

"THE JEW IN MODERN HISTORY."

BY BENJ. I. COHEN.

The following lecture was delivered before the Young Men's Hebrew Association at Portland, Or., November 14, by Benj. I. Cohen: Spain, the Sunny home of the olive and the vine, was the chosen abode of Israel's wanderers, long ere the gates of Gouta opened to admit the Moorish conquerors. And above all, in Southern Spain had they become the favorites of fortune, where being the principal cultivators of the soil, they had aroused the jealousy and excited the cupidity of the Goths, who attempted by a series of barbarous decrees, to drive them from the land which their industry and intelligence had made to blossom as the rose. The Jewish population of Spain, of Arab descent, turned in this dark hour, an appealing glance to their brethren of the Crescent, whose banners could be seen to wave and the sound of whose Tebir war cry could still be heard across the narrow straits which separates Spain from Africa. "The overthrow of the Gothic Kings was as much achieved by the superior information which the Saracens received from their suffering kinsmen as by the resolute valor of the desert." And then shone the dawn of a glorious day for Israel's race. Hand in hand, and heart to heart, with their Moorish friends, they mounted the ladder of fame. Both alike reared fair palaces and filled the highest offices of state. The leading physicians were Jews, and grave professors cast abroad the dazzling light of secular science, mingled with the lucid rays of Talmudical lore. An extensive and enlightened commerce

SUPPORTED THIS SPLENDOR. While noble universities flourished for the benefit of the favored youth. Long after the fall of the Moorish Kingdoms the Jews still flourished in Spain, until the increasing strength of the Goths brought with it increase of persecution. Gradually the Jews were deprived of their privileges, or forced to an outward compliance with the Catholic faith under the title of *Nuevos Christianos*. At length the rise of Ferdinand and Isabella, and the introduction of the fatal Inquisition, sealed their fate. This moral Uparis tree first unfolded its leaves at Seville, and the Duke of Medina Sidonia, the Marquis of Cadiz, and the Count of Aragon, were its first victims. The introduction of the Inquisition into Aragon was resisted with all the energy of despair; but alas! it triumphed over good and its fell talons were again reddened with the blood of the children of the Sun. Ferdinand, in a spirit of madness, the evil effects of which are felt to this day, determined that its delicious shade should no longer be breathed by any who did not profess Catholicism. Baptism or exile were the alternatives. More than 600,000 of the most industrious, the most intelligent, and most enlightened of Spanish subjects, clinging to the faith of their fathers, resigned the delightful land where in their beautiful cities they had raised, the universities from which Christendom drew for ages its most precious lore, the tombs of their ancestors and the temples where they had worshiped the God for whom they made this sacrifice. They had but four months to prepare for their eternal exile, after a residence of as many centuries, during which brief periods of freedom and gluttony had virtually confiscated their property. It is a calamity which the scattered people still revere with the desolation of Nebuchadnezzar and of Titus. Who, after this, should say that the Jews are by nature

A SOLEID PEOPLE. But the Spanish Goth, then so cruel and so langhy, where is he? A despised suppliant to the very race which he banished for some miserable portion of the treasure which their habit of industry had again accumulated. Where is that tribunal which summoned Medina Sidonia and Cadiz to its dark inquisition? Where in Spain? Its fall is unparalleled and irremediable fall is mainly to be attributed to the expulsion of that large portion of its subjects, the most industrious and intelligent who traced their origin to the Mosaic and Mohammedan Arals. Many, if not the greater portion of these hapless exiles, sought and found a safe asylum in free Zion England, where, as in all other parts of Europe, their progress, though silent and slow, was onward ever and upward. Legions of the gift of time until we arrive at the early part of the 19th century, we find their then condition thus portrayed in the glowing Orientalism of Disraeli: "You never observe a great intellectual movement in Europe in which the Jews do not largely participate. The first Jews were Jews, that mysterious, Russian and dignified which so alarms Western Europe is organized and principally carried on by Jews; that mighty revolution which is at this moment preparing in Germany, is entirely developing under the auspices of Jews, who almost monopolize the professorial chairs of Germany. Nessler the

FOUNDER OF SPIRITUAL CHRISTIANITY, and who is Begius Professor of Divinity in the University of Berlin, is a Jew. Benary, equally famous in the University, is a Jew. Wehl the Arabic Professor of Heidelberg, is a Jew, the first Arabic scholar of the day and author of the life of Mahomet. A few years ago we were applied to by Russia for a loan. I resolved to go myself to St. Petersburg. I had an interview with my arrival with the Russian Minister, Finance, Count Cancrin. I beheld the son of a Lithuanian Jew. The loan was connected with the affairs of Spain. I repaired thither in the person of the Spanish Minister, Senor Mendizabal; I beheld one like myself, the son of a *Nuevo Christiano*, a Jew of Aragon. From Madrid I went to Paris to consult the President of the French Council; I beheld the son of a French Jew, a hero, an Imperial Marshal, and very properly so, for who should be military heroes, if not those who worship the Lord of Hosts. And is South a Hebrew? Yes, and others of the French Marshals, and the most famous; Massena for example; his real name was Manasseh; but to my anecdote. The consequence of our consultations was, that some northern power should be applied to in a friendly and mediative capacity. We fixed on Prussia; and the President of the Council made an application to the Prussian Minister, who attended a few days after our conference. Count Arnim

science of harmonious sound which the ancients recognized as most divine, and defined in the person of their most beautiful creation. Almost every great composer and skilled musician, almost every voice that awakes you with its transporting strains, springs from our tribes. The catalogue is too vast to enumerate; too illustrious to dwell for a moment on secondary names, however eminent. Enough for us that the three great creative minds, to whose exquisite compositions all nations at this moment yield—are of Hebrew race; and little do your men of fashion, your muscadins of Paris, and your dandies of London, as they thrill into raptures at the notes of a Pasta or a Grisi; little do they suspect that they are offering their homage to the "sweet singers of Israel." From the earliest times of which American history takes cognizance, the free exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship have been considered the absolute rights of individuals, recognized by our constitutions and secured to them by law. It is ordained by the constitution of the United States that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, and the same principle appears in all of our State constitutions. But although the United States required no

RELIGIOUS TEST. Eligibility to place and power in the various State governments was confined to Trinitarian Christians. In the State of Maryland the struggle to remove the political disabilities of the Jews waxed warm in 1826. In January, 1824, Col. Worthington delivered his famous speech in the Maryland Legislature, in the course of which he stated that he had propounded certain inquiries to Solomon Etting, Esq., a leading Israelite of Baltimore, as follows: To what denomination were you or are you held by Hebrews? Solomon Etting, a Jew, in the American revolution, a distinguished officer who risked after the revolution of the wounds received or their effects. Reuben Etting, Marshal of Maryland, appointed by President Jefferson. He was also Captain of a volunteer corps, raised very early in Baltimore, long under his command, which became so numerous as to require being drilled into the 11th and 12th regiments of the Maryland militia. Solomon Etting, Captain Fifth regiment Maryland militia, appointed by Governor Paca. Benj. I. Cohen, Lieutenant in Columbian Volunteers, attached to the Fifth regiment Maryland militia. The strongest case against the Jews is one of present existing and may be thus stated: Early in the spring of 1823 a number of spirited young men formed a

VOLUNTEER RIFLE COMPANY known as the "Marion Corps." Without any previous knowledge on his part even the existence of this company, they unanimously elected Benj. I. Cohen, Esq., their Captain. A commission was received from Governor Stevens, but not qualified to, of course, in consequence of the existing law of the State. It was made acquainted with this fact, and a resignation of the command on the part of Capt. Cohen followed. At a meeting of the corps, called for that purpose, it was unanimously determined that no Captain should be elected until the fate of this bill to repeal the test law should be decided. The corps is at present commanded by the First Lieutenant Another eminent Hebrew is Major Mordecai M. Noah, Major in Pennsylvania, Consul to Tunis for the American Government, and on his return to this country, appointed by the Legislature of New York to the important station of Sheriff of the County of Madison. A. A. Mason, Major in the U. S. Army during the late war, and retained in the service at the reduction of the army.

HE IS NOW PAYMASTER For the Southern Department; W. P. Levy, Lieutenant in U. S. Navy, last Commander of schooner Revenge, and afterwards a Commodore. The Constitution of Maryland of 1851 provides "that no other test or qualification ought to be required on admission to any office than such as may be prescribed by this Constitution." If the party shall profess to be a Jew, the declaration shall be of his belief in a future state of rewards and punishments. The Maryland Constitution of 1867 provides "that no religious test ought ever to be required as a qualification for any office in this State." Other than a declaration of belief in the existence of God. The Constitution of Oregon declares that "No religious test shall be required as a qualification for any office of trust or profit." To-day we find the chosen people occupying high positions in the length and breadth of the land and the breadth thereof. Joseph of Louisiana is in the United States Senate, while Einstein of New York is in the House of Representatives. Some of the brightest lights of the Bench and Bar of the country are Hebrews. The army and navy contain a fair proportion of them, who in times of trial have proved not unworthy of their positions. In Europe their standing is, if possible, even higher. In Germany Edward Tasker is the

LEADER OF THE LIBERALS In the Prussian Landtag and Solicitor for the "Deutsche Baden Credit Bank," or "Credit Foncier." He has been a member of the various parliamentary bodies since 1850, and is far honest than Disraeli in that he has clung to his original Hebrew faith in spite of all the advantages that apostasy offered to an ambitious man; and his political integrity is beyond the reach of slander. In 1868 an active and enterprising young lawyer made his debut at the Palais de Justice in Paris, first attracting public attention by a remarkable defense of several persons prosecuted for conspiracy. In the following year he was sent to the Corps Legislatif from Bellville and Marseille, and on September 4th, 1870, when the furious populace invaded the Legislative chamber, Leon Gambetta was proclaimed a prominent member of the Government of National Defense. Of his eloquence it has been said: "There is a wild passion in the man which is

ABSOLUTELY INDESTRUCTIBLE. His character is like the ocean, gentle and quiet in a calm; but imposing and awful in a storm. The orator is never cold and stately, his hollow and resounding voice is more than that of some famous warbling prophet of doom, and his fiery sentences follow one another with such rapidity that there is little chance for interruption. Another French leader, Jules Simon, is both honest and great, a fine orator, a shrewd and cautious politician, a patriot of noblest type, a philosopher of no mean order, and a careful student of social science; he is one of the foremost figures of his time. He struggled up from the ranks of the masses, his origin was humble and his youth was a perpetual battle for bread. Another Frenchman of note, whose recent death was mourned as a national calamity, was Isaac Adolph Cremieux, Minister of Jus-

lice in 1848, and a zealous defender and champion of the rights of his oppressed brethren. In 1840 he accompanied Sir Moses Montefiore to the East for the purpose of taking active measures in behalf of the persecuted Jews of Damascus. The greatest equity lawyer of England, who has filled the exalted position of MASTER OF THE ROLLS, During the present generation, is Sir George Jessel, a strict member of the Jewish persuasion, who has been successively Senator of the University of London, Member of Parliament, Solicitor General, and Master of the Rolls; while the acknowledged leader of the English bar is Judah P. Benjamin, a Jew born in New Orleans, and who, while awaiting his admission to the bar of England, wrote and published the best book upon the law of sales, in existence. But in England Disraeli stands pre-eminent in the 19th century; his ancestors bearing a different name, were driven from Spain, and took refuge in the Venetian Republic, where, grateful to the God of Jacob who had sustained them through unprecedented trials, and granted them through unheard of perils, they assumed the name of Disraeli, a name never born before or since by any other family in order that their race might be forever recognized. From this stock sprang the great Premier, whose own life is a more wonderful tale than that of Alroy, a more splendid romance than that of England, the philanthropist, Sir Moses Montefiore, who, grateful to the God of Jacob who had sustained them through unprecedented trials, and granted them through unheard of perils, they assumed the name of Disraeli, a name never born before or since by any other family in order that their race might be forever recognized. 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