could not even engage a new apprentice without permission from the Rugsamt.

A representative of the Rugsamt attended every Guild meeting, and the Guilds were not allowed to communicate with Guilds in other towns. It was no doubt considered healthier for the city's autocracy to prevent the Guild members knowing what was going on elsewhere, just as in Hitler Germany, to-day, the population is not allowed to know what the world outside thinks and does.

But all these measures adopted by the Council could not prevent the growing resentment of the Guilds from breaking into open rebellion. For the first and only time in the history of the Nuremberg Dictatorship the Council came face to face with a revolt by that section of the population which was then considered the middle-class.

In 1347, the Guilds stormed the City Council. The noblemen fled precipitately, taking their families with them, and leaving the town in the hands of the Guilds. But the new régime did not last long. Charles IV entered the city with an army, and the former rulers returned in his wake, bringing back the old oligarchy.

The Councillors came back in a more sobered frame of mind, and realised that something would have to be done to appease the populace. It was necessary to secure again the acquiescence of the lower classes in the Council's rule of luxury and corruption, and this could only be done by diverting their attention from the defects of their leaders into some other direction less dangerous to the Council. The growing prosperity of the Jews provided the obvious solution. In order to distract the people's attention from the real evils that afflicted them, the time-honoured device of blaming the Jews was tried once more, with the success that has always attended it.

To alleviate that poverty of the masses in a city which was already known as one of the richest in the world, the Jews were deprived of almost every means of livelihood, so that the positions thus left vacant could

be filled by Christians. The Jews were not allowed to hold any salaried employment. Their commercial activity was restricted to the utmost. They were even forbidden to purchase food before nine o'clock in the morning, so that the non-Jews could buy everything they needed before the Jews came to the market. By every conceivable means and device the Jews were driven into the only occupation that was left for them—usury.

And yet these concessions were not enough to appease the disgruntled populace, and the Council finally hit upon a plan calculated to appeal to the non-Jews of all classes. First there would be a re-distribution of Jewish property, and then a Carnival for the entire population, to be held in the Jewish quarter.

In 1315 Nuremberg was already beginning to feel cramped because of the houses of the Jews, and in that year the Jewish inhabitants were ordered to demolish all projecting gates admitting to their houses, in order to give greater width to the streets. But it was soon evident that the Jewish houses in the middle of Nuremberg that stood in the way did not in themselves give sufficient scope for the further development of the city, and a further complaint, which carried much weight, was added, that the Jewish cemetery had grown too large, and had become a source of inconvenience to the citizens in their daily walks. At the same time the families of the patricians were increasing, and they were beginning to feel the housing-shortage.

It was therefore considered desirable that the houses of the Jews should be confiscated and distributed amongst the Councillors and their relatives. It was also important that some means should be found whereby this step could not only be "justified," but also shown to be of advantage to the discontented poorer classes. Obviously any plan of this kind would have to be accompanied by an impressive gesture of

goodwill to the property-less elements in the city, so that they should feel that they were receiving their proper share of crumbs from the contemplated feast.

The scheme required the most careful consideration. The Council had to make provision for satisfying four interested parties, besides itself. First of all, there was the Emperor, whose share, as usual, would have to be in hard cash. Then there was the Bishop, who would have to be consulted beforehand, not only because of his influence with the Emperor, but also because it would be useful to have the blessing of the Church for the proposed celebration. As for the third party, the middle-class, the Guild Masters and skilled artisans, many of these owed money to the Jews, and would be only too glad to have their debts wiped out by the elimination of the creditors. While the fourth and lowliest section of the people to be conciliated, those who had nothing, not even debts,—they would make the Carnival. For a time they would be given a free hand to work off their resentment by murdering Jews, looting Jewish property, and burning down a few of the less important Jewish houses.

Through the destruction wrought by the fourth party, the debts of the third party would automatically disappear. The income derived from the remaining Jewish possessions would be shared among the first and second parties, and whatever was left after this share-out would belong to the Council.

The plans for the holocaust were completed at the appointed time. The Council saw to it that the preparations proceeded in an orderly manner. Care was taken to prevent hot-headed individuals from doing anything precipitate. Everything was arranged to start and finish strictly according to plan, and constant stress was laid on the importance of discipline and obedience, qualities of which the city of Nuremberg has long been justifiably proud.

CHAPTER VI

MURDER AND ROBBERY " IN PERFECT ORDER "

THE plan was put into operation with the connivance of Charles IV. The preliminary agitation and preparations were spread over a period of several years, and when the time for action arrived, the circumstances were exceptionally favourable.

Europe was being ravaged by the Black Death, in which nearly half the population perished. It is common knowledge that the Jews were accused of poisoning the wells, and it was alleged that the poison they used was compounded from a formula which included Christian hearts, spiders, frogs, lizards, human flesh and sacred wafers stolen from the churches. It was apparently assumed that the Jews themselves had decided to go without water during the whole period in which the poisoned wells were being used.

With these false charges as a pretext, the people, sometimes with the active encouragement of the authorities, but almost always with their tacit consent, launched a murderous attack on the Jewish communities, robbing, burning, and slaying old and young.

Such unsystematic outbreaks could not take place in disciplined Nuremberg. While the storm of annihilation raged throughout Germany, Nuremberg remained calm. The City Council had not yet completed its preparations. The description, " people's revolt," which was applicable elsewhere, could not be applied in Nuremberg. By the time the Nuremberg Council unleashed its hordes on the Jews, the outbreaks that followed in the wake of the Black

Death had already subsided everywhere else in Germany. The Nuremberg pogrom was the last that was launched against the Jews during that period. It is often linked up with the events that occurred at that time in other parts of Germany, but the underlying assumption is not correct. Nuremberg, as the capital and mother-city of Franconia, should, according to tradition, have been the first to slaughter the Jews, not the last. At all events it is certain that Nuremberg is not to be included among those towns which can plead extenuation on the ground that their attack on the Jews was a part of the widespread Black Death massacre.

Nuremberg has not the excuse that the 1349 massacre of the Jews was a consequence of the rising of the Guilds, which was country-wide, and not confined to Nuremberg. To begin with, the plans had been prepared before the rising of the Guilds, and in the second place the rising of the Guilds was suppressed more quickly in Nuremberg than anywhere else.

It is true, of course, that Jewish houses were plundered during the short-lived revolt of the Guilds in Nuremberg, especially when the Guilds found that the city coffers had been emptied by the members of the Council before they fled. And when the Emperor heard of this pillage by the Guilds, he sent instructions in May to the Burgrave that the stolen money and goods should be returned to the Jews, a very noble gesture, only, no doubt, inspired by the fact that he had had no control over the city at that time, and had therefore received no share in the spoils.

The Emperor returned to Nuremberg with his army in October, and there was ample interval between then and the massacre of December 6, to continue the arrangements that had been previously made for it by the Council.

The Nuremberg City Council was too calculating to plunge into such an adventure without knowing

first what profits were likely to accrue from it, who were to be the principal beneficiaries, what amounts would be available and how much would ultimately be left over for the Council. The city's first step, therefore, was to win over the Emperor, and for this purpose they sent to him Ulrich Stromer, a Burgomaster of Nuremberg.

As a delegate, Stromer was particularly acceptable at that time to the Emperor. He came of a family that had taken a leading part in the affairs of Nuremberg from generation to generation since the thirteenth century—a position they continued to hold until the end of the nineteenth century.

It was for another reason a piece of astute diplomacy on the part of Nuremberg. Stromer had previously supported Ludwig of Bavaria against Charles in the contest for the empire, and when Charles came to the throne he was anxious to conciliate his former opponents. He did not want to make fresh enmities when he returned to Nuremberg, and except for banishing a few of the less important people, who could give him no trouble, he attempted no reprisals against those who had supported his rival.

He wanted very much to win the support of Stromer; and there is no doubt that this fact contributed very largely to the success of Stromer's diplomatic mission, and explains the generosity with which the Emperor heaped gifts upon him.

Stromer told the Emperor a distressing story of the extraordinary power the Jews had come to exercise in the Imperial city. He said that he was no longer able to say with certainty whether Nuremberg was a Christian or a Jewish town. The synagogue, he comcomplained, occupied an ostentatious and obtrusive position in the very centre of the town (Stromer himself, as it happens, owned several houses on either side of the synagogue). Moreover the Jewish

cemetery took up so much room that the Christians could not even go to market without serious inconvenience, and the noble Councillors whose houses adjoined the cemetery were deprived of a decent approach to their homes. In fact, Stromer complained, the Jews had taken possession of the best parts of the city.*

First of all, Stromer sought the Emperor's permission to expel the Jews from the best parts of Nuremberg, and he may also have sounded him on his attitude to the idea of giving the populace a free hand to avenge themselves on the Jews, an act of blood-letting which might do much to appease the discontent still in existence against both the City Council and the Holy Roman Emperor, as a result of the previous unsuccessful revolt of the Guilds.

That Stromer touched on all these points during his interview with the Emperor is apparent from the fact that several months before the second onslaught on the Jewish community of Nuremberg, Charles had concluded an agreement with the Nuremberg Council, by which both the Emperor and the Bishop of Bamberg were to be compensated for losses in revenue which they were bound to suffer from " certain events " that were to take place.

Stromer seems to have reached a satisfactory understanding with the Emperor concerning the proceeds of the affair. In a letter dated October 2nd, 1349, the Emperor exonerated him in advance from

* The use of the Jews as a scapegoat in early Franconian history is reminiscent of the present period in Germany under Hitler.

Nine hundred years ago the Jews were blamed for the loss of a war. The chronicler, Meisterlin (fifteenth century), relates that when Henry V waged war against his father in 1106, the Jews of Nuremberg betrayed the town to the son, and on that occasion selected the best parts of the town for their own use.

Stobbe deals with these events as recorded in " Vita Hajnrice," a contemporary account in which the surrender of the town is described, but with no word about the Jews having taken any part. Meisterlin, who lived three hundred years later, preferred to draw upon his Franconian imagination in the writing of his history.

all responsiblity for the events which were to take place two months later—on December 6th. It says :

> " On account of the animosity of the common people, and as it is expected that the Jews will come to harm . . . (we declare) that neither we nor our Imperial descendants will have any charge to make against the Council and their citizens."*

Stromer's mission had been successful from every point of view. In the first place the proposed plan was completely legalised. It was not dignified for a town of the standing of Nuremberg to flout the law, and the legal sanction of measures still to be taken was not the least important of the diplomatic successes Stromer had achieved.

He himself certainly had reason to be pleased, for the Emperor bestowed on him one of the finest of the Jewish houses marked down for confiscation, a house in the synagogue district which would be of great use to Stromer, and would also remove the barrier that had previously existed between the two parts of his existing property.

Formally, of course, all confiscated property would fall to the Emperor, but that was only a matter of routine which could easily be left to Stromer to adjust. And Stromer had obtained not only a gift for himself, but also the grant of several other Jewish houses for members of his family.

Nor had the generous Emperor forgotten his other friends in Nuremberg. He allotted several houses, for instance, to the nobleman, Arnold von Seckendorf. The Seckendorfs were a prolific family, who multiplied even more extensively than the Stromers, and were for this reason nicknamed " The

* When Charles entered Nuremberg to suppress the Guilds, the inhabitants submitted with their usual docility. Not a hand was raised against his troops. The patricians were clearly masters of the situation from the day they returned with him. Charles himself was satisfied with the order in the town, and the guarantee of immunity from a possible " spontaneous " outbreak was actually an official permit to go on with the organisation of the plot.

Most." The allocation of extra living accommodation to such a large family would not come amiss. At first glance it is difficult to see why the Emperor was so generous, but it is to be assumed that he probably owed the Seckendorfs either cash or gratitude for services rendered, and therefore welcomed the opportunity to pay them with other people's goods.

The plan had begun to take shape in 1347, when Charles issued a decree ordering the demolition of the synagogue and the neighbouring Jewish houses to make room for the building of a new church; which bears witness to his customary piety. He had already promised the Pope some time previously that he would comport himself in a manner befitting a Holy Roman Emperor. He would not only refrain from meddling in Italian affairs, but would further prove his devotion by building a new monument to the holy faith.

The order was promptly, but not entirely, carried out. The synagogue was immediately demolished, with the enthusiasm and whole-heartedness befitting so devout an act. But when it came to the houses, it was felt that it would be foolish to destroy these, since they were still in good condition. Besides, it was not easy to see how anybody's faith could be strengthened by demolishing ordinary secular buildings, no better nor worse than the houses of non-Jews. But the new occupants expressed their appreciation of the Emperor's most Christian decree by adorning the façades of the former Jewish houses with holy images and crucifixes.

There could, or course, be no question of compensating the Jews for the confiscated property. This was not ordinary spoliation. It was an act of faith. And if the Jews were to be paid for their expropriated property it would mean taking away from God with one hand what had been given to Him with the other. On this occasion the worthy

Councillors of Nuremberg were more inclined to yield to their religious impulse than to observe the dry letter of the law relating to property.

The Jews were given to understand that they could settle, if they so desired, outside the town. They were offered for this purpose a large plot of waste land, like a huge refuse-dump, a deserted spot which had been laid waste by a great fire some years ago. They could have this land for 1,600 gulden.

It is more than likely, though the fact cannot now be definitely established, that this plot of land was the property of Arnold von Seckendorf, for we find that the 1,600 gulden were distributed in three equal parts to the Burgrave (for the Emperor), the Bishop of Bamberg, and von Seckendorf. If Seckendorf was not the owner, it is difficult to understand why he should receive one-third of the sum paid for city property. It also provides a reasonable explanation of Seckendorf's spirited agitation for the improvement of the amenities of Nuremberg, combined with a policy of slum-clearance which would drive the Jews outside the precincts of the town.

As soon as the arrangements for the re-distribution of the Jewish property were complete, the fourth party concerned had then to be dealt with. That sullen herd, the populace, had been waiting long and impatiently for some assurance of a share in the proceeds of the plunder, and had already begun to fear that it was going to be cheated out of it. The best and richest parts of the Jewish possessions had nearly all been allotted, and still there was nothing for the common people. And their growing impatience was further aggravated by the knowledge that the Jews were being beaten up everywhere except in their own town.

But the wise Councillors steadfastly refused to be hurried before they had made certain of securing a satisfactory share of the Jewish possessions for them-

selves, whilst ensuring that the amount to be paid to the Emperor would not be excessive, and that whatever was left should be divided with justice and equity.

The chroniclers of Nuremberg make hardly any reference to the beginning of the pogrom. In their weighty and exhaustive tomes, which record a wealth of minor and insignificant detail, there is no mention of what occurred on December 6th, 1349! Ulrich Stromer himself, who also wrote a history of Nuremberg, is content with the following brief note: " On December 6th, 1349, the Jews were burned at the stake."

But that was not all that happened. The Jews were not only burned. 560 men, women and children were killed by every imaginable form of slaughter. The community was not large at that time. Only fifty years had elapsed since the Rindfleisch massacre. There were 212 Jews who " enjoyed " a certain degree of " citizenship." The entire Jewish population probably did not exceed 1,200 souls.

While preparations were being made for the massacre, of which the Jews must have had unmistakable signs in advance, it may be assumed that a number of them left the town, although it is difficult to imagine where they could have gone in those days. In any event the number of the dead could not have been less than half the Jewish population.

It is significant that the day chosen for the 1349 massacre was the Jewish Sabbath; no doubt, a demonstration on this, as on other such occasions that the God of the Jews, to whom they had dedicated the day, showed no sign of interest or concern on their behalf.

The Jews were rounded up and herded together at a place which was afterwards named the " Judenbuehl." Many of the victims were the widows of men slaughtered in former attacks on the Jews.

There is a folk story current among the German Jews, containing a description of the last moments of the Nuremberg Jewish community before the massacre of 1349:

"Sinister and terrifying shouts from a thousand blood-thirsty throats rang through the narrow streets of the Jewish quarter. Most of the Jews fled towards the synagogue, but the swarming mob surrounded them there, hammering at the doors and throwing blazing torches into the adjoining houses, until utter panic seized the doomed congregation, already paralysed with fear.

"Some stared hopelessly into space, their eyes already glazed, like those of the dead; some fell to the ground, wringing their hands in anguish; others wept and lamented before the Holy Ark.

"Only the grey-haired Chief Rabbi, with his long white beard, remained standing at the Almemar, and prayed silently from his holy book, while the tears streamed down his face on to the black-and-white praying shawl that enfolded him from head to foot.

"At length he lifted up his head, that had been bowed with grief, and in a frail and heart-rending voice he said: 'Just is the Lord in all His ways, and upright in all His acts! A day of calamity hangs over our heads; O ye who are loyal and faithful believers, we must accept our misfortune with the same devotion as our blessings, for everything comes from Him, the only One, whose reasons are not to be explored, and whose wisdom is unfathomable.

"'O my brothers, now that only a few last moments of life remain to us, let us not spend them in lamentation and despair, for this earthly dwelling-place is but the ante-chamber to a better life. Therefore take courage, pray to the Almighty, and repent for your sins. Let each of you cover himself in his Tallith, and say, with a broken heart, Ashamnu . . .'"

This wholesale slaughter might have gone unrecorded in history, save for a few incidental notes in the chronicles, were it not for the Jewish Memorial Books. These were kept so that the names of the martyrs might be inscribed for the purpose of the prayers which were offered in the synagogue, and not as an attempt to proclaim their martyrdom to an unheeding world.*

The smaller debtors to the Jews—the third party—went to the Jewish houses to reclaim the pledges on which they had borrowed money, but, as one of the chroniclers relates, " When they saw so much wealth and so many treasures, they finished up by taking everything they could lay their hands on." And since the creditors had been eliminated by massacre, a huge list of debts was thus automatically cancelled.

But there was still another problem to be dealt with. What of the Jewish survivors ?

It would have been unwise for the city authorities to permit any impression of inequality to gain ground among the population, as would have happened if two Nuremberg citizens had found themselves in a position where the creditor of the one was dead, whilst the creditor of the other was still alive, and demanding his money.

Why, and how, the murderers left any Jews at all alive is not clear. There is no reason to believe that the authorities made any attempt to stop the slaughter ; so the only possibility is that it was an oversight on the part of the populace.

The City Council overcame the difficulty by

* The *Nuremberg Memorial Book* is one of the most valuable of the community records of the persecution of the Jews in Germany in the Middle Ages. The scribe, Isak ben Samuel of Meiningen, began with the opening of the new synagogue in Nuremberg in 1296, and continued his work up to the Rindfleisch massacre, when the task was interrupted in the middle of a word. It is known that he himself was martyred later, with his wife and five children. The second scribe to take up the work did not omit to record the name of his predecessor, and the *Memorial Book* was continued until after the persecutions of the time of the Black Death. (See Salfeld, *Martyrologium* ; Loewe, *Memorbook of Nuremberg.*)

issuing an order that all the surviving Jews must leave the city immediately.*

The blood of the Jews had a calming influence; it acted like oil on the troubled waters of Nuremberg. All four parties concerned in the massacre were satisfied. They appreciated the fact that in the propriety and honesty of its business methods, the Imperial City need feel no shame in the face of the other Hanseatic Towns. What finer example could there be of the city's uncompromising commercial integrity than the law under which anyone found guilty of adulterating saffron or other spices was sentenced to be burnt to death? The chronicles relate that even a person who aided and abetted such a crime (a woman), was punished by being buried alive.†

No one, therefore, could honestly reproach the Council that it had failed to carry out the plan in strict conformity with that rigid sense of justice of which the citizens of Nuremberg were so proud.

* See Wurfel, *Historische Nachrichten von der Judengemeinde in Nurnberg*, page 91, and Hegel, *Chronik der deutschen Städten*, Vol. I, page 25.

† Later, Nuremberg decided to humanise the punishment for women. From 1515 to 1580, the usual capital punishment for women was drowning, instead of burying them alive, which had been the practice till 1513.

Without denying the humanitarian impulse that prompted this step, it must be admitted that it was robbed of much of its effect by the shallowness of the water in which the victim was drowned, for the sack in which the delinquent was tied had to be pressed under water, until there was no longer any sign of life.

CHAPTER VII

Nuremberg in Search of Jews

The German princes and cities achieved two distinct ends by the expulsion of the Jews. In the first place it disposed of outstanding and troublesome debts; and secondly, the expulsion provided a safe outlet for the discontent of the citizens, which might otherwise have been directed against their rulers.

This second result did not last long. It was only a temporary palliative, like a drug whose effects soon wear off, leaving an increased weakness which only a stronger dose of the drug can alleviate. Consequently, the towns which had no more Jews to expel soon found themselves again in a state of unrest.

It became necessary to bring back the scapegoat so that it might be driven out again, as in the story of the rabbi and the unbeliever. The rabbi of a small town was told that an unbeliever was there who smoked on the sabbath; he was incensed and ordered the offender to be expelled at once. When told that the unbeliever had left the town the rabbi demanded that he should be brought back, so that he could be expelled.

This kind of comedy was enacted over and over again in the German towns. The Jews were expelled, and then, after a short term of exile, they were re-admitted.

The Emperor Charles himself felt no real enmity towards the Jews. There is evidence of his "impartiality" in the fact that six months after the last Jew had been driven out of Nuremberg, he gave permission to Bishop Markwart to admit Jews into Augsburg, recommending him "to look after them,

and protect them" ; at the same time he sent a letter to the Convent of Waldsassen (which was in debt to the Jews of Nuremberg), exonerating it from all responsibilities and liabilities to the Jews "who were slaughtered in Nuremberg because of the wrath of God."

There is nothing surprising, therefore, in the following proclamation, issued by Charles on May 26th, 1352, less than three years after the Nuremberg massacre :

> "We, Charles, etc., etc., . . . Declare publicly by these presents to all who will read them, or may hear them read, that after mature deliberation and in accordance with the advice of our trusted counsellors, for the benefit of the country and the Imperial Representative,—to the Council and citizens of Nuremberg in general, we have commanded, and command with all the force of this letter, that the Council should admit the Jews into their town, protect and defend them for our sake and for the sake of the country. At the same time we give the assurance of our imperial grace to our representatives and to the Council and citizens generally, and also to the Jews of Nuremberg that the annual revenue and taxes which will be due to us from these Jews will not be transferred to anyone, and will not be pledged or promised to anyone, but will be reserved for our account, and for the account of the Imperial Chamber. If we have already issued any letters (i.e., which may be contrary to this), they are herewith declared null and void."

Charles was certainly being cautious! "If we have already issued any letters . . . ." He knew that it was risky to rely on his memory. It had led him in the past to forget many promises, so this time he had decided to clear his conscience at the outset by concluding his proclamation in such a way that he would be absolved from any promises that he had already made, which were therewith broken.

But before many years had passed he had again pledged the Jewish taxes to the patrician, Haller, for 1,500 gulden. A little later he increased his borrow-

ing to 2,000 gulden, and ultimately he pledged the whole of his tax to the Council.

Since the massacre of the Jews of Nuremberg, Charles had had three years in which to draw conclusions from his " mature deliberation." He needed fresh money, so it was " for the benefit of the Empire and the Council and citizens of Nuremberg " that new and wealthy Jews should be attracted to the town.

This friendly proclamation was intended to advertise to the Jews that they might come and settle in the hospitable town of Nuremberg, where they would be " defended and protected."

The advertisement brought excellent results. Jews came from all parts to Nuremberg. They must have known that it was foolish to depend on the Emperor's word, or on Nuremberg's promise of protection, but they placed their trust in God.

On May 2nd, 1352, Nuremberg signed an agreement with three Jewish representatives,* attaching certain conditions to the re-settlement of the Jews. For one thing they were to reside only in those parts of the town which would be " most convenient " for the citizens. Further, the Nuremberg citizens and their servants were to be formally freed from all debts and obligations to the Jews, whether there were promissory notes outstanding or not. If individual Jews should by any means come again into possession of the houses they had formerly owned, they must sell or exchange them within a year. If that proved impossible, a member of a special commission to be set up would assess the value of the house, and the Jew would be compelled to sell it at that price.

The Jews were also required to try to influence the Emperor and the other princes not to impose any further taxation on them, so that they might " better serve the Reich." It was also laid down that all letters-patent or privileges in Jewish hands which

* Hegel, Vol. I, page 112 et seq.

might be considered in any way detrimental to the interests of the city were without force or value. It was provided that those Jews coming into Nuremberg after the agreement was signed should also " enjoy " the same " rights."

In the ordinary way a Jew was required to produce two guarantors before he could be accepted as a " citizen." The naturalisation fee was anywhere between six and fifty gulden. Previously Nuremberg's share in Jewish property and possessions had been no more than it could obtain by occasional " bargains " with the Emperor. But henceforth the city insisted that in addition to the various payments made for Nuremberg citizenship, she must also have an equitable share in the Emperor's revenue from the Jews. And from 1360, Nuremberg regularly received one-third of all the moneys collected by the Emperor from the Jews.*

It became the custom that whenever the Emperor demanded money from the Council, the Councillors promptly passed on the demand to the Jews. In 1377, for instance, the Burgrave ordered the town to build a new wall round the castle. The Council immediately called on the Jews to furnish the bulk of the money needed, and, moreover, warned the wealthy Jews that they would have to provide the balance,† as the City Council had no funds.

The Jews had hardly returned to Nuremberg, when in front of their eyes, on the ruins of the demolished synagogue, the City Councillors laid the foundations of the great church to be dedicated to the Virgin. Close by, stood the " Lovely Fountain," and the completed Church of the Virgin Mary came to look down on it with the eyes of a victor and a protectress. Round the fountain were carved the worthiest and greatest men in world history, from

* Stobbe, *Die Juden in Deutschland waebrend des Mittelalters*, page 57.
† Hegel, Vol. I, page 27, No. 2.

Jesus to the noble and wise Councillors of Nuremberg. Nor had the great Jews, from David the King to Judas Maccabaeus been overlooked. They, too, were there, admitted to the exalted company of the Burgomasters of Nuremberg.

No doubt this mingling of races is now a source of great annoyance to the German people; but they may admit some justification for the presence of the Jewish Prophets, who are perhaps immortalised on the fountain only to remind the world how bad the Jews are. For did not the Prophets constantly denounce the Jews for their sins and their wrongdoing, did they not always scourge them because of their evil ways? And, indeed, is not that precisely what Nazism also seeks to do? The very fact that the Jews produced such great prophets only goes to prove the extent of their depravity. The Nordic peoples, who had no prophets, evidently had no need of them. They lived on a much higher plane, and did not require such constant admonishment and denunciation as the Jews. They never fell so low that it was necessary for prophets to come and save them.

The stern gaze of our Teacher Moses is now fixed, from his place on the Lovely Fountain, upon the noble structure of the Church of the Virgin Mary, a magnificent example of Nuremberg's religious art. Under the feet of the Virgin lies the trampled dust of a demolished, blood-stained Jewish house of prayer. And whenever the clamorous, joyous bells of the church ring out, proclaiming the victory, it seems as if the lips of the Jewish lawgiver repeat the ancient command, "Thou shalt not steal . . . ."

CHAPTER VIII

A Nuremberg-Born Emperor

The Emperor Wenceslaus (or Wenzel), the son of Charles, was born in Nuremberg. He first saw the light in the imperial castle situated near St. Sebaldus's Church, nine years after his father had, on " mature deliberation," decided that it would be convenient to increase the number of Jews in Nuremberg. The Emperor celebrated the birth of his son by a gift of the child's weight in gold for holy purposes.

The Nuremberg-born Crown Prince showed early indications of the lines on which his life would run. He succeeded to the throne when he was eighteen. At first he gave the impression that he was merely indolent, and this nickname (" Ignavus "), stuck to him.

But presently he revealed other qualities as well. He delegated the affairs of the Empire to his officials, and spent nearly all his time in his castle in Prague, devoted to three things, the chase, women, and drink. When he was not drunk, he tortured, murdered and drowned those of his followers whom he had the slightest reason to suspect of disloyalty. And he had abundant reason for suspecting most of his retinue.

It is impossible to record anything that he ever did to earn the gratitude of his country, except perhaps for one thing that the people of Nuremberg were hardly likely to forget.

He had inherited both from his father and his place of birth a predisposition towards the art of " liquidating " debts without having to repay his creditors. He became a master of this art, and even evolved a new system which proved extremely successful.

It is not surprising, from the way in which he left the country to run itself, that he and his entourage always found themselves short of funds. He had neither the time, nor the inclination, nor the patience to undertake protracted negotiations with the Jews, in order to squeeze money out of them. For one thing, he was too hard pressed for such slow and complicated manœuvres to be of use.

So he devised a more simple method of expediting the extortion. He announced to all whom it might concern that he had for sale certain "privilegiums," available both for towns and for whole provinces, which would automatically annul all debts which the purchaser, whether an individual or a corporate body, might owe to the Jews.

The price of a "privilegium" was regulated by the size and importance of the city concerned, and the economic position of its Jews. By the year 1390, this system of selling "privilegiums" had become a wholesale business.

It was a golden opportunity for a city like Nuremberg. After a good deal of haggling it was agreed that the Council should pay the imperial drunkard 40,000 gulden for a "privilegium."

The amount was not excessive. The Emperor could have got more for the Nuremberg "privilegium" at a public auction. The Councillors themselves seem to have considered it a bargain, for they made a gift of 4,000 gulden to the imperial envoy, to express their appreciation of his good offices on their behalf in the negotiations with the Emperor.

On receiving this "privilegium"—which absolved the Nurembergers morally and legally from all obligation to repay whatever moneys they had borrowed from Jews,—the Council conceived the following plan to give it effect in the peaceful and equitable manner characteristic of all the business transactions of the city.

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Each person indebted to a Jew was ordered to pay into the City Treasury thirty per cent. of the amount owed. And in return, the Council issued a certificate that the debt had been fully discharged before God and man, and the absolved debtor was guaranteed against all molestation by his Jewish creditor. Even the Burgrave, the Emperor's representative in Nuremberg, who owed the Jews about 8,000 gulden, was ordered to pay thirty per cent. of the amount to the Council; but he seems to have been one of the many debtors who had no money to repay even a part of what they owed, so he had to pledge to the city the Imperial Court of Justice, over which he presided, and the revenues he derived from customs-duties.

There were also several Christians who expressed grave doubts as to the absolute fairness of this procedure, and refused to pay the Council; while a few Christian merchants in Augsburg went so far as to repay their debts to the Jews, ignoring the absolution.

The result was that a fresh edict was issued, that "No one is allowed to collect from them (i.e. the Christian debtors), on account of debts funded in this debt-annulment. Offenders will be considered guilty of attempted robbery, and any Jew acting in defiance of this order will be dealt with as a robber." It is recorded that the conscientious Augsburg merchants were actually punished for having disobeyed the imperial command.

Nuremberg behaved with her customary sense of discipline. Whatever other cities might do, Nuremberg would never act in such a matter contrary to an order issued by the Holy Roman Emperor. There were, in fact, a number of punctiliously law-abiding debtors who entered so thoroughly into the spirit of the Emperor's injunction that they turned to him for guidance as to whether debts incurred after the decree had been issued might not also be included in the

"privilegium." Wenzel seems to have drawn the line at this equivocation, and replied that his edict was only retrospective and could not be applied to debts which people had been foolish enough to incur since it had been issued.

Nuremberg made a clear profit on the "privilegium"—after all deductions on account of bribes to the Emperor's envoys—amounting to 60,000 gulden, or 190,000 thaler, a sum larger than the entire annual revenue derived by the city from its regular sources.

The cancellation of debts owed to Jews was a practice more or less general in the whole of Germany, but in Nuremberg it was accompanied by the simultaneous confiscation of Jewish property. Even this was done on strictly business lines, and in order to give it a semblance of legality, the Council appointed a special commission to assess the amount of Jewish capital, and to advise the Council in accordance with its assessments how much each Jew should be ordered to contribute. Some Jewish merchants had to pay as much as 13,000 gulden, and one, Yankel of Ulm, and his sons, paid 15,000 gulden.

While the commission was sitting, no Jew was allowed to leave Nuremberg, lest he should take a part of his capital away with him. It cost the Council 782 pounds heller to place special guards to watch the houses of the Jews, and to keep surveillance at the city gates.

This is particularly interesting, because when an Emperor had asked that the Jews of Nuremberg should be confined to their homes while he applied his extortionate methods in order to induce them to pay him proper homage and honour on his coronation, the City Council had refused to co-operate; but this time the amount involved was much larger, and it was to go into the city's own coffers.

In 1385, five years before all the debts owing to

Jews were cancelled by the "privilegium," the Jews of Nuremberg had all been put in prison without cause, and compelled to pay a very large sum as ransom. The Jewish community had been unable to raise so much money itself, and had resorted to several wealthy Jews, who had paid the money to liberate the community. It was a typical Nuremberg extortion. On a certain day, all the Jewish houses were surrounded, and the inhabitants carried off. The rich were incarcerated in the castle, and the poor in the notorious "Hole,"—a terrible underground torture-chamber, from which it seemed impossible that anyone should emerge alive.

The Jews were given no reason for their arrest; they were only told afterwards that the Council demanded a ransom of 80,000 gulden. The fact that the money came from individual Jews suggests that the Council must have realised that the community as such could not find all this money, and the arrests were made because it was felt that only if the whole community were arrested first, would it be possible to induce other Jews to negotiate for their release.

There is a concise, business-like entry in the Nuremberg account books to the effect that the Jews "paid 40,000 gulden without compulsion, because things were then very bad for them in the country."* It sounds as if they had purchased temporary immunity from a massacre.

The repeated extortions had the inevitable effect of depressing the economic conditions of the Jews to such an extent that they ceased to be as useful as they were expected to be. Nuremberg may have considered the rich Jews a permanent danger and a source of provocation to her inhabitants, but the poor Jews were of no value at all. And there was a constant desire to exchange poor Jews for rich.

Wenzel accordingly gave Nuremberg permission

* Hegel, Vol. I, page 124.

to take whatever steps she found necessary to acquire wealthy Jews. He had himself again become financially embarrassed. The revenue derived from taxing Jews had decreased since his debt cancellations, so the Emperor introduced a new kind of tax to retrieve the position.

Every adult man and woman (and in those days everybody was considered an adult from the twelfth year of age) was to pay a special annual head-tax,—one gulden "opferfenning." Nuremberg was afraid that this new imperial tax would affect the city's revenue adversely, or would at least divert from the city exchequer funds which were potentially hers. So Wenzel made a concession to the Council, exempting Nuremberg from having to pay her annual contribution of 400 gulden to the Emperor for the right of holding the imperial Jews in fee.

In respect of the treatment of the Jews, Wenzel was a believer in the maxim of "live and let live." He was always amenable to sharing with Nuremberg whatever wealth the Jews possessed, even though it all belonged to him as Emperor by "divine right."

This amenability was displayed most clearly in his decree of September 13th, 1390,* which provided that all the immovable property left by a deceased Jew should pass to two persons, one appointed by the Emperor and the other by the Nuremberg Council, who were required to sell this property to a citizen within one year, and to divide the proceeds equally, half to the Imperial Treasury, and half to the Council. No one has discovered any other instance of Wenzel being willing to share anything with anybody else, except the city of Nuremberg. There was a touching and tender relationship between this Emperor and the rulers of his birth-place. He was theirs both in blood and spirit.

* Wiener, *Regesten zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland,* No. 355.

CHAPTER IX

"The City of the Muses"

The citizens of Nuremberg are proud of their city. They have developed self-advertisement to a fine art. All the books written about Nuremberg expatiate on her artistic achievements and the general impression is that these achievements redound to the credit of the city and its leaders. Naturally, in all the eulogies of Nuremberg, and her art and artists, there is one name that stands out supreme above all the rest—Albrecht Dürer.

Yet when we read Dürer's letters from Italy, we find one in which he writes: "Here (in Italy) I am a master . . . at home a parasite." This letter seems to throw a different light on Nuremberg's attitude to art. Dürer does not appear to have found her as appreciative as she would now wish the world to believe. And this impression is borne out by the fact that while Dürer's work is to be found in most of the European capitals, there is hardly any of it in Nuremberg. The authorities in Nuremberg are content with reproductions; they preferred to dispose of the originals for whatever they would fetch in ready cash.

If Dürer did not die a pauper it was not due to Nuremberg's appreciation of his art. "I can truthfully say," he wrote to the Council, "that in the thirty years I have stayed at home, I have not received from people in this town work worth 500 gulden—truly an absurd and trifling sum—and not a fifth part of that has been profit."

After his death the value of his work was greatly enhanced, and the shop-keeper citizens began to realise

that there was money in it. They searched avidly for every drawing, sketch and scrap of work of his, and eagerly seized upon the collections of paintings and drawings which his widow was obliged to part with in settlement of debts. The bulk of Dürer's work fell into the hands of the usurer, Imhoff, who, as a shrewd business man, immediately realised their cash value, and hawked them about all over Europe.

Mr. Lionel Cust, in his book, *The Paintings and Drawings of Albert Dürer*, gives an account of the treatment accorded by Nuremberg and her citizens to Dürer's life-work. He writes :

" The Town Council of Nuremberg seem to have followed suit with the paintings which were immediately under their control, if not actually in their possession. In a short time Rudolph (the Emperor) became possessed of the bulk of Dürer's paintings and drawings at Prague or Vienna. Several of the paintings remain in the Imperial collection to this day, and a large portion of the drawings now forms the nucleus of what is known as the ' Albertina ' collection at Vienna. Another portion of the Imhoff collection found its way through a collector in the Netherlands, perhaps through one of the Austrian governors, into that of Sir Hans Sloane, and is now in the print-room at the British Museum. These two collections, together with the great collection, which official industry and acumen have brought together at Berlin, are the best field for the study of Dürer's work as a draughtsman, although in some of the smaller public or private collections some of the most remarkable examples are to be found.

" The good citizens of Nuremberg continued their work of converting Dürer's works into hard cash whenever the opportunity occurred. In 1585 the Town Council persuaded or compelled the governors of the Landauer almshouses to sell to the Emperor Rudolph their great painting of ' All Saints', replacing

it by a copy which, by way of carrying out the deception, was inserted in the original frame designed by Dürer. The 'Adam and Eve' also appears to have passed into the same Imperial hands. In 1627 the Council sold to the Elector Maximilian of Bavaria the two great panels of the 'Four Preachers,' Dürer's last gift to his native town, and replaced them by copies. The long inscriptions from the Bible were cut off from the original panels and added on below the copies. A few years before, in 1613, they had presented the same Elector with the beautiful Baumgartner altar-piece, which was torn from its place in St. Catherine's Church at Nuremberg. The two 'Descents from the Cross' followed in the same channel; and the Praun collection at Nuremberg yielded up the portrait of Wolgemut and the portrait of Hans Dürer. Worst of all, the portrait of their beloved and honoured citizen, the world-famous portrait of Dürer by himself, which had become actually the property of the Town Council, was lent by them to a local painter to copy; this ingenious craftsman sawed the panel in half, and glued his copy on to the back, on which were the town seal and other marks of ownership, and sold the original to King Ludwig of Bavaria. The worthy magistrates never discovered the fraud, or pretended not to, and this copy hangs to-day at Nuremberg a monument of dishonour and fraud. Gradually Nuremberg divested itself of every work by Dürer which it could, and rejoiced in its copies and its cash. Ludwig I of Bavaria took pity on its denuded condition, and gave back to it as a gift the 'Descent from the Cross,' known as the Peller altar-piece, and also apparently returned from Schleissheim the 'Hercules' and the 'Stymphalian Birds.' With the overdaubed paintings of Charlemagne and Sigismund, these appear to be the only authenticated paintings by Dürer in his native town at the present day. Three hundred years after

Dürer's death, a statue was erected to him in Nuremberg, and his house is now preserved and shown as a national relic. Yet little more than fifty years after the erection of this statue, in 1884, the citizens allowed the famous 'Holzschuher' portrait, the last great work by Dürer which the town possessed, to be sold by the family, to whom it still belonged, to the Munich Gallery."

Peter Vischer, the great sculptor of Nuremberg, and his five sons, worked for more than twelve years on the shrine of St. Sebaldus, in dire need and poverty, without any help from the City Council. The work required seven tons of metal, but even that was not provided. Vischer had to break off the work several times because of ill-health, shortage of material and his own harassed circumstances. And in the end he had to go begging for 800 gulden, because the Council had no funds earmarked for such a purpose.

To-day Nuremberg prides herself on the shrine of St. Sebaldus as one of her greatest works of art. And it must be remembered that Vischer lived in Nuremberg at a time of civic prosperity, in a period when it was said that " Nuremberg's wares are found in every land."

After Vischer's death, his sons completed a bronze gate that he had begun. It was spoken of as a masterpiece. Yet the city of Nuremberg sold it to a waste-dealer for the price of scrap-metal, and it went into the melting-pot.

If art was encouraged in Nuremberg, it was by the vainglory of the corrupt rulers of the city who sought to perpetuate their own names by splendid sepulchres that would rival the wonderful shrine of St. Sebaldus. An ostentatious funeral was the great ambition of the wealthy citizens of Nuremberg. The tombs of the patricians in the churches were adorned with carved or painted memorials which are a delight to the eye and an ornament to the city. They are

undoubtedly an honour to the living members of the families of those entombed there. Some of the finest of these works of art were made for the Tuchers and the Imhoffs, the families of two Burgomasters who were concerned in the murder of the Councillor, Nicholas Mueffel, against whom they had brought false charges, and who was put out of the way because he knew too much.

So much for art. The cultivation of native literary talent received similar treatment at the hands of the Nuremberg authorities. The city's great cobbler-poet, Hans Sachs, was forgotten by his native town as soon as he was dead, and as late as 1828, when Nuremberg issued a souvenir book dealing with the period of her greatest artistic achievements, from 1480 to 1530, it was not considered sufficiently important to devote space to his memory. The name of Hans Sachs was not as much as mentioned.

Nuremberg is also inordinately proud of the inventiveness and skill of her sons. But if we look into the facts, we find that it was always Nuremberg's way to insist on a dead level of complete equality among all her craftsmen. If a capable artisan distinguished himself by the quality of his work, and consequently became more widely known, so that there was a greater demand for his work than for that of his more mediocre competitor, he was compelled to hand over this additional work to his less able rival, who, because he was not so good, could not get people otherwise to entrust him with their commissions.

As for invention, it was "streng verboten" for any artisan to devise a means of making his work more easy, or of accelerating it. In 1585 a needle-maker invented a grinding tool for needles. He was immediately ordered by the Council to refrain from using this new tool, or showing anyone how to use it, and he was compelled to destroy it.

In 1512 a thimble-maker invented a turning-wheel which enabled him to produce thimbles at a greater speed than before. The Council ordered him to destroy the mechanism, and he had to pay a fine of ten florins for each time he had used it.

In 1570, a builders' smith invented a new tool for making saw-blades. He was sentenced to pay a fine of five pounds heller each time he made use of it.

The city fathers showed equal solicitude for the welfare of the inhabitants in other directions. We find, for instance, that at a time when pestilence and disease were rife, the Council recorded the expenditure of fifty-one and a half florins as an honorarium to two doctors for their work among the sick.

Nuremberg was a well-regulated place, proud of her appearance, and the fact that men and beasts fell dead in the streets was not allowed to interfere with the look of the city. The only thing that was really done was to instruct the street-scavengers to remove all dead bodies during the night, and not leave them lying about till daytime, otherwise they would be dismissed from their employment.

The Council had, of course, not felt it necessary to set aside any of its funds for hospitals; but the city was fortunate in finding a wealthy inhabitant who believed that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, and who, therefore, had no further use for his wealth. So he made up his mind to build a hospital in Nuremberg, and the City Council agreed to let him do it.

The Nuremberg brothels were conducted under an excellently organised system which might have been taken as a model by most other towns in the Middle Ages. Those who traded in prostitution in Nuremberg considered themselves members of a Guild. The Council started out by recognising the supreme fact that the brothels provided it with a substantial revenue, and since this was so, it followed that every endeavour must be made to keep prostitution on as

high a level as possible, so that it should thrive and bring profits. Jews were forbidden to frequent the brothels. The Aryan notions about purity were applied to the harlots.

Apart from that, the Nuremberg law relating to prostitutes stated that the women had to accept any man brought to them, and had no right of appeal or choice.

Until 1546, the brothel-proprietors had to supply a number of women to the Balls organised at the Rathaus (Town Hall), where they sat near the band to await instructions from the Master of Ceremonies.

These licensed houses played a considerable part in the diplomatic affairs of the town. The goodwill of distinguished visitors was won by making them free of the best of the brothels, and apparently they appreciated the honour. On one occasion, the Holy Roman Emperor Sigismund considered it his duty to express thanks publicly for the delightful arrangements that had been made for his entertainment in this respect in the town.

The state of Nuremberg family purity was described by the humanist, Pirkheimer :

" As for marriage, things have come to such a pass at Nuremberg that if it were not for the presence of the executioner we should soon have community of wives all over the town."*

Of course, Nuremberg was scourged by syphilis. It affected rich and poor alike, and raging throughout the sixteenth century, claimed many victims and became a source of danger to travellers and the whole vicinity.

At the same time, the Council was extremely concerned for the sexual morality of the poor, whom they subjected to rigorous control in this matter. The regulation says :

" The honourable Council orders that no master

* Janssen, *History of Germany*, Vol. V, page 126.

should accept or teach an apprentice unless such apprentice was born to parents who were lawfully married, and this must be proved by documents or other sufficient evidence."*

The same scrupulous regard for the decencies must have inspired the promulgation of a law forbidding Christians to buy meat from Jews because "usually they spit upon it, and also allow their sons and daughters to water on it, and later they sell it at a lower price than Christian butchers."

If the Jews had such beastly habits it is really difficult to see what else Nuremberg could do than seek to improve their character and morals by converting them to their own superior brand of Christianity. The Church placed great hope in the Dominican friar, Pieter Schwartz, who had studied in the Jewish seminaries of Spain, and had diligently listened to rabbinical discourses, thus acquiring an appreciable knowledge of Hebrew and the Talmud. When he considered that he already possessed all the secrets of the Jews, he invited them to a disputation with him. The Jews declined the honour. Furious at the refusal, Schwartz published two works, vehemently attacking the Jews and their religion. He also induced the Emperor to issue an edict compelling the Jews to attend his sermons. He told the Jews that their refusal to accept Christianity was wicked, and that they thereby proved themselves as stiff-necked as their ancestors had been. It was not only wicked but foolish to spurn the glories of the life to come, and to reject, incidentally, all chance of living in tolerable comfort in this world.

When the Jews were driven by brute force to attend the sermon in the Church of the Virgin Mary, that stood on the site of their demolished synagogue, they stuffed their ears with cotton-wool. And their

* *Nurnbergisches Handwerksrecht des XVI Jahrhunderts*, Nuremberg, 1879, page 17.

hearts were filled with contempt for the Church and its friars and prelates, and its images of gold and bronze and wood and stone.

Notwithstanding the powerful means employed by the conversionists, their harvest of souls was a poor one.

After Pieter Schwartz, came in 1454 the fanatical Franciscan monk, Johannes Capistranus, who also forced the Jews to listen to his sermons.

Everywhere, the Jews trembled at his approach for he hurled the wildest charges against the Jews, accusing them of killing Christian children and desecrating the host. Wherever he went, there were anti-Jewish riots. His admirers called him "the scourge of the Jews." Yet with all this, only two conversions are known in Nuremberg previous to the expulsion. One certainly has no reason to think that if there had been more, they would not have been recorded, seeing what efforts were made to bring them about. One of these conversions was in 1381, but the name of the convert is not known. The second was in 1499, at the time of the expulsion, and the convert is recorded as Rabbi Samuel, an author.

The Jews remained stubborn. And while they continued spiritually unsaved, their physical status, too, deteriorated. Incessant persecution and periodic legalised robbery left them weakened, and fearful of what might happen to them at any moment.

With the economic collapse of the Jews, the remainder of their so-called "rights" disappeared, including the control of their own internal communal life. In 1406, Nuremberg issued a decree closing down the only school there was for Jewish children. The teachers were expelled, and the parents were told that if they insisted that their offspring must follow their misguided religion, they must themselves teach it to them in their own homes.

The number of Jewish beggars and other destitutes

increased rapidly. Their desperate condition drove them to corrupt and disreputable practices in order to live. A Jew who lost his money automatically forfeited his right of domicile, and the right to earn his livelihood. The burden of supporting this large and increasing number of destitute Jews became unbearable. The community could not cope with it. And before long those fortunate Jews who could still live in the city more or less unmolested began to assist the authorities to keep out the destitute and stateless wanderers, whose presence embarrassed them and made them fear for their own future. Thus, driven both by the authorities and their own more happily-placed co-religionists (who were willing, it must be said, to help them with food and money as far as they could, but who dreaded their presence), and compelled to wear the Yellow Badge to warn every good Christian to shun them as they would a leper—the life of these destitute Jews became a nightmare.

CHAPTER X

Christian Usury in Nuremberg

In 1451, a Church Synod held at Bamberg, attended by the Papal Legate, Cardinal Nicholas, forbade Jews to engage in money-lending. It may be that the design for once was positive, instead of merely negative and discriminatory. The intention was to shut out the Jews from commerce and make them return to manual labour. But such decrees are hard to enforce. It was not even possible to compel Christian usurers to pay attention to the canon law which forbade them to lend out money at interest. And this new decree aimed at the Jews met with a great deal of opposition.

Nuremberg was emphatically hostile. Deputations were sent to the Pope and to the Burgrave. The Pope was urged to revoke the decree on the ground that if the Jews were not allowed to lend out money, it would have the effect of driving Christians into that abominable profession. This specious argument, however, was quite untenable, because there were already wealthy Christian financial sharks in Nuremberg who understood the art and practice of usury much better than the Jews.

The deputation to the Burgrave took a different line. It drew his attention, as the representative of the Emperor, to the appalling distress among the Jews living in Nuremberg at the time. It showed how bad the economic position of the Jews was, and that they were suffering from penury and sickness, and were "too weak to occupy themselves with manual work."

"The Jews," Nuremberg wrote to the Emperor, "have lately sustained in our city a very severe and

rapid loss. Many of their debtors have died in the wars or during the plagues, or have been forced to emigrate on account of their poverty. Jewish wealth has dwindled to a very small amount."

This touching and solicitous appeal to the Emperor that he should not make the Jews take up manual labour because they were not strong enough, is explained when we remember that the Council had nothing to offer to the poorer classes of the population, and was terrified of exasperating them still more by subjecting them to fresh competition from Jewish workmen.

All who had anything to do with the Jews were now beginning to recognise that their value had depreciated, and that there was little advantage to be gained from their continued presence. The Church felt that it had lost prestige through Friar Schwartz's failure to convince them that the Church had the Kingdom of Heaven in its gift; the Emperor's income had shrunk because of the Jews' capital losses; and the Nuremberg Council was now confronted with the new problem of Jewish poverty. And the Christian usurers of Nuremberg were anxious to get rid of the Jews so that they should have the money market to themselves.

The Jews seem to have spoiled the business of the Christian money-lenders by charging a lower rate of interest. As far back as 1391 an agreement had been drawn up between the Nuremberg Council and the Jews, fixing the rate of interest which Jews were allowed to charge on money they lent.*

It was arranged on a sliding scale, according to the size of the transaction and the risk involved, the term of the loan and the amount. As a rule it worked out at about ten per cent. for sums over 100 gulden and twelve and two-thirds per cent. for smaller amounts. If a Jew charged more than the rate allowed, he was

* Hegel, Vol. I, page 129. Baader, page 325.

liable to lose the whole of his interest, and, in addition, to be punished by the law at the discretion of the judge.

This was not enough for the Christian usurers. It is true that the law did not entitle them to charge any interest at all, but they were assiduous students of the methods of the Lombards, who disguised usury as payment for possible loss or delay, and by similar equivocations.

In exactly the same way, interest appeared in their books under such headings as " Compensation for the risk of loss of capital," " Compensation for delay," etc., etc. Professor Janssen writes ;* " The South German trading companies . . . the Imhoffs, the Ebners, and the Volkammers of Nuremberg are notorious for their usury and extortion. There is no doubt whatsoever that as a result of their cunning and sharp-practice in forcing up prices the country was sorely pressed, and they bear in a great measure the guilt for the later serious upheavals in social conditions."†

The so-called " trading companies " met at appointed times for the exploitation of some particular branch of trade or industry, and shared the profits among themselves in proportion to the sums which the various members had invested.

They co-operated in buying up supplies, creating monopolies, and forcing up prices in every branch of trade. They purchased all available stocks of corn and wine, every blade or sheaf. The trading companies of Nuremberg actually bought up the most indispensable goods in large quantities in front of the very gates of the city, or even in the market place, and by this means

* Janssen, Vol. II, page 80.

† The history has yet to be written of those Christian noblemen, who devoured like a swarm of locusts the countries which they honoured with their patriotism. Prince Karl von Lichtenstein would have a prominent place in such a history. At the beginning of the seventeenth century he amassed a fortune of 31 million gulden by usury, swindling and coin-clipping.

secured complete control of the retail trade and of prices.

There is a notorious example of surreptitious Christian usury in the affairs of the famous House of Holzschuher in Nuremberg. The account books of this firm for 1304–7 were published only recently.* Ostensibly the firm was engaged mainly in the textile trade, but actually it occupied itself to a large extent with usury of a rapacious kind.

These account books contain a series of entries relating to moneys lent by the firm to Jews, and moneys it received from Jews. The difference between the amounts advanced and the amounts received is anything from 63 per cent. to 220 per cent. There is, of course, no indication in the books that these additional sums were received in respect of interest. The Jewish accounts of the House of Holzschuher are much too vague for any historian to be able to say that those Christian noblemen took interest from the Jews up to a rate of 220 per cent. There are a number of questions that immediately arise. Why should Jews borrow money from the Holzschuhers? After all, the lending of money was their own business, and some have even thought, their monopoly. Were the Jews going in for vast industrial operations, that they needed all this money? And above all, would Jews borrow at such fantastic rates of interest, and still be able to lend money to other Christians, and make a profit?

There is also the further fact that must be considered, that the Jews ran a greater risk of not being repaid than the Holzschuhers incurred by lending to Jewish borrowers.

The mystery has not yet been solved, but it might well be that the famous and highly respected House of Holzschuher simply concealed behind Jewish names

* *Das Handlungsbuch der Holzschuher in Nurnberg von* 1304–1307, bearbeitet und herausgegeben von Anton Chroust und Hans Praesler. Erlanger · 1934.

the identities of impoverished Christian debtors, princes who needed money so badly that they were glad to pay any interest for immediate cash. It is possible that the Jews merely played the role of collecting agents in these transactions.

Be that as it may, the honourable and celebrated Christian "merchants," friends of both Pope and Emperor, whose remains now rest in the beautiful Nuremberg churches adorned by immortal works of art, were seriously disturbed by the operations of the Jewish money-lenders; for the Jews offered better conditions to borrowers, if for no other reason than because money-lending by Jews was regulated and controlled by the Council, so that their rates could not be excessive.

There were many other reasons why intending Christian borrowers should prefer to go to the Jews rather than to their brothers in faith. If they owed money to a Jew, there were a number of very attractive possibilities which might enable a debtor to evade payment—the chance of a massacre, a new expulsion of the Jews, a wholesale cancellation of debts, and, as a last resort, the Jew might even be denounced to the authorities on a charge of having done something not strictly in consonance with the law. But such miracles did not happen if they owed money to a Christian. A Christian creditor had his debtor in his power for ever.

The Imhoffs, the Ebners, the Holzschuhers and the Volkammers were the "bosses" of the city. They were Councillors and Burgomasters. The decree of the Synod of Bamberg placed them in a dilemma. On the one hand it was an excellent idea to forbid the Jews to lend out money, but on the other hand if they were turned to manual labour, it would mean trouble with the poorer sections of the population.

There was only one way out—to get rid of the Jews altogether. They had lost their usefulness anyway, as a

source of capital to be taxed and confiscated, so their expulsion would mean no great deprivation. The only obstacle might be the Emperor, and for twenty-five years the Council plotted and intrigued until at last it had a plan ready which would satisfy the Emperor as well as the Council and the people.

CHAPTER XI

Expulsion of the Jews

As soon as Nuremberg realised that she could make no further use of the Jews, and that they were " weakened, impoverished, and starving," it was a foregone conclusion that they would not be allowed to remain much longer in the city.

The Council had been for the last twenty-five years, since 1473, sending emissaries and deputations to all who might have influence with the Emperor Frederick III to try to persuade him to permit Nuremberg to get rid of her Jews.

Frederick was opposed to the attempt of the Catholic Church, through the Synod of Bamberg, to abolish the lending out of money at interest. He was convinced that it could not be made effective, and furthermore he knew that the Church favoured the Christian money-lenders, who had become known as " the Pope's Usurers."

Frederick III granted the Jews of Nuremberg a " privilegium " valid for six years,* authorising them to continue lending out money; and in explaining his reasons he stated his belief that, first of all, if nobody is allowed to lend out money, people who are temporarily in difficulties will have to lose everything they possess, without a chance of retrieving their fortunes; and secondly, if it is decreed that Jews must not lend money, Christians will do it. Furthermore, Nuremberg is situated on barren, sandy soil, and would be ruined without trade and industry, which require capital.

It was not until Frederick's son Maximilian,

* Regesten, page 103.

ascended the throne in 1493, that Nuremberg's efforts began to show signs of succeeding. The fact that these efforts had to be continued indicates that Maximilian, too, was not enthusiastic about the idea at first. He was, generally, not interested in local politics, and he had come to the throne predisposed to the traditional view that Jews were Imperial property, possessing a definite monetary value.

But circumstances intervened. Maximilian was the first Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire after a lapse of many years who wanted to reassert his claim to world dominion. He even had designs on the seat of St. Peter. And these ambitions created a great many difficulties for him. He was engaged on all sides in wars of varying magnitude. And in between the wars his soldiery fought among themselves because their pay was constantly in arrears. He frequently found his infantry fighting his cavalry over the proceeds of a looting expedition. Before he could bring to an end his two invasions of France he found himself in the midst of a losing battle with the Swiss who refused to contribute the share he demanded from them towards his Italian expedition. This Italian venture involved him in a huge expenditure. He was fought to a standstill, and compelled to hang on, with his 6,500 men, in the hope that his allies would come to aid him against the French. Few of his men returned, and those who did, came back not with the glory that had been promised them, but with wounds and all kinds of disease instead.

He was in urgent need of money, ready cash; and it was very important that he should be able to arise a large sum without much fuss. The Diet of Worms, which he had summoned with the express intention of helping him to raise this money, proved a disappointment. While Maximilian was haranguing the Diet on the need of imposing additional taxation and collecting outstanding debts, the Diet went on

discussing long overdue reforms. The Emperor was in no mood for reforms. But the Diet was unaccommodating and quarrelsome. Maximilian spent three years arguing with it, and trying to make some sort of a bargain, and in the end he came away empty-handed.

Meanwhile Nuremberg gave him no respite. Councillor Loeffelholz, one of those concerned in the murder of Burgomaster Mueffel (he has a special chapel to his pious memory in the church of St. Sebaldus), paid several visits to the Emperor to try to get his consent to evict the Jews from Nuremberg.

His failure to obtain the money he needed from the Diet made Maximilian more amenable to Loeffelholz's proposals. How much would Nuremberg pay him for this "privilegium"? His feelings about the Jews did not, of course, enter into the matter; though no one would suspect the Emperor of being in any way favourably disposed towards them. To begin with, he was closely related by marriage to Ferdinand and Isabella, who had just expelled the Jews from Spain. His son Philip had married their daughter, the Infanta Joanna, and afterwards became King of Spain. (He was the father of the famous Emperor Charles V, who was at the same time King of Spain, and was the great Catholic ruler who presided at the Diet of Worms which condemned Luther.) Maximilian was no less zealous for the Christian faith than Ferdinand. What concern had he with the well-being of the Jews?

Meanwhile Loeffelholz submitted to him a concrete proposal. The Nuremberg Council was prepared to pay 8,000 gulden for the privilege of driving out the Jews; but in return it wanted all the immovable property belonging to the Jews. And in addition, the Emperor must give it a letter of indemnification, confirming the legality of the expulsion,

and absolving the city from any future claims that anyone might prefer.

Maximilian could probably have got much more for such a sweeping "privilegium." His predecessors had been paid larger sums for lesser "privilegiums" of the same kind. But Nuremberg has always been known for driving hard bargains. A characteristic Nuremberg saying is "Nurenbergisch Gebot is Halb ab—Das macht rechte Kauf." (The Nuremberg way is half-price—that is good buying.) If a tradesman told his customer that he could not possibly sell under a certain price, the customer paid no attention, but tried to beat him down to the "Nuremberg half."

But Maximilian was too hard-pressed for money to hold out, so he got rid of the Jews of Nuremberg for whatever they would fetch. Besides, compared with the obdurate Diet of Worms, the Nurembergers seemed almost lavish. And, what was most important, they were willing to pay immediately in cash.

As soon as Loeffelholz and the Emperor had agreed about the terms, Maximilian issued the following proclamation, dated July 5th, 1498:

> "We, Maximilian, by the grace of God Roman Emperor, devoted at all times to the advancement of Our Empire, extend herewith to Our Empire's loyal and well-beloved servant Wolfgang von Passburg, Our Imperial Representative in Nuremberg, Our sovereign grace and good wishes, and We bid him know by these presents that after mature deliberation and with full knowledge, on Our own initiative (!) and with sufficiently good reasons, We do hereby and herewith proclaim Our Royal Command to the honourable, loving, and loyal Burgomasters and Councillors of the City of Nuremberg, that they shall expel all Jews and Jewesses from the said city, and from the neighbourhood adjacent thereto (which may belong to the city). The said Jews and Jewesses shall assemble with their portable and movable possessions at a time to be appointed by the aforesaid Burgomasters and Councillors, and they shall go forth from the city; and their houses, synagogue, land, and other immovable property wherein

they have lived, resided, and kept their bodies, shall be left to Us in Our name without let or hindrance, as it is clearly stated, declared, and proclaimed in this Our Royal Command; Therefore we give to you, as the Representative of the Roman King, Our Imperial Command with all the solemn, earnest, and decisive power and force of these Our written instructions, and We give you herewith full powers that all such houses, synagogue and other properties be held on our behalf, and shall be divided in accordance with Our instructions . . . (This must be carried out) if you wish to avoid Our and Our Empire's displeasure, and by following Our commands, you will be in all things acting in accordance with Our considered opinion and wishes."

Maximilian was in no mood to sit down patiently to seek to justify his decree. He did not even state any specific faults because of which the Jews were to be expelled, which even the Inquisition felt it necessary to do. He was too preoccupied with his own more pressing affairs to worry about giving reasons for the expulsion. Let Nuremberg do that. For him it was enough that he had said "after mature deliberation . . . on our own initiative, and with sufficiently good reasons."

His father had taught him, however, that trade and industry cannot be carried on without capital, so he also issued a decree that Nuremberg should open special loan-banks to lend out money at rates of interest just enough to cover expenses. But this order was never more than a scrap of paper. The Imhoffs and the Volkammers saw to it that a reform of this kind should not be enforced to their detriment.

And Nuremberg was not altogether pleased with the way in which the Imperial Proclamation was drawn up. The Emperor had been well paid for it, so he might have explained, while he was about it, why he had decided to expel the Jews, instead of putting the onus on the noble Council, and leaving it to bear the brunt of the displeasure of the Bishop of Bamberg, who would have to lose financially by the

expulsion. Besides, if the Council explained the reasons for expelling the Jews from Nuremberg, it would show that the initiative had come from Nuremberg and not from the Emperor. And then all sorts of claims might be preferred against the Council for a share in the confiscated Jewish property.*

A few days later, therefore, Maximilian was induced to issue another decree, reiterating that the expulsion was on his own initiative, and setting out in some detail the crimes committed by the Jews, because of which he had decided to expel them. This document bears all the signs of hasty composition. It made the " discovery," for instance, that the Jews had engaged in usury, thus impoverishing the population. It also complained that they had been guilty of increasing too prolifically. (Both Charles IV and his drunkard son Wenzel had thought there were not enough Jews in Nuremberg, and had tried to increase their numbers for revenue purposes.)

The Jews were accused of having entered non-Jewish houses (apparently to collect debts), and of having given help to suspected persons, which meant that they had aided and abetted crime.

All these accusations were set out merely in vague and general terms. After all, why should the Emperor, " the foremost knight of the age," go to the trouble of justifying his actions with regard to a pack of Jews ? If there had been any truth in the charges, the Nuremberg priest, Wuerfel, whose writings are full of anti-Jewish animus, would not have omitted them from his chronicles of the Nuremberg Jews. The inference is plain, that he could not find any evidence to support them. He was not the kind of man who was likely to forgo the joy of recording the names of Jewish thieves, rogues, blackguards,

* We actually find that many years after the expulsion, litigation was still pending in the High Court of Prague with regard to several former Jewish properties, concerning which the parties could not agree about the legality of the various claims to ownership involved.

and evildoers, if only he could have laid his hands on them.

As against this, we have the diary of Franz Schmidt, who was public executioner at the time, showing that Nuremberg was then a cesspool of iniquity. He records murder, rape, sodomy, parricide and infanticide among the crimes for which Nuremberg citizens were handed over to him for his professional attentions. And he gives a list of 345 criminals whom he himself sent into the next world, by means of the axe, or the sword, or by breaking them on the wheel. He mentions hundreds of others whom he punished by scalding, or by cutting off their fingers or ears, and these lists do not include the countless victims of the Nuremberg torture-chambers. The number of executions there multiplied threefold in the sixteenth century, and unnatural vice increased in the same proportion.* So much for the character of the good Christian population of Nuremberg.

The Jews did not reply to the Emperor's accusations. They were not expected to. They knew it was hopeless to try to have the decree rescinded. They only pleaded for a postponement, to give them enough time to wind up their affairs. The Council was generous, and deferred the date of the expulsion, until it was finally fixed for the Sunday after Lent, 1499.

On November 1st, 1498, the Noble Council appeared in the synagogue to hear the Jews swear a communal oath that they would leave the town on the appointed day. And as they took the oath, the despairing Jews must also have cursed under their breath, "Yemach schemom vezichrom!" "May their name and memory be blotted out!"

* Janssen, Vol. XVI, page 166.

CHAPTER XII

No Scapegoat

On Sunday, March 10th, 1499, the Jews of Nuremberg, rich and poor, piled all their movable goods on carts, removed from their synagogue the Scrolls of the Law, their Hebrew books, the store of loose and torn pages,* the Mezuzoth† from their doors; they then took leave of their cemetery, where they had buried hundreds of their kin, men, women and children who had been martyred for their faith, the adults facing death knowingly, the children murdered without even understanding why.

From the time of Rindfleisch until that dread Sunday they had never heard an honest word spoken, or seen a decent action done, on their behalf. Many "great men," even "humanists" had lived in Nuremberg. The very Council responsible for the expulsion of the Jews counted among its members so renowned a humanist as Wilibald Pirkheimer, who admonished the people of Nuremberg for their immorality, but appears to have been both deaf and blind to the violation of all the other nine commandments. He was actually one of the Councillors who took charge of the distribution of the Jewish spoil.

With a last bitter glance at the city which treated them so inhumanly, the Jews went out from its gates. With characteristic concern for the orderliness even

* "Shemot" (names), or "Genizah" (hiding place). It is a Jewish custom to preserve loose pages or scraps of Hebrew books, because they contain the name of God (hence the term "Shemot") and are therefore sanctified.

† Parchments inscribed with the passsages Deut. vi. 4–9, and xi. 13–21, rolled up and inserted in a wooden or metal case and affixed to the door-post of houses occupied by Jews. . . "And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gate."

of its most brutal proceedings, the Council sent an armed escort to protect the wandering Jews. Or at least the ostensible object was to protect them because of the insecurity of the roads, because they might on the way meet with other people who had not yet attained the high level of culture of the burghers of Nuremberg, and who might not know how to treat the strangers within their gates. But the real reason for the armed escort was a little different.

If we look closely into the activities of the Nuremberg Council before and during the expulsion, we shall hit upon a more likely reason for its concern about the safety of the Jews. Travelling at that time, particularly of whole families, with women and children, and with large quantities of household goods, was a perilous business. The German robber-barons, who afterwards constituted the German nobility, were engaged in constant looting expeditions. The Jews would therefore not wish to travel far, and would try to obtain permission to settle somewhere close to the city they had left. But in the same way as the present régime in Germany seeks to persecute the Jewish refugees even after they have left Germany, so the Nuremberg Council wanted to prevent its refugees settling in the vicinity of the city.

Many of the Jews had contemplated settling in nearby Fuerth, but the Nuremberg Council did everything it could to make this impossible. And the armed escort was there to keep the Jews moving, further away from Nuremberg.

Some of the Councillors had become the sole permitted money-lenders in Nuremberg, and they did not want any Jewish competitors in this business so near that the Jews might still be able to maintain contact with their old clients in Nuremberg. The Council's apprehensions were not diminished by the knowledge that a considerable number of Christian merchants in Nuremberg preferred to deal with Jews

rather than with the patricians. This danger was averted by the Council's intervention to prohibit Jewish settlement in Fuerth, and it was not until 1528, nearly thirty years later, that the first Jews were admitted to Fuerth.* Even then Nuremberg tried to prevent it. As soon as the Nuremberg Council heard that Fuerth had decided to let Jews live there, it sent a written protest to the city authorities. The Jews had "robbed Nuremberg of a great deal of money" (!) it said, "and they will do the same in Fuerth." The Jews had been so harmful, it went on, that the city of Nuremberg had decided to expel them, even though it meant losing the very large revenue which she derived from them. It does not seem that Fuerth was impressed by the warning. The Jews were allowed to settle there, and if the city made any reply at all to Nuremberg, no copy of it has survived. By 1582 there were 300 Jews in Fuerth.

But Nuremberg did not tire of raising objections. She protested to the Emperor in 1552, and again in 1554. The city supported the protest by citing the Imperial Laws, but the Bishop of Bamberg dissented, and cited other laws against them. A hundred years after she had herself expelled the Jews, Nuremberg still persisted in sending protests whenever she heard that Jews were going to settle anywhere in her neighbourhood. In 1582 and 1585 she protested against their settlement in Bamberg, where there were already so many Jews that they occupied a whole street.

There was meanwhile still one important item of Jewish property left in Nuremberg that had not been turned to use, the Jewish cemetery. Nearly 150 years previously, Stromer had already complained to the Emperor that the Jewish cemetery was an obstruction, and that the Christian citizens found it very much in

* The Jews subsequently played an important part in the development of Fuerth, which made it a formidable rival to Nuremberg, and eventually contributed to her decline at the end of the eighteenth century.

their way. It was now at last possible to do something about the "obstruction," by including this large and valuable plot of land in a big and ambitious "slum-clearance" project.

Building activities in the Middle Ages were generally planned in a miserly and cheese-paring fashion, allowing very little space for streets and passage-ways. But when it came to demolishing the Jewish cemetery, the Council could afford to be liberal. They drove through it the broadest and most spacious thoroughfare in the city, sixty-five feet wide and seventy-nine feet long. The Jewish cemetery provided sufficient land for the purpose. It also supplied Jewish tombstones for use as pavements, adding to the amenities of the town, which had hitherto had only narrow, uneven, cobbled streets.

The tombstones were laid symmetrically, with the inscriptions downwards. Many of them commemorated the cruelties perpetrated by the town, and were records in stone of a part of Nuremberg history that is not to be found in any of her own written chronicles.

This treatment of the Jewish cemetery provides a complete prototype of the spirit which made Hitler's followers notorious before they came to power. Without the power to persecute living Jews, they systematically attacked the dead Jews, uprooting their tombstones and defiling their graves.

Under the tombstones of the Jewish cemetery of Nuremberg slept many generations of martyrs who had died in the firm belief that their people would one day be recompensed for the sacrifices they had made "for the sanctification of the Name." They had been sure that they would at least be allowed to lie in peace in their "eternal rest," until the day foretold by the prophets and the rabbis, when they would all be summoned again to enter into the life to come, where there would be neither enmity nor strife. What could

they have thought when their place of rest was invaded by a gang of Nuremberg labourers, who proceeded to tear out of the ground their only signs of identification, and to pile them by the wayside ready for the road-makers! Did the re-awakened martyrs at first mistake them for the precursors of the Messiah, who had come at last to tell them to rise and welcome His coming?

There was only one compensation for this desecration of the dead. It seemed for a long time as if it would be the last chance Nuremberg would ever have of doing harm to the Jews. For three hundred years after that there were no Jews in Nuremberg. In her direst need, in her worst spells of economic distress, she had no Jews to blame for her troubles, or to treat as a scapegoat for the mistakes, the misdeeds, the corruption of her noble and powerful rulers.

How often they must have hankered for a few Jews on whom to vent their displeasure! How useful they would have been as a safety valve through which to divert the discontent of the populace! When the famished and desperate people rose in protest, there was no Jewish quarter in Nuremberg into which their rulers could turn them loose, with a free hand to institute another carnival of blood!*

In 1500 Nuremberg was decimated by a plague, but there were no Jews there to accuse of having poisoned the wells. And the Noble and Wise Council must often have reflected sadly that a few financial transactions with the Jews might have saved them from the wrath of the irate Holy Roman Emperor, whose importunate demands for money they could not meet, because by that time there was not enough for all the members of the great families, who had lived in Nuremberg from the time of the first crusades;

* History seems to be repeating itself. At the opening of the Anti-Jewish Exhibition in Germany by Dr. Goebbels, the Propaganda Minister, the Nuremburg "Leader," Streicher, said, "I am beginning to get worried because I see no more Jews about in Germany. This is a dangerous sign."

until finally there came that black day of disaster when Nuremberg was driven into bankruptcy, and sold up under the hammer!

For generations the noble Nurembergers had lived on the capital and financial ability of the Jews, by constant extortions, by the periodic confiscation of Jewish property, houses and synagogues, by pledging Jewish brains and wealth. But now the Jews had gone—and, in the words of the Emperor Maximilians' decree, "for all time."

What could they do without a scapegoat? The curse which the Jews had called down on the city seemed to be working towards fulfilment. The splendours of Imperial Nuremberg had been dimmed, and the spectre of bankruptcy loomed over her.

CHAPTER XIII

The Imperial City Goes Bankrupt

For nearly 350 years Nuremberg was left without Jews, a 100 per cent. Christian-Aryan community, the ideal of Streicher and Hitler. And during all these centuries the shadow of financial disaster was hardly ever absent. It was one long protracted chapter of money difficulties and insolvency.

It is true that in all her history Nuremberg never had a balanced budget. Indeed, she never had a budget at all. The City Council never attempted to prepare one. There were severa Treasuries in the city, and each of them jealously guarded its own secrets—and its various defalcations—and insisted on the right to conduct its affairs independently of any central supervision.

The story of Nikolaus Mueffel throws light on the inner affairs of the Council. It does not appear that Nikolaus Mueffel was any better or worse than the other Nuremberg Councillors. He used his position to feather his own nest, just like the rest; but he seems to have antagonised them by an assumption of superiority.

In addition to his haughty and arrogant bearing, and his enviable influence with the Pope and the Emperor, he knew enough about the affairs of his colleagues to be in a position to blackmail them all. It seems that he knew more of their affairs than they knew of his. So that he was dangerous. And his unconcealed contempt for them did not tend to increase his popularity. He claimed he had thirty-eight distinct accusations ready to be levelled against his colleagues. But they forestalled him. And his

arrogance had left him entirely without friends in the Council, so that he could not rely even on those whom he had considered his allies.

Even Loeffelholz turned against him with the rest. The Council could hardly be expected to tolerate the presence of a member who could at any moment hurl thirty-eight incriminating charges against them. At the same time, they did not relish the idea of a public trial against him, in which the people might learn more than it was advisable for them to know. So Mueffel was seized in his own Chancellery and carried off to the "Hole," from which he never again emerged.

It was part of the plan to brand him as a common thief, as though he had been arrested while sneaking out of the Treasury, with his pockets and sleeves stuffed with gold coins.

There was a secret "trial," at which no notes were taken of any evidence, whether by the accused or the witnesses. Long after Mueffel's execution, when the representatives of the Pope and the Emperor were inquiring very persistently into the matter a scribe was appointed to write out an account of the trial. This scribe seems to have bungled his job, for in recording the evidence of four witnesses who were supposed to have caught Mueffel with his pockets bulging with stolen gold, he made each witness give a different day for the arrest.

Seven days after Mueffel's execution, Jobst Tetzel, his life-long and implacable enemy, was appointed to his vacant post of Chancellor of the Treasury.

And furthermore, when Mueffel was tortured in the "Hole," to extract a "confession" from him, this task was not left to the common executioner, but the noble Councillors did it themselves, including the famous Imhoff, who, after the expulsion of the Jews, bought the property where the new Nuremberg synagogue had stood.

No one seemed to know (and no reference is to be found in the Nuremberg Constitution) how much the Councillors drew as remuneration for serving the interests of the great city.

In the diary of one of the Council members, Christoph Kress (1484–1535), we find that he has jotted down various remunerations that he had received, consisting of payments from all kinds of departments in the city administration—in one year from as many as fourteen (legitimate) sources.

In other times the budgets might have been balanced by fresh calls on the resources of the Jewish community, but now the various treasurers were forced to look for different sources of revenue. There were two possible ways. Additional taxation or additional indebtedness. There is extant a pamphlet, published in 1701, which, in the absence of any imprint of town or author* was apparently an illegal publication, which says: "They know, these noblemen, how to squander in the wildest fashion uncounted sums of money, to consume and empty the richest treasuries; but the common method of balancing income with expenditure—that, alas, they do not know." Of their vigilance to keep their activities from becoming known, the pamphlet says: "As soon as the authorities hear of any incriminating document offered for sale, they buy it up at once, and immediately after it disappears."

Since the city's increasingly heavy commitments had made it more difficult to obtain fresh loans, and the conditions imposed by the lenders had become intolerable, the Council had to resort to the only other source of supply, additional taxation. And in this field Nuremberg must surely have broken all the records for any municipality. Practically every usable commodity was taxed, even the horses' rations. Travellers and visitors to the city were not allowed to

* *Der Nurnberger Bot.*, 1701.

bring with them an extra ration of fodder for their horses; they had to purchase it at double the price when they came into the city.

When the Jews were expelled in 1499, the population of Nuremberg was 150,000; after that the number gradually dwindled, until by 1818 it had fallen to 27,000. And as the population declined, so the city's debts soared. At the beginning of the sixteenth century, Nuremberg owed 453,000 gulden; by the end of the century, the debt had increased to 3,475,000 gulden. By 1618 it had reached 5,000,000 gulden, and in 1796 it was 14,000,000 gulden. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Nuremberg was in debt to the amount of 200 gulden per head of the population.

There were about 290 taxed articles on the list. One tax that was levied was described as the "Turkish Tax." This was a tax that had been imposed in 1493, when the Turks stood at the Croatian border. Nuremberg was one of the towns that had been asked to contribute funds for the war against the infidels. The Turks had been beaten back, and their invasion had been forgotten. But three hundred years later, in 1793, the Nuremberg City Council still collected the "Turkish Tax."

The ordinary industrious citizens, who had no "influence" with the city treasurers, were not able to bear the burden for long, and they gradually emigrated. Some went to the neighbouring town of Fuerth, and helped it to develop at the expense of Nuremberg.

Gone were the times when Aenius Silvius could say with justice that "the Scottish kings would be glad to live in houses such as those wherein lived the burghers of Nuremberg." Instead it was said of them that "the peasants of Bavaria are lords in comparison with Nuremberg citizens. But patience, it is not

possible that the Almighty should look on much longer at such misdeeds."*

At the end of the seventeenth century, the workers of Nuremberg sent a petition to the City Council, begging it to do something to mitigate their terrible poverty. The iniquitous taxes, they complained, had reduced them to the verge of starvation, and they were now forced to beg or to emigrate.

At this point, the Council decided to "examine old proposals for improving the finances of the city." Such "old proposals" could only mean additional taxation, and more effective collection of the taxes. Meanwhile the number of frauds and bankruptcies increased to an alarming extent, and the Council found it necessary to issue a warning against such lapses from strict commercial integrity. The authorities took so serious a view of this matter, that it threatened to deprive fraudulent bankrupts of the right to carry swords, if it was proved that their bankruptcy was caused by extravagant living.

A rigid economy campaign was started. The authorities were seized by a veritable frenzy of scrimping and cheese-paring. Every conceivable means was used to compel the citizens to reduce their expenses. Decree after decree urged the need for greater economy, regulated and limited the expenditure of the private citizens, and imposed severe punishments on all found guilty of the least extravagance. The population of Nuremberg had no alternative. They tightened their belts, and economised.

Expenditure on any kind of festivity or social gathering was restricted to a bare minimum. For example, not more than four women were allowed to attend a christening; a betrothed couple were not allowed more than twelve guests each at their wedding. It was stipulated that the guests must not be offered refreshment, except home-made wine, or purchased

* *Nurnberger Bot.*, page 16.

wine of the same value. A fine had to be paid for each guest present in excess of the quota, which made "gate-crashing" an expensive practice. And the cost of the wedding-ring was not to be more than 10 gulden, including the stone, if there was one.

Funeral expenses, too, had to be curtailed. Only a limited number of people were permitted to attend a funeral, and those had all to have a special reason for attending, since otherwise they would be wasting time that would be better spent at their work. Under no circumstances were the mourners and their friends to be offered food or drink on returning from the cemetery.

Even dress fashions were minutely regulated, and several ordinances appeared laying down the cut of men's clothes, and decreeing the maximum quantity of material that might be used. Women were not allowed more than a certain maximum width of sleeve, and there were even precise rulings as to the amount of material that might be cut away to show a specified amount of material of another colour. The extravagant habit of wearing silver belts was abolished by law, and it was laid down that belts might not contain more than a half-mark's worth of silver. Toe-caps were limited in size by regulation. Afterwards they were entirely prohibited.

It was likely that the people of Nuremberg might feel tempted to make some caustic remarks about the Council's assiduity in promoting this economy-drive, so a decree was issued imposing a fine of five pounds heller on anyone heard fulminating against the Council or any of its members. Four pounds of this fine went to the city, and the other pound to the judge. It was a shrewd way of ensuring his personal interest in every conviction, and protected the Council against any loss of income for reasons of abstract, academic justice. "Put money in thy purse," was the Council's Shakespearean injunction to the judges. A

sort of " live and let live." Of course, proper arrangements were made to deal with those people who were too poor to pay the fine, and yet insisted on the right to swear at their betters : they had to pay with the loss of a finger.

The economy drive affected both rich and poor ; but obviously the city officials were immune. There is no evidence of a single attempt to reduce the number of salaried posts held in the city administration, or to cut down the salaries attached to them. Meanwhile, crime increased by leaps and bounds. And the number of executions was trebled. " Going through the chronicles—especially of the second half of the sixteenth century, one is astonished at the number of deeds of violence, cruelty and murder, and the more or less serious robberies, and the vast amount of fraud committed in Nuremberg."*

Nor did the heavy taxes imposed in Nuremberg fall on all alike. Wealthy merchants were able to evade most of them with impunity. An Imperial Commission that was sent from Vienna in 1798 to end the rule of the Nuremberg patricians, found that the merchants of the city employed at least seventeen different ways of fraudulently evading their obligations. It reported that those who were caught smuggling were rarely fined ; there was always someone " higher up " to protect them. Even when fines were imposed, as a matter of formality, they were not collected. Bribes seem to have been the only things that were paid promptly and regularly.

Administrative corruption was found in every office, even the highest. The Commission was engaged in its work of investigation for seven whole years, but could not track down the several Treasuries that functioned in Nuremberg, nor lay hands on their secret records of accounts, nor obtain any explanation why there were so many sinecures available for people

* Janssen, Vol. XVI, page 166.

who drew regular salaries, without having any idea of what they were supposed to be doing in return. And when the Commission asked for certain documents which might have thrown light on the question of responsibility for this financial chaos, all the relevant documents suddenly and mysteriously disappeared, without a trace . . . " spurlos verschwunden."

The Commission was trying to find a way of putting the affairs of Nuremberg into some sort of order. But everything was in a hopeless muddle, and after much cogitation and exploration, it could think of no alternative but to get rid of the incompetent and corrupt City Council, and to put the insolvent city of Nuremberg up for public auction, as so much bankrupt stock.

Buildings, art treasures, churches, land, everything went to the highest bidder, for as much as it would fetch.

A fountain representing Neptune, made by three Nuremberg artists, was sold to Russia for 66,000 gulden.

Everything possible was turned into cash, and the accumulations of centuries of labour and skill were dispersed and scattered. What could not be sold was farmed out to approved dealers.

The valuable city library was not spared. Decorative bindings and expensive ornaments were removed from the books. The *Nuremberg Mahsor*, considered one of the most valuable Hebrew MSS. in existence, was mutilated by vandals, who tore off the rich binding and clasps. The *Mahsor*, which was written in 1331, originally consisted of 528 parchment leaves and is illustrated by miniatures which experts have pronounced of high artistic value. It was probably stolen from the Nuremberg synagogue during the sack in 1349. When Wuerfel wrote his book, the *Mahsor* was still intact, and with its gold clasps and

illustrations must have given an impression of great value. Wuerfel records that the Jews of Vienna offered to buy it at a cost of a ducat per page.

Eleven of the folios have been torn out. It is alleged that the French stole these, but it is difficult to see why, if that were so, since they had the power, they did not take the complete MSS.

Her rulers have attributed the downfall of Nuremberg to a variety of causes, from the Thirty Years' War to the competition of her neighbour, Fuerth, which had been a tiny, insignificant village when Nuremberg was a great metropolis. They have ascribed her failure to the discovery of new sea-routes, to the general decline of central authority in Germany, to Napoleon, to anything and everything except the real causes which were to be found in the city itself. For all the other causes had affected the other German cities equally, and yet they were all flourishing when Nuremberg petered out.

In 1768, thirty years before the liquidating Commission arrived, there had indeed been one Nuremberg patrician, Christian Haller, who had put his finger on the spot. He blamed for Nuremberg's decline her greed, her callous indifference to the welfare of the bulk of her population. And he proposed that Nuremberg should mend matters by attracting foreigners instead of repelling them, by being tolerant to other religions beside her own, and that she should invite the return of the Jews, " who would be an asset to her because of their ability."

Haller cited in support of his proposal the contribution the Jews had made towards the prosperity of Fuerth, which had grown at the expense of Nuremberg. But not even he had dared to suggest more than that the Jews should be permitted to settle in the environs of Nuremberg. The city itself was too sacred to be defiled by the presence of a Jew.

But nothing came of all these proposals.

A hundred years before, the Council had decided to "examine old proposals for improving the finances of the city"; and when the Imperial Commission arrived a hundred years later, the Council was still "examining."

Right to the end, even when the Commission was already at work, the Councillors still fought desperately for every position they held, though each of them went in dread of the rest, and kept constantly exchanging the roles of blackmailer and blackmailed. Before the Commission arrived, the thousand-year-old proud city of thirty-odd monarchs tried hawking what remained of her charms to the highest bidder. There were no offers. In 1796 she begged the Prussian King to take her, even if it meant surrendering her ancient privileges as a Free City, but even that did not tempt him. At first, it seemed attractive, but when he looked more closely into the facts, he found that the city was hopelessly bankrupt; and the King of Prussia had no desire to add to his liabilities.

CHAPTER XIV

Facing Both Ways

The history of Nuremberg in relation to the wider conflicts which affected her interests is one of almost incredible duplicity. She unfailingly appeared to agree with both sides in a dispute, trying at one and the same time to cheat both parties, while she was drawing the benefits of apparent loyalty to both. She adopted this two-faced role during the Reformation, and attempted to carry it through to the end.

She claimed to be one of the pioneer cities of the Reformation. In 1525, Nuremberg publicly declared herself on the side of Luther; then in 1527, she confiscated a satire directed against the Pope, and accused Hans Sachs and Osiander of being the authors. But the fact was that Nuremberg was interested neither in Protestantism nor in Catholicism, but only in her own material advantage.

Nuremberg attended the Reichstag of Speyer in 1529 and signed the Lutherian Augsburg Confession in 1530; yet she refused to join the alliance for the defence of the Reformation. When the struggle was at its height, Nuremberg welcomed the Catholic Emperor Charles V with much pomp, and when open war began between Protestants and Catholics, she decided that it would be best for her to remain neutral, and thrive by furnishing munitions and supplies to both sides.

Nuremberg paid dearly for this cynical attitude, for her feigned loyalty to either cause, so long as it suited her business interests; she had to pay both sides, in order to be able to play each of them false in turn.

The city's behaviour during the great peasant rising of 1525 is typical of her general treatment of the term neutrality. For actually, she gave the peasants every encouragement, and then left them in the lurch as soon as she saw that the fight went against them. At first, the Nuremberg Council gave tacit consent to the activities of the peasants who were busy buying arms and provisions in the town. When the insurgents asked the Council what attitude it would adopt if they marched into Southern Franconia with an armed force (which they claimed to be between twenty and thirty thousand strong), the Council replied: "It was well known how loyally they (the members of the Council) adhered to the evangelical teaching, and the peasants would have nothing to fear from the Council so long as they made no attack on the town." And then, though it was she who had armed the peasants, when they turned to her for help, Nuremberg rebuffed them, explaining that the Council was not sure that the peasants had acted evangelically. She carried out her obligation to the alliance against the peasants by beheading some of their leaders when the revolt collapsed, and the bulk of the leaderless revolutionaries were decimated by disease, starvation and cold-blooded murder by hired soldiery.

During the Thirty Years' War, Nuremberg continued to pursue her policy of duplicity. Though the city suppressed the Catholics, denied them citizenship, and refused to tolerate their churches, yet she would not take a definite stand on behalf of Lutheranism, and tried with considerable success to convince the Emperor that she was really on his side. Her representatives in Vienna in 1621–2 did this with such skill that Nuremberg was actually considered as one of the cities belonging to the Catholic League, and a devoted servant of the Emperor.*

Things must have been very bad in Nuremberg for

* Ghillany, *Nurnberg*, page 72.

Prussia to refuse the offered addition to her territory. It was at the time that Prussia was contesting with Austria for the leadership of the German States, and she would not have lightly rejected any opportunity of adding to her influence and her domains. It seemed on the face of it a tempting proposal, and when the offer was first made by Nuremberg, Prussia indeed jumped at it, and sent two regiments of Hussars to take occupation of the city. On August 28th, 1796, Nuremberg held a plebiscite, and by an overwhelming vote of 3,242 in favour, and only 61 against, agreed to accept the rule of Prussia. But then, after he had looked more closely into the facts, the Prussian King decided that it was more than he cared to have on his shoulders; and he withdrew, leaving the field clear for Austria.

While the Imperial Commission was at work in Nuremberg, investigating the conduct of the City Council, the proud Franconian patriots conceived a treasonable plan to enlist the support of France against their German compatriots. In 1801 they sent a deputation to France, begging her, in the most cringing manner, to protect the freedom of Nuremberg from the German "outsiders." They intimated to Napoleon, who was then First Consul, that Nuremberg's freedom was "in France's interests, and would benefit her commercially." They went on to tell him a pitiful tale about the misfortunes that had befallen the city, and how carefully and economically they lived, and how important Nuremberg was, and how admirable and gifted were her citizens.

To prepare French opinion for the arrival of the deputation Nuremberg issued a booklet* appealing to France to save her from Germany, and to protect her independence. The booklet contains the somewhat surprising (and entirely false) statement that

* *Reflexions sur les relations de la ville libre et imperiale de Nuremberg*, 1798.

Nuremberg had actually asked for the Imperial Commission to be sent to the town; though it is common knowledge that the city's representatives plotted desperately in Vienna to try to prevent the Commission from being sent.

The booklet was sent with a covering letter to Napoleon, and to everyone else of importance in France. Napoleon's reply, in which he acknowledged the receipt of the booklet, and said that he would "at all times make himself pleasant to the city," was intercepted and published, probably by the neighbouring town of Fuerth.

Nuremberg was greatly embarrassed by this unexpected announcement to the whole of Germany that she had endeavoured to make secret and treasonable advances to Napoleon, and she tried to extricate herself by implicating other German towns, and persuading them to join her in placing themselves under the potential guardianship of France. But she had no success. Frankfort, for instance, replied that she found it more desirable to preserve her constitution under the aegis of the Holy Roman Empire, with the head of that Empire as her protector, than to take independent action such as Nuremberg recommended. She added that she not only deprecated such methods, but was convinced that they would not meet with any kind of success.

When the Nuremberg delegation was presented to Napoleon, and humbly pleaded for his protection, he brusquely replied "You published my letter!" The delegates offered fulsome apologies and explanations, and pleaded that it was not their fault, and that they had at once made a public denial of the existence of such a letter; but Napoleon said that it was not a matter of great importance and that in any case he did not write in the style of the letter that had been published.

He was about to leave them, to deal with the other

deputations awaiting an audience with him, when the Nuremberg delegation again begged him to give consideration to their plea for his protection. "Yes," he replied tersely, "your town is well recommended to the Government!"

The Nuremberg Council had hoped that the strained relations existing between Prussia and France would help towards the success of the deputation, since Napoleon had been heard to make ironical remarks to a delegate concerning Prussia's ambitious schemes of aggrandisement. But the deputation failed to secure a public promise, and had to be content, after much talk and wire-pulling, with a declaration from Talleyrand that France "would always take an interest in their city."

When they persisted further in asking Talleyrand whether he would help them to regain their former proud position, he answered brusquely, "Pour vivre, il faut d'abord exister." (To live, one must first exist.)

Talleyrand's declaration threw the Nuremberg delegates into a state of almost delirious jubilation, and they sent home the news in these terms:

"To our unsurpassable joy we have had the great good fortune to receive from the French Government a declaration more favourable than anything we ever expected. We are not losing a second in notifying you about it . . . and that Minister Talleyrand expressed his Government's willingness to restore the former status of our town, to help her to regain her lost position, and to enter into commercial relationships with her."

In the same year that Nuremberg sent a deputation to Paris, seeking foreign protection, ready to grovel at Buonaparte's feet, the city also submitted a memorial to the German Emperor, saying "We leave ourselves and this Imperial City in your all-highest and protecting hands, with that deep sense of humility

and boundless loyalty which we shall retain for ever."*

It fell to France eventually to decide what was to be done about Nuremberg, and Buonaparte thought it best to have the city annexed by Bavaria. Bavaria herself heard of this "windfall" six days only before it happened.

As soon as the city realised that her independence was irrevocably lost, and was told by her French "friends" that she was to be handed over to Bavaria, the Councillors felt that at this juncture it was a matter of the greatest urgency to assure His Majesty the King of Bavaria of their profound and sincere humility, and to convince him that it had always been their most cherished desire to serve under the rule of a king as loving, gracious, and fair-minded as himself. They considered, moreover, that by hastily dispatching a deputation to submit their most humble allegiance to the king before they were made to do so by his troops, they might secure better conditions for themselves.†

With all possible haste they came to Munich, were granted an audience, and submitted their humble address of loyalty to the king, concluding with the assurance that they were "looking forward with joy to Nuremberg's happy future under His Majesty's rule."

It seems that their new master was not for very long puzzled by Napoleon's generosity, and Prussia's reluctance to avail herself of an opportunity to take a further step on the road of territorial expansion, for in reply to Nuremberg's flattering address, the King of Bavaria merely smiled, and answered, "You, gentlemen, have many debts!"

* Baader, *Streiflichter aus der Zeit der tiefsten Erniedrigung Deutschlands* page 43.

† Baader, *Der Reichstadt Nurnbergs letzter Schicksal.* Nuremberg: 1863. Page 17.

CHAPTER XV

The Return of the Jews

The edict of expulsion proclaimed the banishment of the Jews from Nuremberg "for all time." But it did not prevent the citizens of Nuremberg from finding ways and means of dealing with the Jews, in spite of the difficulties, and regardless of the fines that were imposed by the Nuremberg Council for such breaches of Franconian discipline. In 1539, forty years after the expulsion, a number of citizens were fined ten gulden for maintaining business contacts with Jews. A Nuremberger who wanted to have dealings with a Jew had to go to the Jew, outside Nuremberg, for no Jew was allowed to set foot in the city. If a Jew was caught there, he was imprisoned in the "Hole," and all goods in his possession at the time were confiscated. Transactions with Jews had to take place outside the precincts of the town; yet all the repressive measures adopted by the Nuremberg Council could not put a stop to these transactions.

Finally, when the Council's financial embarrassments forced it to look round for some new means of raising money, it found a way of using the Jews, while continuing to exclude them from residence in the city. The Nurembergers were still dealing with the Jews, so why should the Council not derive some benefit from these dealings, by allowing the Jews to come into the city to meet their clients, instead of the Nurembergers having to go outside the town to pay them illicit visits?

So the Council decreed that the Jews might come to Nuremberg to transact their business, on paying a certain sum to the City Treasury as a tax. The visits

were regulated according to the following procedure: The Jew had to present himself at the gate of the city, put on his "Yellow Badge" and give his name to the gate-keeper, who was authorised to issue a passport valid for one day. He then had to show his passport at the customs-house, and pay the tax imposed on a Jew for allowing him to bring his person into the city. The customs officer allotted him a "living companion" ("lebendiges Geleite"), usually a drab from the gutter who had been discarded by the lowest of the public brothels. They were generally offensive in appearance, disease-ridden and decrepit. One was actually stone-blind, so that the Jew to whom she was allotted had to lead her. They stood about at the gates, in the hope of picking up such commissions, and the remuneration attached to them. They had to accompany the Jew wherever he went in the city, to keep watch over his morals and general behaviour, and to bring him back to the gate when he had settled his affairs.

If the Jew found the gates of the city shut before he had finished his business, he had to pay a fee to have them opened again so that he could pass out. And if it was essential that he should spend the night in Nuremberg, he had to obtain a special permit, which meant more money, and, though the amount was not fixed, it was generally a substantial sum.

While he was in the city, he was not only accompanied at every step by his "companion," but his movements were restricted also in other ways. He was not allowed to be in the market-place during the mid-day hours, between eleven and one. And when he left the city he had to pay two per cent. duty on any goods he had bought. In this way the Nuremberg Council collected an average of about 4,000 gulden a year.

But while treating Jewish visitors in this degrading way, Nuremberg did not scruple to employ Jews

in her defence against the robber bands that infested the high roads in the vicinity. The Nuremberg War Office appointed a Jew, Michael of Fuerth, to police the neighbourhood. Apparently Michael was the leader of a band of police, for on one occasion he caught six robbers, which he could hardly have done single-handed. The robbers were all sentenced to death.

When the Margrave of Ansbach, who was at loggerheads with Nuremberg, heard of this, he had Michael arrested, killed and quartered, and exposed the parts of his dismembered body at four different places in the town, marked by tablets bearing the inscription: "Michael, the Jew traitor, from Nuremberg." Nuremberg protested to the Emperor against both the execution and the wording of the inscription. This was in 1596, and is the only instance on record of the Nuremberg Council ever taking any action in defence of a Jew.

When Christian Haller proposed that the city should be more decent to the Jews, and showed that many of them preferred to forgo the business that awaited them in Nuremberg, rather than submit to the indignity of the "living companion," he found no support. Afterwards, when the Imperial Commission from Vienna was in Nuremberg, considering every possible way of improving the financial position, it also gave attention, before abandoning the quest as hopeless, to the idea of raising funds from the Jews. It was not in the power of the Commission to open the city to the Jews, but it did endeavour to abolish the more obnoxious features regulating the business visits of Jews to the town, and it succeeded in having the female "companion" replaced by a member of the city police.

Not that the Jews lived under enviable conditions in Fuerth or in any other places in Franconia where the extreme rigour of the Nuremberg laws concerning

Jews did not apply. There is a petition submitted by the Jews of Fuerth on February 15th, 1792, to the District Assembly, on behalf of the Jews of Franconia, which reads as follows :

" So long as we are not allowed to earn our livelihood as agricultural workers or artisans, or by any other regular productive occupation, and are driven exclusively into commerce, our talents and capabilities must necessarily suffer from a one-sided development, and can never be cultivated like the talents of the Christians, to whom every avenue is open. And even our sole means of subsistence is made difficult and encroached upon ! There are many towns that we cannot enter at all, and in others we have to pay a heavy duty, and must leave again at nightfall. In some districts the most profitable branches of trade are forbidden to us. We are compelled to pay a humiliating body-tax, and indignities are heaped upon us, and politically we are treated like cattle, so that we are overwhelmed with shame and contempt, and at the end of it all our meagre profit is thrice swallowed up by fees and duties—the profit that has been won with pain and danger in strange parts."*

The return of the Jews to Nuremberg was a long and slow process. The spirit of liberalism was already abroad through the whole of Europe ; on the surface the old order had disappeared ; the words " liberty and tolerance " were on everybody's lips ; the neighbouring community of Fuerth had become a great Jewish cultural centre, where many important Hebrew books were published—but Nuremberg was still " Judenrein." In 1839, Joseph Wasserman, an old soldier who was employed in the Postal Service, was given permission to live in the city of Nuremberg. Six years later, another Jew was allowed to live in Nuremberg for one year—the city appears to have

* Document in Nuremberg Archives. (Barbeck, *Geschichte der Juden in Nurnberg und Furth*, pages 103–105.)

retained its belief in short-term privileges. There was a great deal of controversy before the Council agreed to grant this permit, and the proposal was adopted by a majority of only one vote—nine for, eight against. And when the Council issued the permit, it felt it necessary to explain, in extenuation, that this particular Jew, Joseph Kalin, of Markt-Erlbach, was a " brave man."

Nor, since Nuremberg was now no longer a Free City, but simply one more Bavarian town like all the others, was it because of her own encouragement and goodwill that more Jews began to settle there. By 1868 there were three hundred Jewish families in Nuremberg. In accordance with the new attitude to religious belief that now existed throughout Europe, the Council of Nuremberg had given the Jews permission in 1852 to hold communal prayers on the occasion of the great festivals, but added that " they should do their praying without noise." The Councillors were probably apprehensive lest the devotions of the Jews should disturb those frequenting the adjoining wine tavern.

In 1874, after an interval of 375 years, the Jews once more built a synagogue on Nuremberg soil. The opening ceremony was attended by Burgomaster Stromer, a descendant of that Ulrich Stromer who, more than five hundred years previously, had persuaded Charles IV to permit the destruction of the old synagogue.

The patience of these people who had clung tenaciously to the memories of their historic past was at last rewarded. They had lived to see the revocation of the Emperor Maximilian's decree banishing them from Nuremberg " for all time." They had come back. They had returned, not in defiance, nor as strangers, but as recognised members of the great German community, emancipated and possessing equal rights with all other citizens, in form, and in

many respects in actual fact. They had come to give all they could to the country they regarded as their Fatherland. They had returned at a time when freedom was becoming a fact in the civilised world, and Germany had become united. They pulled their weight in the life of their old-new Nuremberg. A few years after they had returned to Nuremberg, in 1849, before they even had a place of communal worship, one of them, Dr. David Morgenstern, was elected to the Reichstag as Member first for Fuerth and then for Nuremberg, and another, Wolf Frankenburger, who belonged to the Progressive Party, was elected to the Bavarian Landtag and to the Reichstag.

Frankenburger was one of the pioneers of German unity. When the Franco-German war began in 1870, resulting in the proclamation of King Wilhelm I as German Emperor, Frankenburger was one of the first who advocated this Imperial unification. As the leader of the Bavarian Liberal Party he threw all the weight of his influence in favour of the union of the Southern and Northern States, and the creation of a strong Central Government. For twenty years, from 1869 until his death in 1889, he was an important member of the Bavarian Parliament, where he took a decisive part as a legal authority in the discussions which led to the legal reforms of the period. He was held in great respect for his rectitude and ability, and in addition enjoyed immense popularity as a "friend of the people." He was also for many years the reporter for the Bavarian Parliament on the Army Budget, and for his services in this regard, the king awarded him the Order of St. Michael, First Class. While engaged with the wider affairs of Bavaria and of Germany, Frankenburger did not neglect the affairs of Nuremberg, where he lived and practised his profession of lawyer, and he served the city as a member of the Nuremberg Council. The tide had turned completely in Nuremberg—a Jew was a

member of the Nuremberg Council; and the contemporary records show that he was a leading and popular member, who enjoyed the entire confidence of his fellow-members and of the population.

There was another Jew, Sigmund Merzbacher, who played an important part in the struggle for democracy and progress in Nuremberg. And the growing Social Democractic Party found in a Nuremberg Jew, Gabriel Lowenstein, a pioneer worker, a leader, and even a martyr, who suffered continual imprisonment for the cause. He threw himself with all the courage of his faith in the progressive movement into the fighting in the popular revolt of 1848. And twenty years later, in 1868, he shared with the great August Bebel the presidency of the party conference held at Nuremberg, when the Socialists seceded from the Democratic Party. It was he, too, who founded in Nuremberg the first Social Democratic journal. His great achievement was his persistent fight for the democratisation of Nuremberg municipal life. His championship of the poor brought him into constant conflict with the authorities, and he had to undergo frequent imprisonment. He actually spent two and a half months in prison when he was seventy-two, a feeble, grey-haired old man, but with his indomitable spirit unbroken.

Many distinguished Jews gave unstinting service to the cause of humanity in Nuremberg. There was Dr. Alex Frankenburger, who spent his life working to save children suffering from tuberculosis. Ferdinand Goldschmid was a pioneer worker for holiday camps; Wilhelm von Gerngros was a co-founder of the Institute for Diseases of the Lungs; Eugen Herz founded the "Society of Warmestuben," to provide shelter and food for the poor; and Elise Hopf was a leading personality in the women's movement.

Foremost among those who served the cause of art in Nuremberg were the brothers Ludwig and

Wilhelm von Gerngros, who were both elevated to the nobility for their services in this field, and were made Honorary Citizens. Nuremberg is indebted to them for the erection of the new Neptune Fountain, after the original, which the city, in its incessant search for money, had sold to Russia in 1797.

The city owes the erection of the "Dudelsachspfeifer" ("Bagpiper") statue to Sigmund Pickert, who also left Nuremberg his famous house in the Albrecht Duerer Platz.

The fountain of the Minnensaenger in the Prateranlage was endowed by Frau Joseph Bach in 1905; and the magnificent Kuenstlerhaus had Siegfried Bach and several other Jews among its founders. This notable home of art was above all the cherished dream of the brothers von Gerngros, who were the actual motive force behind it.

Another Nuremberg Jew, Heinrich Berolzheimer, who had gone to live in New York with his two sons, but remembered his birthplace with gratitude and affection, was responsible for the establishment of the famous Luitpoldhaus, the headquarters of the Society for Natural Science, the Institute for Adult Education, and of the Medical Society.

Michel Kahn played a great part in the affairs of the Albrecht Duerer Society and the Museum for Germanic Studies, and when he was seventy, the city recognised his services by bestowing on him her highest honour, the Gold Medal of Citizenship. Kahn was also instrumental in establishing the fund for the endowment of the Nuremberg Polytechnic.

During the Great War of 1914–1918, out of 8,000 Jewish inhabitants in Nuremberg, 1,543 served in the German Forces, 991 in the front line. Thirty-eight Nuremberg Jews were awarded the Iron Cross, First Class, two received the Gold Medal for Conspicuous Valour, 553 won the Iron Cross, Second Class, and many others obtained various other decorations.

As soon as the war broke out, twenty-six Jews went from Nuremberg as officers into the army, and twenty of these were killed in action. Altogether the Nuremberg Jews contributed 133 commissioned officers to the German fighting forces. 178 Nuremberg Jews gave their lives for Germany on the battlefield. These Jewish soldiers came from all classes of society, and the Nuremberg synagogue contributed its cantor, the organist, and the choir-master, and the headmaster of the Jewish school served with all his assistant teachers.

But the humiliation of Germany's defeat in the war was too bitter to bear without trying to throw the blame for it on a scapegoat. In order to foster the legend of German supremacy in war, the story was spread that there had not been a real military defeat at all, but that German arms had been betrayed by traitors within the ranks. And, true to tradition, the Jews were singled out as the traitors.

It was not necessary to produce any evidence to support the allegation, it did not matter in the least that all the evidence was against it; German military prestige and German pride had to be saved from any suspicion that the French and British and American armies had actually defeated Germany by ordinary military superiority. On all sides the cry was raised that the Jews had sold Germany to the Allies, and everywhere people began to believe it. The essence of propaganda is to repeat the same thing over and over again. Something is sure to sink in. "The mere presentation of an idea, unless we are careful about it," said Bagehot long ago, "makes us believe it."

So Nuremberg reverted to her old mediæval self. There was an end to the harmony between Jews and Christians, and even the social work for the sick, conducted without distinction of faith, was resentfully described as a "Jewish monopoly."

The anti-Jewish propaganda was intensified as the fortunes of the town declined, and vituperative pamphlets were published, attacking even the non-sectarian philanthropic work of the Jews. The Nuremberg Jews began to consider seriously withdrawing from non-Jewish public affairs, and limiting their activities to the needs of the Jewish community.*

For some time the Jews were torn between loyalty to their ideals of citizenship and the increasing difficulty of doing anything in face of the anti-Semitic spirit that dominated the town. It did not accord with their sense of duty to relinquish a work of humanity because it brought them the enmity of the Christian rulers of Nuremberg. They felt that their duties as citizens must be carried out whether the anti-Semites objected or not. As long as they possessed citizen rights they must not let them go by default. They felt that a Jew had no cause to apologise for choosing to be active according to his convictions in the ranks of any of the existing political parties, right or left; for whatever activities a Jew engaged in, the anti-Semitic agitators would be able to distort them for their own purposes.

For years they had sought permission to enter the German army, so that they might prove their readiness to share all the obligations of the rest of the German people. In return for the privilege of being treated as equals, they offered their native land such intense love, devotion, and pride, that it was interpreted by many as Chauvinism; and yet it was no more than the expression of overwhelming relief and gratitude because they were at last being treated as human beings. Seven centuries of inhuman treatment, insult and ignominy were immediately obliterated from their minds. How they loved the German land and the German tongue! It has been said that most

* Dr. Marx Freudenthal, *Die Israelitische Kultusgemeinde in Nurnberg*, 1874–1924, page 165 *et seq.*

Germans speak the dialects of the various parts of the country, whilst the German Jews alone speak correct Imperial German. They were in everything pathetically eager to prove their gratitude, their devotion, their unquestioning readiness to serve the land of their birth to the utmost. How could they have imagined, in those days of enlightened tolerance and progressive thought, that after all these centuries Nuremberg—and Germany as a whole—would revert to the savagery of mediæval times, and that Rindfleisch would suddenly be resurrected in the person of his modern counterpart—Streicher!

CHAPTER XVI

In Streicher Land

Gunther, in his book *Inside Europe*, calls Streicher "the incarnation of brutality." And it is Streicher's aim, by whatever brutality he thinks fit to employ, to make all Germany a Franconia for the Jews. In 1933, when he drove 250 Jews into a field, and made them pull up the grass with their teeth, he gave a characteristic demonstration of his mentality, and the mentality of Nazism. It is difficult to say whether it is hatred or bestiality that plays the stronger part in governing his actions. Teacher and disseminator of pornography, his chief aim as the ruler of Franconia is to expound race-purity to young girls. The extent of his education and his knowledge of affairs may be judged from a speech delivered in the Sport-Palast in Berlin in 1935, when he said: "The great Jew who lived in England, Benjamin Disraeli, became Premier. Later he was elevated to the peerage under the name of Lord Gladstone."

To-day, Streicher is Nuremberg. His will is law, and the symbol of his will is his whip, which is recognised as such by the law of Nuremberg. For on his fiftieth birthday, the Nuremberg dignitaries of the law presented him with a silver-handled riding-whip, which he always carries with him. He was elected an Honorary Member of the German Academy of Law, that law which he administers by going into the dungeons where Jews and Socialists sit bound with chains, and with his whip demonstrating to them the power that he wields. He whips the accused, before the law has decided that they are guilty, and he whips them again after the verdict. As an

Honorary Member of the German Academy of Law, he teaches the judges how to deal with accused persons without wasting time in legal procedure. He whips the accused, he whips the witnesses, he whips the public.

Professor Glaser, a lecturer at the University of Warsaw, relates that happening to be in Nuremberg on holiday, he read that a trial of two Catholic priests was about to open, and obtained a grudging official permission to be present. Hardly had the trial begun than a note was handed to the judges, who at once interrupted the proceedings and retired with all the court. An armed attendant summoned Professor Glaser into an adjoining room where everyone was waiting, and suddenly a communicating door was flung open. Through it rushed, raving and screaming, a stout, brown-uniformed man, who planted himself, whip in hand, before the astonished Polish lecturer.

"Who am I?" he thundered in answer to Professor Glaser's question, "You don't know? I am Streicher, and you are going to remember it!" And then the Honorary Member of the German Academy of Law turned to the pale and trembling judges and for minutes together hurled a stream of insults at them. "This man is a spy!" he howled, "and of course you did not know it, you numskulls!" Streicher raved until he grew short of breath, when he telephoned for a detective, who took Professor Glaser back to his hotel, and told him he was free.

In 1935, when "the revolution was over," Streicher outlined his attitude to his adversaries as follows:

"I sometimes give a taste of my riding-whip to those prisoners I have taken into protective custody to save them from the mob. Take that school-teacher, Dr. Steinruck, who used to talk so big! I went along with several party members to his cell. He began to talk in a tearful voice, and behaved like

a schoolboy. He did not act like the man I had expected to find after so much big talk, so I gave him a good thrashing with my whip."

He is the arbiter not only in matters of law, but also in the arts. He has ensured that dramatic critics should be qualified for their profession by marshalling a number of them on the stage and forcing them to perform acrobatic dances; with whip in hand he has compelled veteran authors to imitate the antics of chorus girls.

In 1934 the *Frankischer Kourier*, a Nuremberg paper not owned by Streicher, published a short obituary notice of an eighty-six-year-old Jewess who had devoted her life to charitable causes in Nuremberg. Even the Nuremberg Council had not been able to ignore entirely her life-long self-sacrifice and devotion to good works, and before Hitler came to power, she had been given the freedom of the city. Streicher's paper, the *Fraenkische Tageszeitung*, described the obituary as "disgusting blubber about an old Jewish hag." This is in keeping with the song he published in No. 42 of the *Stuermer* (October, 1934):

> "The people hope that the day will come
> When shooting the last Jew will be no crime."

There was a time when even the Nazi Government appeared to be ashamed of the outpourings of the *Stuermer*, for its circulation abroad was prohibited, and several times it was also forbidden in Germany, because of the contents of certain issues. There was in particular a revulsion of feeling, not only abroad, but also in Germany itself when the *Stuermer* produced its notorious "Ritual Murder" issue. The *Deutsche Rundschau* wrote in June, 1934, that it could not understand why only two German papers, the *Frankfurter Zeitung* and the *Deutsche Rundschau* itself, had dealt with the ritual murder issue of the *Stuermer*.

" We should have thought," the *Deutsche Rundschau* said, " that the entire German Press would have taken the opportunity in the interests of German prestige abroad, to express the feeling that exists on this subject among millions of German people, including good National Socialists. Quite apart from the inestimable harm that such a publication has done Germany in the eyes of the foreign world, we cannot reconcile it with the duty of the Press in the new Germany that such accusations should be made which cannot stand a close scientific examination."

A year later, the *Stuermer* (No. 35) claimed to have discovered that Jews perpetrate various outrages on themselves in order to bring false accusations against their enemies. According to the *Stuermer*, " in order to discredit anti-Semites in the eyes of the public, the Jews commit outrages and then blame their antagonists. We are familiar with the manner in which they have done this in Germany in the past, and to some extent are doing it even to-day ; they burn down synagogues, uproot tombstones, and paint swastikas there so that there should be no doubt about the authorship of the crime."

Nothing happened in Nuremberg during this demented Streicher-phase of German history which did not happen elsewhere in Germany, but though the wave of anti-Jewish hostility swept beyond the borders of Franconia, the source was in Nuremberg, the breeding-place of the *Stuermer* obscenities, the headquarters and inspiration of the anti-Jewish boycott, of which Streicher was the supreme Generalissimo for the entire country. It was in Franconia that the first sign-posts were erected outside towns and villages, reading " Admission prohibited to Jews," and the first posters exhibiting warning Jews that they " enter here at their peril." (It is in keeping with Nuremberg's tradition that the anti-Jewish legislation that applies throughout Germany is

officially known as the " Nuremberg Laws," and that it is to Nuremberg that the Nazi Party goes each year for its annual rallies and its further inspiration along the road of anti-Semitic agitation and action—to the fountain-head, to the chief apostle of the new religion.

It was there that Streicher first demonstrated how he intended to deal with people who found themselves at his mercy. The *New York Times* of December 24th, 1933, published a confidential report about the treatment of the Jews in Nuremberg. It reads as follows :

> " At six o'clock in the morning on July 20th, Storm Troopers (Sturm Abteilung), visited the homes of between 300 and 400 Jewish families, mostly merchants and professional men, and confiscated bonds, check books, savings bank books and savings found in the houses. Only in a part of the cases were receipts given for the full or part of the confiscated values.
>
> " Afterwards the heads of the families in question were conducted to meeting places in town and from there to various sports places in the suburbs of Nuremberg. Some of the people were arrested in the street or in shops, others during the morning services in the synagogue. Among those arrested were old men up to the age of seventy-eight years."

The persons thus taken into custody by Storm Troopers were forced to perform as follows :

> " One group was drilled. One group had to exercise with bricks. One group had to work with axe and shovel. One group had to clear off weeds from a road on a station, kneeling on both knees and pulling the weeds out with both hands. Weeds which had been left had to be pulled out with the teeth. Behind each person stood an S.A. man and all around the place stood a great number of shouting and gaping people."

A few of the Storm Troopers spared some of the older men, the report adds, but the others were " drilled without mercy," meanwhile being forced to endure insults. When one of the groups was released, an S.A. " Fuehrer " harangued them and wound up by saying that this time they were merely " guests " of the S.A.

The report continues :

" Besides the moral torture and the objurgations those several hundred men had to endure, some of them were beaten and scourged. During the same week several Jews were tortured with steel rods (Stahlruten) and dismissed only after they had signed a paper that nothing had happened to them."

Nuremberg has always endeavoured to live up to her high reputation for orderliness and respect for legality, and a written declaration by a tortured victim that nothing had happened to him is perfectly in keeping with her traditions.

Charles IV explained away the Nuremberg massacre as having been made inevitable by the wrath of God. To-day such outrages are dismissed as Jewish plots to calumniate the anti-Semites.

The Nazi leaders have a lot to say about a " German race " and about Nordic blood, but it does not seem that Nuremberg is a particularly Nordic city. In 1892, Dr. Hagen* declared that while 32.11 per cent. of the population throughout Germany at that time conformed to the Nordic ideal of blond hair, blue eyes and fair skin, not more than 23.36 per cent. of the population of Nuremberg belonged to this desirable type. The fact was that 49 per cent. of the inhabitants of Nuremberg had dark hair. Yet Nuremberg is in the front rank of the fight for " racial purity." There is a school text-book in Germany, *The Jewish Question in Teaching* which has been prepared with the avowed purpose of instilling into the children a passionate hatred of Jews ; it is the work of the Education Officer of Nuremberg, Councillor Fritz Fink, and the foreword is by Streicher himself.

In this book Councillor Fink tells the teachers of Germany that it is not enough to devote certain fixed hours in the school curriculum to the racial problem. The " Jewish Angle " must be introduced, he says, into every subject in the curriculum, so that the realisa-

* In *Festschrift von der Stadtsgemeinde Nurnberg*, page 120.

tion of the importance of race-purity, and of the Jewish menace to Germany in politics, religion, art, literature and morals filters through into the mind of the pupil by means of incessant emphasis on the "Jewish angle" at every possible opportunity, whatever the subject may be.

Thus it is possible, he suggests, to explain to the children, even in the most elementary history lessons, that ancient Egypt was demoralised and despoiled by the Jews, and that the Jews then went to Palestine, "slaughtering the natives" and "transforming into a desert a land which formerly flowed with milk and honey."

Even the tiniest tots can be told, he urges, of the "Jewish conspiracy in Persia," where a "blood-bath" was organised under the leadership of the beautiful Esther, in which thousands of King Ahasuerus's loyal subjects were slain by the Jews.

In teaching the history of Rome, he goes on, the children must be made to recognise that it was the Jews, after their dispersion, who, by penetrating into all the corners of the Roman Empire, finally encompassed its ruin and downfall. In the same way mediæval and modern history must be taught with special emphasis on the "desperate struggles" of the Spanish, Polish, and German peoples against Jewish domination.

"Racial purity," as Streicher and his collaborators understand it, does not seem to be at all the same thing as sexual purity, as ordinary, simple morality. It is not adultery that is a crime in Nuremberg, but only intercourse between Jew and non-Jew, even if they have been married, even if they are both of the Christian faith, even if they had been married for many years before Hitlerism became the religion of Germany. It is a fact that marriage can now be dissolved merely on the ground that one of the partners to the marriage

is of Jewish origin. This is the official pronouncement on the subject :

" The National Socialist Revolution has spread and furthered the understanding of the essence and importance of race to such an extent that Germans who had married members of the Jewish race before the National Socialist Revolution because of ignorance of the importance of race, now attempt to contest the marriage and have it declared null and void, because they would not have contracted the marriage if they had understood the essence and importance of race for the marriage itself and for the German nation."

And Law Courts have actually granted divorces on these grounds, because " miscegenation between members of Aryan and non-Aryan races produces hybrid offspring."

It is a repetition of the conditions that applied in Nuremberg in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In a city which was rank with sexual debauchery, prostitution and sodomy, an occasional backsliding Jew was punished for having relations with a Christian woman. This in Nuremberg, at a time when Hans Sachs protested (in 1540) that the streets were swarming with loose women, that the city had lost all sense of shame, and that flagrant immorality had come to be a matter for boasting.*

In the same way, Nazism to-day is not concerned in its " racial purity " campaign with sexual immorality or perversion. That is all secondary to the important task of preventing any sort of relations between Jews and non-Jews. And that being so, there is perhaps much to be said for Streicher's efforts to keep even the most disease-ridden " Aryan " prostitute free from contamination by Jewish blood. It is in keeping with the spirit and traditions of Nuremberg.

* Janssen, Vol. XVI, page 142.

CHAPTER XVII

Nuremberg Over Germany

The spirit and the laws of Nuremberg are now supreme in Germany. As in the Middle Ages, when the rulers of Nuremberg could find no better way of retaining their hold over the suffering population than by letting them loose in an orgy of bloodshed in the Jewish ghetto, so to-day, all that seems left of the tremendous and epoch-making Nazi programme, which was to have brought the Millennium to Germany, is the doctrine of cleansing German blood of "foreign" matter, in other words, the persecution of the Jews.

This task of "purifying" German blood was entrusted to a group within the leadership of the Nazi party, many of whose members had later to be destroyed because of their depravity and unnatural sexual practices, as Hitler himself proclaimed—in the same way as in the sixteenth century, the syphilis-ridden city of Nuremberg could put on an air of moral righteousness and solemnly decree that a master must not employ an apprentice who could not satisfactorily prove his legitimacy.

So the influence of Nuremberg has spread throughout Germany in all other respects. In religion, for instance, Nuremberg paid lip-service to Lutheranism, while at the same time she cringed before the Pope and the Holy Roman Emperor; she sold arms and munitions to the peasants to aid them in their insurrection, while at the same time she subsidised the State troops who crushed them. In all Germany to-day, as in Nuremberg then, the god who rules is the State. All religion is persecuted, not only Judaism.

The Catholic and the Protestant Churches suffer as much. Christianity, in fact, is contemptuously dismissed by the Ludendorffs and the Rosenbergs as a "Jewish superstition."

But the Nazis make no martyrs of those they persecute. In the same way as the rulers of Nuremberg got rid of their opponents, not by attacking their convictions, but by making it appear that they were common criminals, so, to-day, Catholic priests are not tried for their doctrines, but for crimes like "smuggling currency"—"devisenschiebung."

In old Nuremberg the lowliest menials had to pay income tax; to-day, after the available wages have been spread so that the average is now twenty per cent. lower than before the advent of the Nazi regime, and the cost of living is immeasurably higher, about twenty-seven per cent. of each worker's wage is now deducted before he receives it, partly for various statutory levies, and partly as "voluntary" contributions.

Like old Nuremberg, Nazi Germany is living to-day on her capital. The device of obtaining money by confiscating the foreign investments of her nationals (and for this purpose the Jews were considered "nationals"), cannot be employed a second time. The only way is to impose more taxation; and it is not surprising to read that the 1937 estimates are twenty per cent. higher than last year's—£1,165,000,000.

No one in Nazi Germany is asked whether he prefers guns to butter—no one may offer an opinion. This, too, is the old Nuremberg tradition. When the people of Nuremberg dared to complain to the Emperor nearly two hundred years ago that the taxation had become unbearable, the Nuremberg Council punished the citizens by doubling their taxes.

What happens outside Germany is considered no concern of the German public, except for whatever

bits of information Goebbels thinks it safe to permit to the German readers. This too, is on the lines of old Nuremberg, where the Guilds were not allowed to communicate with members of Guilds outside the city. In the totalitarian Nuremberg state any interchange of information with the outside world was considered harmful, as it is in all Germany to-day.

Judges in Nazi Germany are expected to adjudicate according to the spirit of the Nuremberg laws. The judge must be the "Yes-man" of Nazism, instead of the impartial interpreter of the law. This is exactly the position occupied by the judges of Nuremberg in earlier days, when they were encouraged to pass judgment in keeping with the policy and wishes of their rulers by the device of allowing them to keep one fourth of all the fines they imposed as their own personal remuneration.

On the night of June 30th, 1934, Hitler, as the supreme judge over all Germany, visited the dens of iniquity where his choicest companions in the leadership of Nazi Germany had forgathered. Roehm, his close friend and associate, the Commander-in-Chief of the Nazi Storm-troops, was killed out of hand. He had grown too important to be allowed to live. In the same way, Nicholas Mueffel had died, because he knew more incriminating facts about his Nuremberg colleagues than they could find against him; and in the same way as Hitler himself executed Roehm, so, instead of handing Mueffel over to the public executioner, Imhoff, his colleague and fellow-burgomaster, came himself to the "Hole," to manipulate the instruments of torture.

There is only one aspect of Nazi Germany which is not in consonance with the traditions of Nuremberg. When the Jews were driven out under Emperor Maximilian, they were allowed to take their property with them; and under Charles IV the problem was radically solved by taking away first the possessions

of the Jews, and then their lives—but to-day they are being pushed out into the world like a band of beggars. For the laws deprive the Jews of all right to earn their living in Germany, and prevent them from taking their savings out of the country; and yet, at the same time, an intensive propaganda is being conducted abroad to make it impossible for the refugees to gain admission anywhere else, and to harass them wherever they may try to settle. This, though, is similar to the practice of earlier times, when Nuremberg did not cease to protest for a hundred years against the action of Fuerth in allowing Jews to settle there. To-day the followers of Nazism have plotted in South Africa and South America to have the doors of these countries closed against Jewish refugees.

Under Wenzel, the Nuremberg Council contrived to secure for itself thirty per cent. of the money involved in outstanding debts to the Jews, a procedure not unlike the present method of confiscating part of the capital of those Jews who are compelled to emigrate.

In 1385, when the Jewish community was imprisoned so that 40,000 gulden might be extorted from it, the Council placed it on record that the Jews had given their money " without compulsion "—and when, in 1934, the Jews of Nuremberg were made to pull up weeds with their teeth, they were afterwards made to sign a statement that nothing untoward had happened to them.

When Germany was preparing for the Olympiad in Berlin, and used every available means to obtain " devisen," the Nazi leaders were instructed to remove the placards reading " Jews are not wanted ! " Every time there is an International Fair or other trade exhibition which might attract Jewish buyers, the insulting inscriptions are removed from the hotels and railway stations. It is reminiscent of Charles V's

appeal to his " beloved Jews " to return to Nuremberg, three years after the old community had been plundered and massacred.

Does Germany want the Jews to go or to remain ? Where is the logic of warning other countries against accepting them if she wants to drive them from her own borders ?

The rulers of Nuremberg have often found themselves in a quandary because of the lack of a Jewish scapegoat ; is that the reason why Nazi Germany still wants to retain some Jews, so that they can be used, when necessary, as a safety-valve ? Or has the intention behind the apparently contradictory laws been revealed in what a Nazi official said to Mr. Pembroke Stephens, the *Daily Express* correspondent, on May 25th, 1937—" The best thing they can do is to die ! "

The Jews are a people with a great deal of patience and a long memory. They remember Nuremberg when she was proud and arrogant and when she was dust at the feet of Talleyrand.

They will wait patiently for the day when the German people will recognise at last their real enemy.

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Nuremberg the unholy city

DATE DUE

JUN 24 1982			