

# The Vexing 'Jewish Question': A Nineteenth-Century Scholar's View

By Goldwin Smith

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Although today it is considered tactless if not hateful to speak openly of a "Jewish question," the often thorny matter of relations between Jews and non-Jews in society is a real issue that has bedeviled countless governments and scholars for centuries. In the following essay, a prominent British scholar tackles this issue with a forthrightness, perceptiveness and courage that is all too rare among academics in our own day.

The author is Goldwin Smith (1823-1910), a prominent 19th-century educator, historian and author. He was educated at Oxford University, where he became regius professor of modern history in 1858. Moving to the United States in 1868, he joined the faculty of Cornell University as a professor of English literature and Constitutional History. He moved to Toronto in 1871, where he continued to write prolifically until his death.

A "classic liberal," Smith was ardently pro-democratic, anti-imperialist and anti-militaristic. An enemy of slavery and an admirer of Abraham Lincoln, he championed the cause of the North during the American Civil War. His booklet, *Does the Bible Sanction American Slavery?* (1863) had considerable impact on public opinion in Britain. As a life-long supporter of "Anglo-Saxon" unity, he worked for close ties between Britain, the United States and Canada.

According to the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1957 edition), Smith's "principal historical writings -- *The United Kingdom: a Political History* (1899), and *The United States: an Outline of Political History* (1893) -- make no claim to original research, but are remarkable examples of terse and brilliant narrative." *The Columbia Encyclopedia* (second edition) says that he "earned a position of great respect in the United States, Canada and Great Britain for his educational and social work." Among the available profiles of his life is a biography by Elisabeth Wallace, *Goldwin Smith: Victorian Liberal* (Univ. of Toronto Press, 1957).

The following essay, originally entitled "The Jewish Question," is reprinted here from the second, revised edition of his book, *Essays on Questions of the Day*, published in 1894 by Macmillan (New York and London), and reprinted in 1972 by Books for Libraries Press (Freeport, New York).

In this bold sketch, Smith shows that the "Jewish Question" has persisted since ancient times -- over many centuries and in diverse cultures. His observations and presentation of facts point up parallel problems in own era.

He establishes that horrific and much-publicized accounts of anti-Jewish pogroms in the Russian empire during the 1880s were grossly exaggerated, and debunks the widely accepted charge that these anti-Jewish outbursts were rooted in religious bigotry and intolerance.

The recurring friction between Jews and non-Jews through the ages, Smith persuasively argues, is due primarily not to the defects or iniquities of non-Jews, but rather is a lamentable but nevertheless quite understandable reaction to Jewish behavior. The most

galling features of this behavior, he contends, are rooted in the distinctively tribalistic character of the Jewish religion as laid out in the Talmud and the Old Testament.

As a solution to this seemingly interminable problem, Smith proposes that Jews should "de-nationalize" themselves by renouncing Jewish tribalism and particularism. In other words, he urges comprehensive Jewish assimilation into society -- a "solution" to the "Jewish question" that is also implicit in traditional American liberalism.

In the following reprint, information originally provided by Smith in footnotes has been incorporated into the text in parentheses. Subheads have been added between paragraphs, and some explanatory words have been added to the text in brackets. A few portions have been deleted, as shown by ellipses.

-- Mark Weber

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Jewish ascendancy and the anti-Semitic movement provoked by it form an important feature of the European situation, and are beginning to excite attention in America. Mr. Arnold White, Baron Hirsch's commissioner, says, in a plea for the Russian Jews ("The Truth about the Russian Jew," *Contemporary Review*, May 1892), that "almost without exception the press throughout Europe is in Jewish hands, and is largely produced by Jewish brains;" that "international finance is captive to Jewish energy and skill;" that in England the fall of the Barings has left the house of Rothschild alone in its supremacy; and that in every line the Jews are fast becoming our masters. Wind and tide, in a money-loving age, are in favor of the financial race.

At the same time the anti-Semitic movement gains ground. From Russia, Germany, Austria, and the Danubian Principalities, it spreads to the Ionian Islands; it has broken out in France; symptoms of it have appeared even in the United States. Yet there is a persistent misapprehension of the real nature of the agitation. It is assumed that the quarrel is religious. The anti-Semites are supposed to be a party of fanatics renewing the persecutions to which the Jews were exposed on account of their faith in the dark ages, and every one who, handling the question critically, fails to show undivided sympathy with the Israelites is set down as a religious persecutor. The Jews naturally foster this impression, and, as Mr. Arnold White tells us, the press of Europe is in their hands.

## **Pogroms in Russia**

In 1880, anti-Semitic disturbances broke out in Russia. A narrative of them entitled "The Persecution of the Jews in Russia," was put forth (in 1881) by the Jewish community in England as an appeal to the British heart. In that narrative the Russian Christians were charged with having committed the most fiendish atrocities on the most enormous scale. A tract of country equal in area to the British Islands and France combined had, it was averred, been the scene of horrors theretofore perpetrated only in times of war. Men had been ruthlessly murdered, tender infants had been dashed on the stones or roasted alive in their own homes, married women had been made the prey of a brutal lust which had in many cases caused their death, and young girls had been violated in sight of their relatives by soldiers who should have been guardians of their honor. Whole streets inhabited by Jews had been razed, and the Jewish quarters of towns had been systematically fired.

In one place, Elizabethgrad [or Elizavetgrad, now Kirovohrad, Ukraine], 30 Jewesses at once had been outraged, two young girls in dread of violation had thrown themselves from the windows, and an old man, who was attempting to save his daughter from a fate worse than death, had been flung from the roof, while 20 soldiers proceeded to work their will on the maiden. This was a specimen of atrocities which had been committed over the whole area. The most atrocious charge of all was that against the Christian women of Russia, who were accused of assisting their friends to violate the

Jewesses by holding the victims down, their motive being, as the manifesto suggests, jealousy of the superiority of the Jewesses in dress. The government was charged with criminal sympathy, the local authorities generally with criminal inaction, and some of the troops with active participation.

The British heart responded to the appeal. Great public meetings were held, at one of which the Archbishop of Canterbury, with a Roman Cardinal, as the representative of religious liberty in general, and especially of opposition to Jew-burning, at his side, denounced the persecuting bigotry of the Russian Christians. Indignant addresses were largely signed. Russia was accused of re-enacting the worst crimes of the Middle Ages. It was taken for granted on all sides that religious fanaticism was the cause of the riots.

## **Exaggerated Accounts**

Russia, as usual, was silent. But the British government directed its consuls at the different points to report upon the facts. The reports composed two Blue Books, in which, as very few probably took the pains to look into them, the unpopular truth lies buried (*Correspondence Respecting the Treatment of Jews in Russia, Nos. 1 and 2, 1882, 1883*).

Those who did read them learned, in the first place, that though the riots were deplorable and criminal, the Jewish account was in most cases exaggerated, and in some to an extravagant extent. The damage to Jewish property at Odessa, rated in the Jewish account at 1,137,381 rubles, or, according to their higher estimates, 3,000,000 rubles, was rated, Consul-General Stanley tells us, by a respectable Jew on the spot at 50,000 rubles, while the Consul-General himself rates it at 20,000. At Elizabethgrad, instead of whole streets being razed to the ground, only one hut had been unroofed. It appeared that few Jews, if any, had been intentionally killed, though some died of injuries received in the riots. There were conflicts between the Jews who defended their houses and the rioters.

The outrages on women, by which public indignation in England had been most fiercely aroused, and of which, according to the Jewish accounts, there had been a frightful number, no less than 30 in one place and 25 in another, appeared, after careful inquiries by the consuls, to have been very rare. This is the more remarkable because the riots commonly began with the sacking of the gin shops, which were kept by the Jews, so that the passions of the mob must have been inflamed by drink. The horrible charge brought in the Jewish manifesto against the Russian women, of having incited men to outrage Jewesses and held the Jewesses down, is found to be utterly baseless. The charge of roasting children alive also falls to the ground. So does the charge of violating a Jew's wife and then setting fire to his house. The Jewish manifesto states that a Jewish innkeeper was cooped in one of his own barrels and cast into the Dnieper. This turns out to be a fable, the village which was the alleged scene of it being ten miles from the Dnieper and near no other river of consequence.

The Russian peasant, Christian though he may be, is entitled to justice. As a rule, while ignorant and often intemperate, he is good-natured. There was much brutality in his riot, but fiendish atrocity there was not, and if he struck savagely, perhaps he had suffered long. For the belief that the mob was "doing the will of the Tsar," in other words, that the government was at the bottom of the rising, there does not appear to have been a shadow of foundation. The action of the authorities was not in all cases equally prompt. In some cases it was culpably slack. At Warsaw the commandant held back, though as Lord Granville, the British ambassador, bears witness, his motive for hesitation was humanity. But many of the rioters were shot down or bayoneted by the troops, hundreds were flogged, some were imprisoned, and some were sent to Siberia. That any of the military took part in the riots seems to be a fiction. It was not likely that the Russian government, menaced as it is by revolutionary conspiracy, would encourage insurrection.

People of the upper class, who fancied that in the agitation they saw the work of Socialists, though they might dislike the Jews, would hardly sympathize with the rioters. Efforts were made by the

government to restore Jewish property, and handsome sums were subscribed for the relief of the sufferers. Yet those who, while they heartily condemned outrage, were willing to accept proof that the Christian men and women of Russia had not behaved like demons, were saluted as modern counterparts of Haman by an eminent Rabbi, who, if the objects of his strictures had cared to retort, might have been asked whether the crucifixion of Haman's ten sons and the slaughter of 75,000 of the enemies of Israel in one day, which, after the lapse of so many centuries, the feast of Purim still joyously commemorates, were not horrors as great as any which have been shown to have actually occurred at Odessa or Elizabethgrad.

## Cause of the Troubles

The most important part of the evidence given in the consuls' reports, however, is that which relates to the cause of the troubles. At Warsaw, where the people are Roman Catholics, there appears to have been a certain amount of passive sympathy with the insurgents on religious grounds. But everywhere else the concurrent testimony of the consuls is that the source of the agitation was economical and social, not religious. Bitterness produced by the exactions of the Jew, envy of his wealth, irritation at the display of it in such things as the fine dresses of his women, jealousy of his ascendancy, combined in the lowest of the mob with the love of plunder, were the motives of the people for attacking him, not hatred of his faith. Vice-Consul Wagstaff, who seems to have paid particular attention to the question and made the most careful inquiry, after paying a tribute to the sober, laborious, thrifty character and the superior intelligence of the Jew, and ascribing to these his increasing monopoly of commerce, proceeds (in *Correspondence Respecting the Treatment of Jews in Russia*, No. 1, 1882, pp. 11, 12):

It is chiefly as brokers or middlemen that the Jews are so prominent. Seldom a business transaction of any kind takes place without their intervention, and from both sides they receive compensation. To enumerate some of their other occupations, constantly denounced by the public: they are the principal dealers in spirits; keepers of "vodka" (drinking) shops and houses of ill-fame; receivers of stolen goods; illegal pawnbrokers and usurers. A branch they also succeed in is as government contractors. With their knowledge of handling money, they collude with unscrupulous officials in defrauding the State to vast amounts annually. In fact, the malpractices of some of the Jewish community have a bad influence on those whom they come in contact with.

It must, however, be said that there are many well educated, highly respectable, and honorable Jews in Russia, but they form a small minority. This class is not treated upon in this paper. They thoroughly condemn the occupations of their lower brethren, and one of the results of the late disturbances is noticed in the movement at present amongst the Jews. They themselves acknowledge the abuses practised by some of their own members, and suggest remedial measures to allay the irritation existing among the working classes.

Another thing the Jews are accused of is that there exists among them a system of boycotting; they use their religion for business purposes. This is expressed by the words "koul," or "kagal," and "kherim." For instance, in Bessarabia, the produce of a vineyard is drawn for by lot, and falls, say to Jabob Levy; the other Jews of the district cannot compete with Levy, who buys the wine at his own price. In the leasing by auction of government and provincial lands, it is invariably a Jew who outbids the others and afterwards re-lets plots to the peasantry at exorbitant prices. Very crying abuses of farming out land have lately come to light and greatly shocked public opinion. Again, where estates are farmed by Jews, it is distressing to see the pitiable condition in which they are handed over on the expiration of the lease. Experience also shows they are very bad colonists.

Their fame as usurers is well known. Given a Jewish recruit with a few rubles' capital, it can be worked out, mathematically, what time it will take him to become the money-lender of his company or regiment, from the drummer to the colonel. Take the case of a peasant: if he once gets into the hands of this class, he is irretrievably lost. The proprietor, in his turn, from a small loan gradually mortgages and eventually loses his estate. A great deal of landed property in south Russia has of late years passed into the hands of the Israelites, but principally into the hands of intelligent and sober peasants.

From first to last, the Jew has his hand in everything. He advances the seed for sowing, which is generally returned in kind -- quarters for bushels. As harvest time comes round, money is required to gather in the crops. This is sometimes advanced on hard conditions; but the peasant has no choice; there is no one to lend him money, and it is better to secure something than to lose all. Very often the Jew buys the whole crop as it stands in the field on his own terms. It is thus seen that they themselves do not raise agricultural products, but they reap the benefits of others' labor, and steadily become rich, while proprietors are gradually getting ruined. In their relation to Russia they are compared to parasites that have settled on a plant not vigorous enough to throw them off, and which is being sapped of its vitality.

The peasants, the vice-consul tells us, often say, when they look at the property of a Jew, "That is my blood." In confirmation of his view he cites the list of demands formulated by the peasants and laid before a mixed committee of inquiry into the causes of the disorder. These demands are all economical or social, with the exception of the complaint that Russian girls in Jewish service forget their religion and with it lose their morals. Everything, in short, seems to bear out the statement of the Russian Minister of the Interior, in a manifesto given in the Blue Book, that "the movement had its main cause in circumstances purely economical;" provided that to "economical" we add "social," and include all that is meant by the phrase "hatred of Jewish usurpation," used in another document.

Vice-Consul Harford, at Sebastopol, is in contact with the Jews of the Crimea, who, he says, are of a superior order, while some of them are not Talmudic Jews, but belong to the mild and Scriptural sect of the Karaites (*Correspondence Respecting the Treatment of Jews in Russia*, No. 2, 1883, p. 17) He says that in his quarter all goes well:

The spirit of antagonism that animates the Russian against the Jew is, in my opinion, in no way to be traced to the difference of creed. In this part of Russia, where we have more denominations of religion than in any other part, I have never, during a residence of 14 years, observed the slightest indication or sectarianism in any class. The peasant, though ignorant and superstitious, is so entirely free from bigotry that even the openly displayed contempt of the fanatical Mohammedan [Muslim] Crim Tartar for the rites and ceremonies of the Russian Church fails to excite in him the slightest feeling of personal animosity; his own feeling with regard to other religions is perfect indifference; he enters a mosque or synagogue just as he would enter a theatre, and regards the ceremony in much the same manner that an English peasant would, neither knowing nor caring to know whether they worshipped God or the moon.

As it is evident from this that race and creed are to the minds of the peasantry of no more consequence than they would be to a Zulu, the only conclusion is that the antipathy is against the usurer, and as civilization can only be expected to influence the rising generation of Russian peasantry, the remedy rests with the Jew, who, if he will not refrain from speculating (in lawless parts of the Empire) on ignorance and drunkenness, must be prepared to defend himself and his property from the certain and natural result of such a policy.

## **An Official Russian View**

All this confirms the statement of M. Pierre Botkine, Secretary of the Russian Legation in Washington, who, writing in the *Century Magazine* (Feb. 1893), says:

Replying to the accusation against Russia in the matter of an alleged religious intolerance, I must first point out a great error I have repeatedly encountered here. The promulgation of the laws and regulations against [that is, enforcing] the laws is being generally ascribed in America to persecution on the part of the Orthodox Church. But the Hebrew question in Russia is neither religious nor political; it is purely an economical and administrative question. The actual meaning of the anti-Semitic measures prescribed by our government is not animosity to the religion of the Jews; neither are those measures a deliberate hunting down of the feeble by the powerful; they are an effort to relieve the Empire of the injurious struggle against those particular traits of Hebrew character that were obstructing the progress of our people along their own line of natural development. It may be said in general, that the anti-Semitic movement in Russia is a demonstration by the non-Hebrew part of the population against tendencies of Hebrews which have characterized them the world over, and to which they adhere in Russia.

The Hebrew, as we know him in Russia, is "the eternal Jew." Without a country of his own, and, as a rule, without any desire to become identified with the country he for the time inherits, he remains, as for hundreds of years he has been, morally unchangeable and without a faculty for adapting himself to sympathy with the people of the race which surrounds him. He is not homogeneous with us in Russia; he does not feel or desire solidarity with us. In Russia he remains a guest only -- a guest from long ago, and not an integral part of the community. When these guests without affinity became too many in Russia, when in serious localities their numbers were found injurious to the welfare and the prosperity of our own people as a whole, when they had grown into many wide-spreading ramifications of influence and power, and abused their opportunities as traders with or lenders of money to the poor -- when, in a word, they became dangerous and prejudicial to our people -- is there anything revolting or surprising in the fact that our government found it necessary to restrict their activity? We did not expel the Jews from the Empire, as is often mistakenly charged, though we did restrict their rights as to localities of domicile and as to kinds of occupations ... Is it just that those who have never had to confront such a situation should blame us for those measures?

Whatever may be said against the restrictions as to residence and occupation laid on the Jews in Russia, from the point of view of policy or humanity, it seems certain that their aim is economical and social, not religious. They fall under the same head with measures taken by the people of the United States to guard their nationality and their character against the invasion of the Chinese. There is apparently no expulsion of Jews from the provinces of Russia which were originally their chief settlements, and which they have hitherto been permitted by law to inhabit. They are only forbidden to spread and extend their financial operations over the rest of the Empire.

## **The Role of the Russian Orthodox Church**

Persecution is not the tendency of the Russian or of the Church to which he belongs. The Eastern Church, while it has been superstitious and somewhat torpid, has been tolerant, and, compared with other orthodox churches, free from the stain of persecution. It has not been actively proselytizing, nor sent forth crusaders, unless the name of crusades can be given to the wars with the Turks, the main motive for which, though the pretext may have been religious, probably has been territorial

ambition, and which were certainly not crusades when waged by Catherine, the patroness of Diderot and the correspondent of Voltaire. This is the more remarkable because the Russians had a struggle for their land with the Tartars like that which Spain had with the Moors.

Arthur P. Stanley, D.D., in his *Lectures on the History of the Eastern Church* (3rd ed., p. 35) dilates upon this characteristic of the Eastern Christians. He says that "a respectful reverence for every manifestation of religious feeling has withheld them from violent attacks on the rights of conscience and led them to extend a kindly patronage to forms of faith most removed from their own;" and he notices that the great philosophers of antiquity are honored by portraits in their churches as heralds of the gospel.

Sir D. Mackenzie Wallace, M.A., who is the best authority, while he admits the inferiority of the Russian priests in education, testifies (in *Russia*, pp. 58, 59) to their innocence of persecution, saying that "if they have less learning, culture, and refinement than the Roman Catholic priesthood, they have at the same time infinitely less fanaticism, less spiritual pride, and less intolerance toward the adherents of other faiths." The educated classes he represents as generally indifferent to theological questions. The peasantry are superstitious and blindly attached to their own faith, which they identify with their nationality; but they think it natural and right that a man of a different nationality should have a different religion. In Nizhnii-Novgorod, the city of the great fair, the Mahometan [Muslim] Mosque or the Armenian church and the Orthodox cathedral stand side by side. (See Hare's *Studies in Russia*, p. 360.) At one end of a village is the church, at the other the mosque, and the Mahometan spreads his prayer carpet on the deck of a steamer full of Orthodox Russians.

The ecclesiastical constitution of Russia is incompatible with religious equality, and therefore with full religious liberty. The Tsar is practically, though not theoretically, head of the Church as well as of the State; the commander of Holy Russia as a Caliph is the Commander of the Faithful. In the interest rather of national unity than of religious orthodoxy he restrains dissent. But it is against innovation and schism within the pale of the State Church rather than against misbelief that his power has been exerted. Some Tsars, such as Peter the Great and the Tsarina Catherine II, have been Liberals, and have patronized merit without regard to creed. Nicholas was full of orthodox sentiment and in all things a martinet, yet Sir Mackenzie Wallace has a pleasant anecdote of his commending the Jewish sentinel at his door who conscientiously refused to respond to the Tsar's customary salutation on Easter Day. No Tsar, however bigoted, has been guilty of such persecution as Philip II. of Spain, Ferdinand of Austria, or Louis XIV [of France]. Russia has had no Inquisition.

That the Jews have had liberty of worship and education, the existence of 6,319 synagogues and of 77 Jewish schools supported by the [Russian] State, besides 1,165 private and communal schools, seems clearly to prove. (See *Statesman's Year-Book*, 1891, pp. 854-856.) It does not seem to be alleged that any attempt has been made by the government at forcible conversion. Whatever may have been the harshness or even cruelty of the measures which it has taken to confine the Jews to their original districts and prevent their spreading over its dominions, its object appears to have been to protect the people against economical oppression and preserve the national character from being sapped by an alien influence, not to suppress the Jewish religion. The law excluding the Jews from Great Russia in fact belongs to the same category as the law of the United States excluding the Chinese.

## **Jews in the Roman Empire**

That Christian fanaticism at all events was not the sole source of the unpopularity of the Jews might have been inferred from the fact that the relation was no better between the Jew and the heathen races during the period of declining polytheism, when religious indifference prevailed and beneath the vast dome of the Roman Empire the religions of many nations slept and moldered side by side. Gibbon, well qualified to speak, for he was himself a citizen of the Roman Empire in sentiment, after narrating the massacres committed by the Jews on the Gentiles in Africa and Cyprus, has

expressed in flamboyant phrase the hatred of the Roman world for the Jews, whom he designates as the "implacable enemies, not only of the Roman government but of human kind." (Edward Gibbon, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, Chap. xiv.)

Tacitus speaks of the Jews as enemies of all races but their own (*adversus omnes alios hostile odium*, in *Histories*, V, v), and Juvenal, in a well-known passage, speaks of them as people who would not show a wayfarer his road or guide the thirsty to a spring if he were not of their own faith. Those who maintain that there is nothing in the character, habits, or disposition of the Jew to provoke antipathy have to bring the charge of fanatical prejudice not only against the Russians or against Christendom, but against mankind.

## Central Europe

In Germany, in Austria, in Roumania, in all the countries of Europe where this deplorable contest of races is going on, the cause of quarrel appears to be fundamentally the same. It appears to be economical and social, not religious, or religious only in a secondary degree. Mr. S. Baring-Gould, M.A. (in *Germany, Present and Past*, Vol. I, pp. 114, 127), tells us that in Germany "there is scarce a village without some Jews in it, who do not cultivate land themselves, but lie in wait like spiders for the failing Bauer." A German who knew the peasantry well said to Mr. Gould that "he doubted whether there were a happier set of people under the sun;" but he added, after a pause, "so long as they are out of the clutch of the Jew."

Of the German, as well as of the Russian, it may be said that he is not a religious persecutor. If persecution of a sanguinary or atrocious kind has sullied his annals, the arm of it was the house of Austria, with its Spanish connection, and the head was the world-roving Jesuit. In the case of Hungary, Mr. John Paget, who is a Liberal and advocates a Liberal policy towards the Jews, says (in *Hungary and Transylvania*, Vol. I, p. 136): "The Jew is no less active in profiting by the vices and necessities of the peasant than by those of the noble. As sure as he gains a settlement in a village the peasantry become poor." "In Austrian Poland," says a Times reviewer, "the worst of the peasant's sluggish content is that it has given him over to the exactions of the Jews." "The Jews," he adds, "are in fact the lords of the country." They are lords not less alien to the people than the Norman was to the Saxon, and perhaps not always more merciful, though in their hands is the writ of ejection instead of the conqueror's sword.

If we cross the Mediterranean the same thing meets us. In Joseph Thomson's *Travels in the Atlas and Southern Morocco* (pp. 418, 419) we read:

As money-lenders the Jews are as maggots and parasites, aggravating and feeding on the diseases of the land. I do not know, for my part, which exercises the greatest tyranny and oppression, the Sultan or the Jew -- the one the embodiment of the foulest misgovernment, the other the essence of a dozen Shylocks, demanding, ay, and getting, not only his pound of flesh, but also the blood and nerves. By his outrageous exactions the Sultan drives the Moor into the hands of the Jew, who affords him a temporary relief by lending him the necessary money on incredibly exorbitant terms. Once in the money-lender's clutches, he rarely escapes till he is squeezed dry, when he is either thrown aside, crushed and ruined, or cast into a dungeon, where, fettered and starved, he is probably left to die a slow and horrible death.

To the position of the Jews in Morocco it would be difficult to find a parallel. Here we have a people alien, despised, and hated, actually living in the country under immeasurably better conditions than the dominant race, while they suck, and are assisted to suck, the very lifeblood of their hosts. The aim of every Jew is to toil not, neither to spin, save the coils which as money-lender he may weave for the entanglement of his necessitous victims.

## **In the United States**

Even if we cross the Atlantic we find the same phenomenon. Mr. Frederick Law Olmstead, in his *Journeys and Explorations in the Cotton Kingdom* (2nd ed., pp. 252, 253), says:

A swarm of Jews has within the last ten years settled in nearly every Southern town, many of them men of no character, opening cheap clothing and trinket shops, ruining or driving out of business many of the old retailers, and engaging in an unlawful trade with the simple negroes, which is found very profitable.

And again (pp. 321, 322):

If his [the planter's] first crop proves a bad one he must borrow money of the Jews at New Orleans to pay his first note. They will sell him this on the best terms they can, often at not less than 25 per cent per annum.

In *Across the Plains* (p. 100), Mr. Robert Louis Stevenson says of the Jews in San Francisco:

Jew storekeepers have already learned the advantage to be gained from this [unlimited credit]; they lead on the farmer into irretrievable indebtedness, and keep him ever after as their bond-slave hopelessly grinding in the mill. So the whirligig of time brings in its revenges, and except that the Jew knows better than to foreclose, you may see Americans bound in the same chains with which they themselves had formerly bound the Mexicans.

These passages were not intended by the writers, nor are they here cited, as general pictures of the Jews, or as pictures of Jews exclusively. In the last, American sharp practice is included. The passages are cited as indications of the real source of the antagonism tending to show that it is economical not religious.

## **A Dawning Awareness**

Light dawned on the writer's mind touching this question when he had been listening with sympathy to speeches in the British House of Commons on the anti-Semitic movement in Roumania, where, as in Russia, the number of Jews is particularly large and the feeling against them is proportionately intense. The Jewish member who appealed to the government on the subject, and the Minister who rose in response to the appeal, had both of them assumed that it was a case of religious persecution, and the Minister especially had dwelt on the mischievous influence of ecclesiastics; with how little justice, so far as the priests of the Eastern Church are concerned, we have already seen.

The debate over, the writer was accosted by his friend, the late Dr. Humphry Sandwith, distinguished for his share in the defense of Kars [in Northeast Turkey] against the Russians, who knew the Danubian Principalities well. Dr. Sandwith said that the speakers had been entirely mistaken; that religion was not the motive of the agitation; that neither the people nor their priests were given to persecution; that the government had granted aid to a synagogue; but that Jewish usurers got the simple-minded peasants into their toils and sold them out of their homesteads till the peasants would bear it no longer, and an outbreak ensued. Dr. Sandwith, being a thorough-going Liberal, would have been the last man to palliate religious persecution.

## **Medieval Religious Sensitivities**

It is doubtful whether, even in the Middle Ages, the quarrel was not less religious and more economical or social than is supposed. That was the age of religious intolerance; Christian heretics, such as the Albigenses, were persecuted with fully as much cruelty as the Jews. Jews who had ventured to settle in the Catholic communities for the sake of gain, braved the same sort of peril

which would have been braved by an enterprising trader who had thrust himself into Japan during its close period. But as a rule, though they were hated, they were not persecuted; they were tolerated and allowed to build their synagogues and worship God in their own way. They were regarded, not like heretics, as religious traitors, but as religious aliens. Their religious blindness, as well as their penal homelessness, was viewed as the act of God. They were privileged in misbelief.

Aquinas expressly lays it down that they are to be tolerated as a useful testimony borne, though by adversaries, to the truth of Christianity (*Summa Theologica*, Secunda Secundae, Quaest. X, Art. xi). It is not true that the great Doctor of the Middle Ages sanctions the forcible conversion of the children of Jews. He raises the question and decides it in the negative (*Summa Theologica*, Secunda Secundae, Art. xii). An argument stated by him only to be set aside has been taken for his conclusion. In the *Corpus Juris Canonici* it is laid down that Jews shall not be baptized against their will or inclination, since enforced baptism does not make a Christian. Their persons are to be secure from violence, their graves from spoliation, their customary rights from invasion, their festivals from interruption, their servants from abduction, their cemeteries from profanation (*Decret. Greg.*, Lib. V, Tit. vi).

## **During the Crusades**

By the kings, and notably by the Angevin [Plantagenet] kings of England, the Jews were protected as the agents of royal extortion, sucking by usury the money from the people which was afterwards squeezed out of the usurer by the king. Of the common people it is not, so far as we can see, the tendency to persecute on account of religion, however superstitious they may be. It is rather by the possessors of ecclesiastical power and wealth, by Archbishops of Toledo and Prince Bishops of Germany, whom dissent threatens with dispossession, or by kings like Philip II and Louis XIV, under priestly influence, that the engines of persecution are set at work. At the time of the Crusades, Christian fanaticism being excited to frenzy, there were dreadful massacres of Jews, and forced conversions, though no reliance can be placed on the figures of medieval chroniclers, who set down at random 20,000 victims slain, or 200,000 forced conversions.

The Jew at that time was odious not only as a misbeliever in the midst of the Christian camp, whose presence would turn from it the countenance of God, but as a suspected friend and ally at heart of the Oriental power. The Jews must have foreseen the storm, and might have escaped by flight, but they were perhaps tempted by the vast harvest afforded them in the general sale of possessions by the Crusaders to buy equipments, while by that traffic their unpopularity was increased. In ordinary times the main causes of the hatred of the Jews among the common people appear to have been usury and a social arrogance, which was particularly galling on the part of the alien and the enemy of Christ. In the riots the people made for the place in which the Jewish bonds were kept. At York, the scene of the worst anti-Jewish riot in England, the chronicler tells us there were two Jews, Benedict and Joce, who had built in the middle of the city houses like palaces, where they dwelt like princes of their own people and tyrants of the Christians, keeping almost royal state, and exercising harsh tyranny against those whom they oppressed with their usuries. The usury was grinding and ruthless.

In the *Chronicle* of Jocelin de Brakelond we see how rapidly a debt of 27 pounds, owed to a Jew, grew to 880. Jews at Oxford were forbidden by edict to take more than 43 per cent. So it was generally. Political economy will say that this was justifiable, in the circumstances perhaps useful, and the penalty due to the Christian superstition which made the lending of money at interest an unholy and therefore a perilous trade. Nevertheless, it was hateful, at least sure to engender hate. The Lombards and Cahorsins, who, when the Jews were for a time driven from the field, took up the business, incurred the same hatred, though in their case there was no religious or social feeling to aggravate the unpopularity of the trade. A Spanish Chancellor describes the Jews as the bloodsuckers of the afflicted people, as men who exact fifty per cent, eighty, a hundred, and through whom the land is desolate, their hard hearts being callous to tears and groans, and their ears deaf to

petitions for delay. (See *The History of the Jews from the War with Rome to the Present Time*, by Rev. H. C. Adams, M.A., p. 245) ...

## **Usury Double Standard and Ostentatious Wealth**

The law of the Jews themselves, be it observed, proscribes usury in the case of a tribal brother, permitting it in the case of a stranger. "Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother; usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent upon usury: unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury: that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it" (Deuteronomy 23: 19, 20). The Jew, then, on the subject of usury is not less superstitious than the Christian. In truth the Christian superstition may be said to have been derived from the Jewish law. In practicing usury on the Christians among whom he dwelt the Jew showed that he regarded them not as brethren but as strangers.

The Jews in the Middle Ages after all were not so maltreated as to prevent them from amassing what was for that time enormous wealth. Of this they appear in those days, as they sometimes do in these, to have made ostentatious and, in the eyes of natives and Christians, especially if they had been victims of extortion, offensive use. A Cortes in Portugal, in 1481, complained of Jewish luxury and display, of Jews who rode splendidly caparisoned [ornamentally covered] horses, wore silk doublets [ornamented jackets], carried jewel-hilted swords, and entered churches where they mocked the worship. Jewish haughtiness seems sometimes even to have indulged in insults to the popular religion. At Oxford it mocks the miracles of St. Frydeswide before her votaries, assaults a religious procession, and tramples on the cross. At Lynn the Jews attack a church to drag out a convert from Judaism to Christianity, for whose blood they thirsted, and the people of the place are half afraid to resist them, knowing that they are protected by the king.

Besides their usury, the Jews were suspected of clipping the coin. Their function as the middlemen of royal rapacity must have been most odious, not least when they handled for the king Church estates which he had wrongfully taken into his hands. In expelling them from England, Edward I, the best of kings, no doubt thought that he was doing a good deed, while his people were unquestionably grateful. The worthy Abbot Samson, of St. Edmondbury, in the same way earned the gratitude of the people of that place by ridding it of the Jews. The clearest, as well as the most terrible, case of persecution of the Jews for religion was in Spain, and there, it must be remembered, when the Jew was burned, the Christian suspected of heresy was burned at his side.

## **Jew and Muslim**

Even in Spain it is not easy to say how much was hatred of religion, how much was hatred of race. For centuries the Spanish Christians had struggled for the land with Islam, and the history of Spain had been one long Crusade. The Jew was identified with Islam. A Jewish writer, Lady Magnus, in her history of her race (*About the Jews Since Bible Times*, pp. 195-197), says:

Both in the East and in the West the rise of Mohammedanism [Islam] was, in truth, as the dawn of a new day to the despised and dispersed Jews. If we except that one bitter quarrel between the earliest followers of the Prophet and the Jews of Arabia -- and that, we must note, was no organized or systematic persecution, but rather an ebullition of anger from an ardent enthusiast at his first unexpected rebuff -- we shall find that Judaism had much reason to rejoice at the rapid spread of Mohammedanism. Monotheists, like the Jews, abhorring like them all forms of image worship, worshipping in simple fashion their one God Allah, observing dietary laws like those of Moses, the Mohammedans both in their faith and in their practice naturally found more grounds for agreement with Jewish doctrine than with the Christian dogma of a complex Godhead, or with the undeveloped aspirations of the heathen. And besides some identity

of principle and of race between the Mohammedan and the Jew there soon discovered itself a certain hardly definable kinship of habit and custom -- a sort of sympathy, in fact, which is often more effectual than even more important causes in promoting friendly relations either nationally or individually. Then, also, there was the similarity of language; for Arabic, like Hebrew, belongs to what is called the Semitic group ...

Nearly a century of experience of the political and social results of the Mohammedan conquests most, inevitably, have made the year 710 stand out to the Jews of that time as the beginning of a grand new era in their history. Centuries of cruelty had made the wise loyal counsel of Jeremiah to "pray for the peace of the land whither ye are led captive; its peace shall be your peace also," a hard task for the most loyal of consciences; and in that early year of the eighth century, when Spain was added to the list of the Mohammedan victories, and the triumphant flag of the Crescent was hoisted on tower and citadel, the liberty of conscience which it practically proclaimed must have been in the widest sense a cause for national rejoicing to the Jews.

The kindness of the Mahometan [Muslim] to the Jew may here be overrated, but the sympathy between Judaism and Islam cannot be questioned, and it meant common antipathy to Christendom, which Christendom could not fail to reciprocate, especially in its crusading mood. We sit at ease and sneer at the fanaticism of the Crusaders. But some strong motive was needed to make men leave their homes and their wives and go to die as the vanguard of Christendom on Syrian battlefields. Let us not forget that the question whether Christianity and Christian civilization or Islam, with its despotism and its harem, should reign in Europe came to be decided, not without long and perilous debate, so near the heart of Christendom as the plain of Tours. The Jews of Southern France, like those of Spain, were suspected of inviting the invaders. If they did they were not without excuse. But their excuse could hardly be expected to pass muster with Charles Martel.

From religious intolerance in the Dark Ages, or long after the end of the Dark Ages, nobody was free. The Jew was not. He had striven as long as he had a chance, by all means in his power, unscrupulously using the Roman or the Persian as his instruments, to crush Christianity. His own law punished blasphemy with death and bade the worshipper of Jehovah slaughter everything that breathed in a captured city of the heathen. [Among many examples, see: Numbers 21: 34-35; Deuteronomy 2:34, 20: 16-17; Joshua 11: 20-22; I Samuel 15: 3, 8.] It was hence, in fact, that the Inquisitor partly drew his inspiration. Medieval darkness had passed away when Judaism sought the life of Spinoza and scourged Uriel Acosta in the synagogue.

## **Jews and Serfs in Medieval England**

Although the lot of a Jew in the Middle Ages was hard in itself, it was perhaps not so hard compared with that of other classes, notably with that of the serf, as the perpetual addition of piteous epithets to his name by common writers might lead us to suppose. *Ivanhoe* is not history; Freeman's works are. In *The Reign of William Rufus and the Accession of Henry the First* (Vol. I, p. 160), Edward A. Freeman says:

In the wake of the conqueror the Jews of Rouen found their way to London, and before long we find settlements of the Hebrew race in the chief cities and boroughs of England: at York, Winchester, Lincoln, Bristol, Oxford, and even at the gate of the Abbot of St. Edmonds and St. Albans. They came as the king's special men, or more truly as his special chattels, strangers alike to the Church and the commonwealth, but strong in the protection of a master who commonly found it his interest to protect them against all others.

Hated, feared, and loathed, but far too deeply feared to be scorned or oppressed, they

stalked defiantly among the people of the land, on whose wants they thrived, safe from harm or insult, save now and then, when popular wrath burst all bounds, when their proud mansions and fortified quarters could shelter them no longer from raging crowds who were eager to wash out their debts in the blood of their creditors. The romantic picture of the despised, trembling Jew, cringing before every Christian whom he meets, is, in any age of English history, simply a romantic picture.

The Jews found it worth their while to buy their way back into lands from which they had been banished, and their existence in which is pictured by historians as a hell. If they were heavily taxed and sometimes pillaged, they were exempted from the most grievous of all taxes, service in war. Their badge, though a stigma, was also a protection, since it marked them as serfs of the king. Even the Ghetto, where there was one, would be comparatively a small grievance when nationalities, crafts, and family clans had their special quarters in cities. Any immigrant would have been less at home in the closely organized communities of feudalism and Catholicism than in the loose society of the Roman Empire. But the Jew was there by his own choice. The tenure of land in a feudal realm, being military, land could hardly be held by a Jew. But Jews were not forbidden by law to hold land in England till late in the reign of Henry III [1216-1272], when it was found that they were getting estates into their hands by mortgage, which would have been ruinous to the feudal system.

A community has a right to defend its territory and its national integrity against an invader, whether his weapon be the sword or foreclosure. In the territories of the Italian Republics the Jews might, so far as we see, have bought land and taken to farming had they pleased. But before this they had thoroughly taken to trade. Under the falling Empire they were the great slave traders, buying captives from barbarian invaders and probably acting as general brokers of spoils at the same time. They entered England in the train of the Norman conqueror. There was, no doubt, a perpetual struggle between their craft and the brute force of the feudal populations. But what moral prerogative has craft over force?

Mr. Arnold White tells the Russians that, if they would let Jewish intelligence have free course, Jews would soon fill all high employments and places of power to the exclusion of the natives, who now hold them. Russians are bidden to acquiesce and rather to rejoice in this by philosophers, who would perhaps not relish the cup if it were commended to their own lips. The law of evolution, it is said, prescribes the survival of the fittest. To which the Russian boor may reply, that if his force beats the fine intelligence of the Jew the fittest will survive and the law of evolution will be fulfilled. It was force rather than fine intelligence which decided on the field of Zama that the Latin, not the Semite, should rule the ancient and mold the modern world.

Religious antipathy, no doubt, has always added and continues to add bitterness to the social quarrel. Among ignorant peasants it still takes grotesque, sometimes hideous, shapes, such as the cruel fancy that the Jews sacrifice Christian children and spread pestilence. The Jew has always been felt to be a power of evil, and the peasant imagination lends to the power of evil horns and hoofs. But even the peasant imagination does not lend horns and hoofs to any power which is felt to be harmless, much less to one which has always been beneficent, as we are asked to believe that the Jews have been. The people are not everywhere fools or fiends. Let it be remembered, too, that the Jewish religion is not merely a religion of peculiar opinion. It is a religion of social exclusiveness, of arrogated superiority to Gentiles, and treatment of them as unclean, of the Pentateuch with its Chosen People, and of the feast of Purim. Milman thinks it possible that in the offensive celebration of the feast of Purim some of the calumnies about the Jews may have had their source.

People of a higher class, whom Jewish usury does not touch, object to Judaism on higher grounds. They object to it because it is at variance with the unity of the nation and threatens to eat out the core of nationality. Admitting the keenness of Jewish intelligence, they say that intelligence is not always beneficent, nor is submission to it always a matter of duty, especially when its ascendancy is gained by such means as the dexterous appropriation of the circulating medium, and when it is, as

they believe, the result not of individual effort in a fair field, but of the collective effort of a united, though scattered race, aided by a press in Jewish hands. They demur to having the high places of their community monopolized, as Mr. Arnold White says they might be in Russia, by unsympathetic aliens turning the rest of the nation into hewers of wood and drawers of water. This feeling, if it is selfish, is natural, and should be charitably viewed by those who are free from the danger.

Some of the opposition to Jewish ascendancy arises from dread of materialism, the triumph of which over the spiritual character and aspirations of Christian communities would, it is apprehended, follow the victory of the Jew, an impersonation of the power of wealth. Among the anti-Semites are Christian Socialists seeking the liberation of the laboring class from the grasp of usury and the money power. [In Germany] Herr [Adolf] Stoecker [1835-1909] belongs, it seems, to this sect, and far from being an enemy of the Jewish people, is a devout believer in the Old Testament. To be opposed on social or patriotic ground to Judaism as a system is not to be a hater of the Jews, any more than to be opposed to Islam or Buddhism as a system is to be a hater of the Mahometan or the Buddhist.

## Medieval Myths

The impression prevails that Judaism during the Middle Ages was a civilizing power, in fact the great civilizing power, while its beneficent action was repressed by a barbarous Christendom. The leading shoot of civilization, both material and intellectual, was republican Italy, where the Jews, though they were not persecuted, never played a leading part. You may read through Sismondi's *History [of the Italian Republics in the Middle Ages]* almost without being made aware of their existence. Intellectually superior in a certain sense no doubt they were; their wealth exempted them from manual labor, and gave them an advantage, as it does now, in the race of intelligence. They were also practically exempted from military service. They preserved Hebrew and Oriental learning, and to them Europe owed the transmission of the works of Aristotle through Arabic translations. But in their medieval roll of celebrated names the great majority are those of Talmudists or Cabalists. The most illustrious is that of Maimonides, whose influence on the progress of humanity surely was not very great, albeit he was let and hindered only by the narrow and jealous orthodoxy of his own people. Jews were in request as physicians, though they seem to have drawn their knowledge from the Arabians. They had much to do with the foundation of the medical school of Montpellier; the origin of that at Salerno was Benedictine. But if they founded a medical science, what became of the medical science which they founded? At the close of the Middle Ages there was none. A Jewish physician, no doubt the most eminent of his class, is called in by Innocent VIII. His treatment is transfusion of blood. He kills three boys in the process and then runs away.

Of the money trade the Jews were generally the masters, though in Italy that, too, was in the hands of native houses, such as the Medici, Bardi, and Peruzzi, while at a later period the Fuggers of Augsburg were the Rothschilds of Germany. But the Jews never were the masters of the grand commerce or of that maritime enterprise in which the Middle Ages gloriously closed. Rosseeuw Saint-Hilaire has observed in his history of Spain that their addiction was to petty trade. Showing abundant sympathy for Jewish wrongs, he finds himself compelled to contrast the "narrowness and rapacity" of their commerce with the boldness and grandeur of Arab enterprise (*Histoire d'Espagne*, Vol. III, p. 147). The slave trade, which in the early Middle Ages was in Jewish hands, was not then the reproach that it is now, yet it never was a noble or a beneficent trade.

Spain is supposed to have owed her fall to the expulsion of the Jews, but the acme of her greatness came after their expulsion; and her fall was due to despotism, civil and religious, to her false commercial system, to the diversion of her energy from industry to gold-seeking and conquest, and not least to the overgrown and heterogeneous empire which was the supposed foundation of her grandeur. England, in the period between the expulsion of the Jews under Edward I [in 1290] and their readmission under Cromwell [in 1656], became a commercial nation and a famous naval

power; and the greatness thus achieved was English, not Gibeonite, as it would have been under Jewish ascendancy; it was part of the fullness of national life, and was prolific not only of Whittingtons and Drakes, but of Shakespeares and Bacons. As financiers it is likely that the Jews were useful in advancing money for great works; they also furnished money for enterprises such as Strongbow's expedition to Ireland. But the assertion, often repeated, that they provided the means for building the churches, abbeys, and colleges of England must be qualified in face of the fact that the greater part of the edifices is of dates subsequent to the expulsion of the Jews. Salisbury Cathedral was built before the expulsion. But we happen to know that the 40,000 marks which it cost were supplied by contributions from the Prebendaries, collections from different dioceses, and grants from Alicia de Bruere and other benefactors. (See Murray's *Handbook of the Cathedrals of England*, Southern Div., Part I, p. 94).

No financial or material advantage at all events could have made up to a nation for the ascendancy of a tribe of alien usurers.

Judaism is now the great financial power of Europe, that is, it is the greatest power of all. It is no longer necessary, out of pity for it, to falsify history, and traduce Christendom.

## The Talmud

Of the two works on which, during the Middle Ages, Jewish intellect was chiefly employed, the Cabbala [or Kabbalah] is on all hands allowed to be mystical nonsense. Of the Talmud, Dr. Rev. F. W. Farrar, D.D., F.R.S., assuredly no Jew-baiter, in his introductory Preface to a volume of selections from it (*A Talmudic Miscellany*. Compiled and translated by Paul Isaac Hershon), says:

Wisdom there is in the Talmud, and eloquence and high morality; of this the reader may learn something even in the small compass of the following pages. How could it be otherwise when we bear in mind that the Talmud fills twelve large folio volumes, and represents the main literature of a nation during several hundred years? But yet I venture to say that it would be impossible to find less wisdom, less eloquence, and less high morality, imbedded in a vaster bulk of what is utterly valueless to mankind -- to say nothing of those parts of it which are indelicate and even obscene -- in any other national literature of the same extent. And even of the valuable residuum of true and holy thoughts, I doubt whether there is even one which had not long been anticipated, and which is not found more nobly set forth in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

This judgment is fully borne out by the selections which follow, and which are made by Mr. Hershon, a known Hebrew scholar, on an impartial principle. It is supported by other independent critics, such as Thirlwall, who spoke of the Talmud as an ocean of nonsense. The writer will not presume to speak, though he looks back upon the perusal of a Latin translation of the Mishna as one of the least pleasant labors of a student's life. Dr. Deutsch's counterfeit presentment of the Talmud, to which Dr. Farrar refers, is a standing caution. In every page of Mr. Hershon's *Talmudic Miscellany* we have such things as this:

"There were two things which God first thought of creating on the eve of the Sabbath, which, however, were not created till after the Sabbath had closed. The first was fire, which Adam by divine suggestion drew forth by striking together two stones; and the second was the mule, produced by the crossing of two different animals." -- *P'sachim*, fol. 54, col 1.

"The Rabbis have taught that there are three reasons why a person should not enter a ruin: 1. Because he may be suspected of evil intent; 2. Because the walls might tumble upon him; 3. And because of evil spirits that frequent such places." -- *Berachoth*, fol. 3, col 1.

"The stone which Og, King of Bashan, meant to throw upon Israel is the subject of a tradition delivered on Sinai. 'The camp of Israel I see,' he said, 'extends three miles; I shall therefore go and root up a mountain three miles in extent and throw it upon them.' So off he went, and finding such a mountain, raised it on his head, but the Holy One -- blessed be He! -- sent an army of ants against him, which so bored the mountain over his head that it slipped down upon his shoulders, from which he could not lift it, because his teeth, protruding, had riveted it upon him." -- *Berachoth*, fol. 54, col. 2.

"Three things are said respecting the finger-nails: He who trims his nails and buries the parings is a pious man; he who burns these is a righteous man; but he who throws them away is a wicked man, for mischance might follow, should a female step over them." -- *Moed Katan*, fol. 18, col 1.

## More Nonsense

Abraham's height, according to the Talmudists, was that of 74 men put together. His food, his dress, and his strength were those of 74 men. He built for the abode of his 17 children by Keturah, an iron city, the walls whereof were so lofty that the sun never penetrated them. He gave them a bowl full of precious stones, the brilliancy of which supplied them with light in the absence of the sun. He had a precious stone suspended from his neck, upon which every sick person who gazed was healed of his disease, and when he died God hung up the stone on the sphere of the sun. Before his time there was no such thing as a beard; but as many mistook Abraham and Isaac for each other, Abraham prayed to God for a beard to distinguish him, and it was granted him. Every one has a thousand malignant spirits at his left side, and ten thousand at his right. The crowding at the schools is caused by their pushing in. If one would discover traces of their presence, he has only to sift some ashes on the floor at his bedside, and next morning he will see the footmarks as of fowls. If he would see the demons themselves, he must burn to ashes the afterbirth of a first-born black kitten, the offspring of a first-born black cat, put some of the ashes into his eyes, and he will not fail to see the demons. The medical and physical apophthegms of the Talmud do not give much evidence of science: "dropsy is a sign of sin, jaundice of hatred without a cause, and quinsy of slander"; "six things possess medicinal virtue: cabbage, lung-wort, beet-root, water, certain parts of the offal of animals, and, in the opinion of some, little fishes."

Mr. Hershon's collection abounds with nonsense on this subject as absurd as anything in medieval quackery. Other features of the work are an Oriental indelicacy, and a pride of Rabbinical learning which treats illiteracy as almost criminal, looking down upon the illiterate as an American would look down upon the Negro.

The most superstitious of Christian writings in the Dark Ages could not be more tainted with demonology and witchcraft, nor in any monkish chronicle do we find fables so gross. Few would set the Talmud, as presented by Mr. Hershon, or the Cabbala, above the works of such writers as Anselm, Aquinas, the author of *Imitatio Christi*, the authors of hymns and liturgical compositions of the Christian Middle Ages; or, in the department of science, above the works of Roger Bacon.

We have been speaking, be it observed, of the Talmud as the work and monument of Jewish intelligence and morality in the Dark Ages; we have not been speaking of the intelligence or morality of the Jews of the present day. The charge is constantly brought against Christendom of having by its barbarous bigotry repressed the beneficent action of Jewish intellect, which would otherwise have enlightened and civilized the world. The answer is apparently found in the Cabbala and the Talmud. By the account of the Jewish historian [Heinrich] Graetz, it would seem that Rabbinical orthodoxy was not less opposed than Papal orthodoxy to science, philosophy, and culture. We are led to believe that, at last, Talmudic bigotry and obscurantism had prevailed, when Judaism was rescued by Moses Mendelssohn, who himself owed his emancipation to Lessing.

Nathan the Wise is a philosopher and philanthropist of the eighteenth century, not a Talmudic Jew.

## **A Tribal Morality**

Still more notable, however, than the absurdities are the passages indicative of a tribal morality which prescribes one mode of dealing with those who are, and another mode of dealing with those who are not, of the tribe.

"If the ox of an Israelite bruise the ox of a Gentile, the Israelite is exempt from paying damages; but should the ox of a Gentile bruise the ox of an Israelite, the Gentile is bound to recompense him in full." -- *Bava Kama*, fol. 38, col. 1.

"When an Israelite and a Gentile have a lawsuit before thee, if thou canst, acquit the former according to the laws of Israel, and tell the latter such is our law; if thou canst get him off in accordance with Gentile law, do so, and say to the plaintiff such is your law; but if he cannot be acquitted according to either law, then bring forward adroit pretexts and secure his acquittal. These are the words of the Rabbi Ishmael. Rabbi Akiva says, 'No false pretext should be brought forward, because, if found out, the name of God would be blasphemed; but if there be no fear of that, then it may be adduced.'" -- *Bava Kama*, fol. 113, col. 1.

"If one finds lost property in a locality where a majority are Israelites, he is bound to proclaim it; but he is not bound to do so if the majority be Gentiles." -- *Bava Metzia*, fol. 24, col. 1.

"Rabbi Shemuel says advantage may be taken of the mistakes of a Gentile. He once bought a gold plate as a copper of a Gentile for four zouzim, and then cheated him out of one zouz into the bargain. Rav Cahana purchased a hundred and twenty vessels of wine from a Gentile for a hundred zouzim, and swindled him in the payment out of one of the hundred, and that while the Gentile assured him that he confidently trusted to his honesty. Rava once went parts with a Gentile and bought a tree which was cut up into logs. This done, he bade his servant go and pick him out the largest logs, but to be sure to take no more than the proper number, because the Gentile knew how many there were. As Rav Aghi was walking abroad one day he saw some grapes growing in a roadside vineyard, and sent his servant to see whom they belonged to. 'If they belong to a Gentile,' he said, 'bring some here to me; but if they belong to an Israelite, do not meddle with them.' The owner, who happened to be in the vineyard, overheard the Rabbi's order and called out, 'What! is it lawful to rob a Gentile?' 'Oh, no,' said the Rabbi evasively; 'a Gentile might sell, but an Israelite would not.'" -- *Bava Kama*, fol. 118, col. 2.

## **'Unclean' Gentiles**

The principle which animates these passages appears in a milder form in the Hebrew Scriptures, which license perpetual bondage as well as the taking of interest in the case of a Gentile, not in that of a Hebrew. Such a principle, however mildly expressed, was too likely to be extended in practice. Dr. Edersheim, the author of *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, is favorable enough on religious grounds to the Jews; but in describing their relations to the Gentiles, as regulated by the Talmud, he says (Vol. I, pp. 90, 91):

To begin with, every Gentile child, so soon as born, was to be regarded as unclean. Those who actually worshipped mountains, hills, bushes, etc. -- in short, gross idolaters -- should be cut down with the sword. But as it was impossible to exterminate

heathenism, Rabbinical legislation kept certain definite objects in view, which may be thus summarized: To prevent Jews from being inadvertently led into idolatry; to avoid all participation in idolatry; not to do anything which might aid the heathen in their worship; and, beyond all this, not to give pleasure, or even help, to heathens. The latter involved a most dangerous principle, capable of almost indefinite application by fanaticism. Even the Mishna goes so far as to forbid aid to a mother in the hour of her need, or nourishment to her babe, in order not to bring up a child for idolatry! But this is not all. Heathens were, indeed, not to be precipitated into danger, but yet not to be delivered from it. Indeed, an isolated teacher ventures even upon this statement: 'The best among the Gentiles, kill; the best among serpents, crush its head.' Even more terrible was the fanaticism which directed that heretics, traitors, and those who had left the Jewish faith should be thrown into actual danger, and, if they were in such, all means for their escape removed. No intercourse of any kind was to be had with such -- not even to invoke their medical aid in case of danger to life, since it was deemed that he who had to do with heretics was in imminent peril of becoming one himself, and that, if a heretic returned to the true faith, he should die at once -- partly, probably, to expiate his guilt, and partly from fear of relapse.

## **Contempt for Humanity**

Not less significant are the Talmudic expressions of tribal pride and contempt of common humanity. "All Israelites are princes." "All Israelites are holy." "Happy are ye, O Israel, for every one of you, from the least even to the greatest, is a great philosopher." "As it is impossible for the world to be without air, so also is it impossible for the world to be without Israel." "One empire cometh and another passeth away, but Israel abideth for ever." "The world was created only for Israel: none are called the children of God but Israel; none are beloved before God but Israel." "Ten measures of wisdom came down to the world. The land of Israel received nine, the rest of the world but one."

## **Judaism and Christianity**

Critics of Judaism are accused of bigotry of race, as well as of bigotry of religion. The accusation comes strangely from those who style themselves the Chosen People, make race a religion, and treat all races except their own as Gentiles and unclean.

The notion that the Jews are to be maltreated because their ancestors by the hand of Pilate crucified Christ, has long been discarded and derided by all enlightened Christians. But equally baseless is the notion that Christianity owes homage to Judaism, has any particular interest in it, or any particular duty concerning it. To Talmudic Judaism, at all events, it owes nothing. Whether in its origin it owed anything to the liberal school of Hillel, we cannot tell. The Talmud is a vast repertory of legalism, formalism, ceremonialism, and casuistry. Nothing can be more opposed to the spontaneity of conscience, trust in principle, and preference of the spirit to the letter characteristic of the Gospel, in which even the Ten Commandments are superseded by the Two.

The pervading intention of the Talmud is, by multiplying ceremonial barriers, to keep the Chosen People separate from the Gentiles among whom they lived; in other words, to perpetuate the tribe. Christianity is a religion of humanity. Baptism is a rite of initiation into a universal brotherhood. Circumcision, the Jewish circumcision at all events, is the mark of enrollment in an exclusive tribe. The fundamental antagonism of Judaism to Christianity was shown, not only in the murder of Christ, but in the bitter persecution of his followers. Christianity had its antecedents, but it begins with Christ: it has no relation to Talmudic Judaism but those of reaction and secession.

## **Neither Accursed Nor Sacred**

We have given up the fancy that the Jew is accursed. We must cease to believe that he is sacred. Israel was the favorite people of Jehovah, as every tribe was the favorite of its own god. The belief that the Father of all and the God of justice had a favorite race, made with it a covenant sealed with the barbarous rite of circumcision, pledged himself to promote its interest against those of other races, destroyed all the innocent first-born of Egypt to force Pharaoh to let it go, licensed its aggrandizement by conquest, stopped the sun in heaven to give it time to slaughter people whose lands it invaded without a cause, and gratified its malignity by enjoining it when it took one of the cities which were given it for its inheritance to save alive nothing that breathed, ought now to be laid aside, with all its corollaries and consequences, including the passionate, and, to the Hebrew, somewhat offensive effort to convert this particular race to Christianity. We have been told from the pulpit that at the last day the world will be judged by a Jew, and a religious lady once suggested to a Jew who had been converted to Christianity that he should go on circumcising his sons. We shall have little right to complain of the tribal arrogance of the Jew so long as the Old Testament continues to be indiscriminately read in our churches and we persist, by talking of a chosen people, in ascribing favoritism to the Almighty. The belief that "God has made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth" is the foundation of a religion of humanity, and Judaism is its practical denial.

## **Struggling with the Old Testament**

Jesus called himself the Son of Man. He was a Galilean, that is, in high Jewish estimation, an inferior Jew, setting aside the "endless" or "profitless" genealogies which the writer of the First Epistle to Timothy classes with fables and bids us not to heed. Born into Judaism, he accepted it and "fulfilled" all its "righteousness," while he must have known, as his antagonists did, that his principles would subvert it. Because he did this, we have taken upon our understandings and hearts a belief in the divine authority of the Old Testament, that is, of the whole mass of Hebrew literature; we have bound ourselves to see inspiration, not only in its more elevated, spiritual, and moral parts, but in those which are not elevated, spiritual, or even moral.

We torture our consciences into approval of the spoiling of the Egyptians by a fraud, the slaughter of the Canaanites, the slaying of Sisera, the hewing of Agag in pieces before the Lord, and David's legacy of vengeance; our intellects into the acceptance of the Book of Chronicles as authentic history, and of such miracles as the stopping of the sun, the conversion of Lot's wife into a pillar of salt, the speaking ass of Balaam, the destruction of the children who mocked Elisha by a bear, and the sojourn of Jonah in the belly of a whale. In church we read, with psalms of universal beauty, psalms of Oriental vindictiveness. We constrain ourselves to see divine meaning, not only in the sublime passages of Isaiah, but in the obscurest and most incoherent utterances of his brother prophets. We read theological mysteries into a love-song because it is a part of the sacred volume. Till this superstition is cast out we shall ill appreciate what is really divine in the Old Testament. Not in the darker side of the Puritan character alone are the evil effects of this idolatry to be traced.

There was much that was infinitely memorable, but recent criticism forbids us to believe that there was anything miraculous, in the history of Israel. Whatever may have been the local origin of the Jews, who spoke the same language as the other inhabitants of Canaan, the race, we may be sure, was cast in the same primeval mold as the kindred races. The story of the Patriarchs and the Exodus being in all its parts -- the primitive theophanies in the tents of Patriarchs, the supernatural birth of Isaac, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the transformation of Lot's wife, the wrestling of Jacob with Jehovah, the marvellous story of Joseph, the miraculous multiplication of the Israelites, the competition between the envoys of Jehovah and the Egyptian magicians, the plagues of Egypt, the drying up of the Red Sea, the forty years' wandering in the barren Sinaitic desert, the prodigies which there took place, the giants of Canaan, and the stopping of the sun -- manifestly poetical, it

would seem that the narrative as a whole must, in accordance with a well-known canon of criticism, be dismissed from history and relegated to another domain.

Of the exact process by which the finer spirits of Israel attained a tribal monotheism, which at last verged on monotheism pure and simple, and carried with it a high morality, while the grosser spirits were always hankering after the groves and images of their idolatry, no exact account has been given us, though the prophets, as moral reformers, clearly played a great part in it. But it involved no miracle, since without miracle Socrates and Plato, Marcus Aurelius and Epictetus could rise to the same level. The peculiar service rendered to humanity by Judaism was the identification of religion with morality through the conception of a God of righteousness and of justice and mercy as his law. Against which we have to set the dark shadow cast on our spiritual life by the cruel fanaticism of the Jew and the sombre denunciations of his prophets. The doctrine of the immortality of the soul was extraneous to Judaism, and was rejected by one of its sects; the tribal idea of immortality being the perpetuation of the family in the tribe.

### **Jewish Parasitism**

Nor is there anything miraculous, penal, or even mysterious, about the Jewish dispersion or its commercial character. The case of Israel is one, though incomparably the most sharply defined, as well as the most memorable, of a number of cases of parasitism, to borrow that phrase from botany. Other cases are those of the Armenians, the Parsees, the Greeks of the dispersion, ancient and modern, and humblest of all, the Gypsies ... The dispersion of the Jews was anterior to the destruction of Jerusalem, for Paul found Jewish settlements, mercantile no doubt, wherever he went. It may have begun with the transplantation to Babylon, and have been extended by the transplantation to Egypt under the Ptolemies. But its principal cause probably was the narrowness of the Jewish territory, combined with the love of gain in the Jew ...

Apparently, there was a religious party in Judea which wished to make the people simple and pious tillers of the soil, and from which emanated that ideal polity of husbandmen with hereditary lots and a year of jubilee, ascribed by its framers to the great lawgiver of the race. But the trading instinct was too strong. In the stories of the patriarch who bought the birthright of his hungry brother, of the Jewish vizier who taught Pharaoh how to obtain the surrender of all the freeholds of his people by taking advantage of the famine, and of the Hebrews who spoiled the Egyptians by pretending to borrow jewels which they never meant to return, we see the gleamings of a character which was not likely to be content with the moderate gains of a small farming community.

### **Unity in Dispersion**

Jewish parasitism, still to use the botanic metaphor, could not fail to be confirmed by the fall of Jerusalem, which deprived the dispersed nationality of its center, though the holy city even in its desolation remained the Mecca of Judaism ... Nationality was preserved by the Mosaic law, the Talmud, and circumcision, the last being probably the strongest bond of all. "That the Jews," says Spinoza, "have maintained themselves so long in spite of their disorganized or dispersed condition, is not at all to be wondered at when it is considered how they separated themselves from all other nationalities in such a way as to bring upon themselves the hatred of all, and that, not only by external rites contrary to those of other nations, but also by the sign of circumcision, which they most religiously retain."

Any other race of strong vitality with the same bonds and barriers might have retained their nationality equally well. The Parsees, though a much weaker community in their origin, have retained their separate existence for eleven centuries. The Gypsies appear to have retained their separate existence for five centuries. There is therefore nothing miraculous about the wandering Jew, nor need we suppose that he is the special object either of the wrath or the favor of heaven ...

Israel henceforth definitely became what it has always remained, a tribe scattered yet united,

sojourning in all communities, blending with none, and forming a nation within each nation. The natural tendency of a race without a country was not to agriculture but to such trades as the Jew has plied, especially the money trade. The insecurity and uncertainty of his residence would deter him from owning property which could not easily be removed. Habit became ingrained and the attempts to form agricultural colonies of the Jews at the present day appear to be uniformly unsuccessful ... The trading instinct seems to have been too inveterate even when Jews have been carried back to their own land.

The Jew has thus worn everywhere the unpopular aspect of an intruder, who by his financial skill was absorbing the wealth of the community without adding to it. Not to produce but to make a market of everything has been his general tendency and forte. Among other things he has made a market of war. He bought Christian captives and spoils of the barbarian invaders of the Roman Empire. He bought up at forced sales the property of those who were departing for the Crusades. He has constantly followed in the wake of armies, making his profit out of the havoc and out of the recklessness of the soldier. General Grant found it necessary [December 1862] to banish Jews from his camp. On the field of Austerlitz Marshal Lannes bids one who accosts him to wait till he has stopped the depredations of the Jews.

### **Rules for Jewish Distinctiveness**

That the Jew clings not only to his religion but to his nationality, and that the two are blended together, or rather are identical, can hardly be doubted when we find in a Jewish Catechism (Jewish School Books -- No. 1, *The Law of Moses: A Catechism of the Jewish Religion*, new edition, pp. 68, 69. By the Rev. A. P. Mendes) such a passage as this:

Q, What other ordinances has God made to prevent our falling into sin?

A. Those which forbid our associating with bad men or intermarrying with wicked and idolatrous nations.

"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil." -- Exodus 23: 2. "Neither shalt thou make marriages with them (the nations); thy daughter thou shall not give to his son, nor his daughter shall thou take unto thy son." -- Deuteronomy 7: 3.

Q. Is this latter command important?

A. Yes, it is of the greatest moment, and the experience of the past has shown its importance.

Q. In what manner?

A. Whenever our people have intermarried with other nations, they have fallen into their idolatries. "But they were mingled among the heathen and learned their works; and they served their idols which were a snare unto them." -- Psalms 106: 34, 35 [35, 36].

Q. Does the law lay much stress upon this precept?

A. Yes, we are repeatedly enjoined to keep from admixture of race, and many of the laws relating to the soil are referable to this subject ...

Q. Are we commanded still to keep ourselves distinct from other nations?

A. Assuredly; we may love them as ourselves, help them in their need, and labor with

them for the good of our fellow-creatures, but we must not intermarry with them, lest we should be led away from the Law.

### **'All-Controlling' Talmudic Ordinances**

The Roman Catholic Church, it is true, discourages mixed marriages on religious grounds. But she does not teach her children that "assuredly they are a nation," and she does try to bring all mankind within her fold. If the Jews, as one of their chief Rabbis seems to intimate, are not a nation but a church, why do they not proselytize? How came it to be said of them, by one of their own race, that they no more desire to make converts than does the House of Lords? However, supposing religion to be the bond, it is the religion of Moses. Does not the religion of Moses separate the people of Jehovah from mankind? The Eastern Jew, the Russian or Polish Jew, and the orthodox Jew everywhere, it appears, still hold by the Talmud. Mr. Hershon says that

to the orthodox Jew the Talmud is like the encircling ocean -- inserts itself into and makes itself felt in every nook and corner of his existence, like an atmosphere encompasses the whole round of his being, penetrates into all centers of vitality, presses with incumbent weight upon every class irrespective of age or sex or rank, is all-inspiring, all-including, and all-controlling, covers in the regard of the illuminated the whole field of life, and with its principles affects, or ought to affect, every thought and every action of every member of the Jewish state.

The wealthy and enlightened Jew of London, Paris, or New York, perhaps, is no longer Talmudic; his religion is probably Theism combined with a vague belief in the sanctity and the superior destiny of his race; yet even he keeps himself much apart from the Gentiles, and if he remains a Jew at all he must observe the law of Moses, that is, a separatist law. In fact those who have studied the subject carefully say that alike by the rich Jew of Bayswater and the middle class Jew of Highbury the safeguards of tribalism are kept as far as possible without actual offense to Gentile society. The "Polish" Jew, alike in Poland and in Whitechapel, is still strongly Talmudic. If the Jew keeps Christian servants in his house it is to do for him what he is not permitted to do for himself on the Sabbath. By making this use of the heathen he shows that Moab is still his wash pot.

That the Jews have, as a rule, observed the laws and performed their civic duties in the countries of their sojourn, no one will deny, and it was natural that they should not take more upon them than they could help of public imposts which to them were unsweetened by patriotism. In countries where military service is part of the duties of a citizen, as it is in Germany, they have not sought to evade it, though they do not voluntarily enlist. It is understood that they behaved well as soldiers in the German army. Wealth has inclined them to conservatism, and the stories about their sinister activities in the French Revolution are fables, though Karl Marx and [Ferdinand] Lassalle were the founders of Socialism, and Judaism is believed to have contributed its quota to Nihilism in Russia. When a Jew plays revolutionist, we may generally expect to see him top the part. To top the part is natural when it is played in a spirit of exploitation. Some Jews have been noted as citizens for beneficence not confined to their own tribe. It is likely, too, that in lands where the Jew has been long established, the sentiment of home has grown strong enough to countervail that of tribal nationality in his breast, and to make removal very cruel.

Still, he is a Jew dwelling among Gentiles. He is one of the Chosen People. He has a nationality apart, with Messianic hopes, more or less definite, of its own, and vague anticipations of future ascendancy. It seems impossible that any man should belong in heart to two nationalities and be a patriot of each. He may be a conforming and dutiful citizen of the community among which he dwells as long as there is no conflict of national interest. But when there is a conflict of national interests his attachment to his own nationality will prevail.

## **Advantageous Alliance**

Mr. Laurence Oliphant, in his book *The Land of Gilead* (p. 503), dwells more than once on the great advantages which any European government might gain over its rivals by an alliance with the Jews. He writes:

It is evident that the policy which I proposed to the Turkish government [that is, the restoration of Palestine] might be adopted with equal advantage by England or any other European Power. The nation that espoused the cause of the Jews and their restoration to Palestine, would be able to rely on their support in financial operations on the largest scale, upon the powerful influence which they wield in the press of many countries, and upon their political co-operation in those countries, which would of necessity tend to paralyze the diplomatic and even hostile action of Powers antagonistic to the one with which they were allied. Owing to the financial, political, and commercial importance to which the Jews have now attained, there is probably no one Power in Europe that would prove so valuable an ally to a nation likely to be engaged in a European war, as this wealthy, powerful, and cosmopolitan race.

Perhaps the writer of these words hardly realized the state of things which they present to our minds. We see the governments of Europe bidding against each other for the favor and support of an anti-national money power, which would itself be morally unfettered by any allegiance, would be ever ready to betray and secretly paralyze for its own objects the governments under the protection of which its members were living, and of course would be always gaining strength and predominance at the expense of a divided and subservient world. The allusion to the influence wielded by the Jews in the European press has a particularly sinister sound. In the social as in the physical sphere new diseases are continually making their appearance. One of the new social diseases of the present day, and certainly not the least deadly, is the perversion of public opinion in the interest of private or sectional objects, by the clandestine manipulation of the press.

## **A Nation Within the Nation**

Such a relation as that in which Judaism has placed itself to the people of each country, forming everywhere a nation within the nation, cherishing the pride of a Chosen People, regarding those among whom it dwelt as Gentiles and unclean, shrinking from social intercourse with them, engrossing their wealth by financial skill, but not adding to it by labor, plying at the same time a trade which, however legitimate, is always unpopular and makes many victims, could not possibly fail to lead, as it has led, to mutual hatred and the troubles which ensue. Certain as may be the gradual prevalence of good over evil, it is a futile optimism which denies that there have been calamities in history. One of them has been the dispersion of the Jews.

As was said before, it is incredible that all the nations should have mistaken a power of good for a power of evil, or have been unanimous in ingratitude to a power of good.

## **A Fresh Invasion**

None of them want to hurt the Jew or to interfere with his religious belief; what they all want is that if possible he should go to his own land. As it is, Western Europe and the western hemisphere are threatened with a fresh invasion on the largest scale by the departure of Jews from Russia. American politics are already beginning to feel the influence. A party, to catch the Jewish vote, puts into its platform a denunciation of Russia, the best friend of the American Republic in its day of trial. Jews are becoming strong in the British House of Commons and one of them the other day appealed to his compatriots to combine their forces against the political party which had been opposed to Jewish interests.

That the Jew should be de-rabbinized and de-nationalized, in other words that he should renounce

the Talmud, the tribal parts of the Mosaic law, and circumcision, is the remedy proposed by M. Leroy-Beaulieu, a writer by no means unfavorable to Israel. There seems to be no other way of putting an end to a conflict which is gradually enveloping all nations. This being done, whatever gifts and graces may belong to the race of Moses, David, and Isaiah, of the writers of the Book of Job and of the Psalms, of Judas Maccabaeus and Hillel, will have free course and be glorified. If Israel has any message for humanity, as he seems to think, it will be heard. Jewish merit will no longer be viewed with jealousy and distrust as having a sinister confederation at its back; and no man need fear in the present age that in any highly civilized community he will suffer persecution or disparagement of any sort on account of his religion. But the present relation is untenable. The Jew will have either to return to Jerusalem or to forget it, give his heart to the land of his birth and mingle with humanity.

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