

# The Wandering Jew.

A LECTURE BY ISAAC M. WISE.

## Introduction.

In my rambles over the pages of history I have discovered a time when no Jews were persecuted, no missionaries were hired to convert them, no sentimental parsons lamented the fate of the poor lost souls; and that was in the time of Father Abraham! The pope or bishop of that classic time, whose name was Malchizedek, was a clever gentleman. He offered bread and wine to Abraham, and collected the taxes of him in the form of tithes, in a truly Mormon style, and everything was pleasant. But right after that the trouble commenced. When Isaac, the son of that same Abraham, raised good crops in the land of\* the Philistines, he was commanded to leave, because the Jew was getting too rich. However, Isaac went into the well-digging business, and was successful, for he dug well, so that the high-born lords of Philistine paid him a visit—perhaps to borrow money—and promised to behave in the future!

There I thought the story of the Wandering Jew must have had its beginning. With the exception of the poisoned wells, bleeding hosts, slaughtered infants, Christian blood, witchcraft, usury and other accusations and side issues, the two stories look exactly alike. Still I saw the mistake in the name. For what the English call the Wandering Jew, the Germans call *Den Ewigen Juden*, and the French *Le Juif Errant*. The Jew *Jud* or *Juif* could not have come into existence before the three great nations had murdered Caesar's Latin and made of the Judaeus the *Jud*. Of this the Frenchman in his hurry made swiftly a

*Juif*, and the Englishman first chewed it, bit of the *d* and left the poor Jew, as he made John of Yohanan, James of Yacobus, and Jesus of the ancient Yoshua. I was forced to the conviction, that the Wandering Jew had grown on Christian soil.

Many of the good Christians, I know, have taken stock in my soul, and are very eager to save it at the lowest expense. So I was advised to read the Gospels, and I did. Among all the miraculous stories, however, I found in that book, the Gospel of Nicodemus included, I found no Ahasverus, no Wandering Jew, no cursed Jew, shoemaker or clothing dealer, before whose door Jesus, bearing the cross, wanted to rest himself which the Jew would not permit. I found that Jesus did not bear his own cross at all. Simon of Gyrene did. Moreover, I discovered, to my utter surprise, that the Jews had nothing at all to do with the crucifixion of Jesus, and the academy of France confirmed my discovery. Consequently, in the Gospels there is not the origin of the Wandering Jew.

## Der Ewige Jude.

A poet and journalist of the last century, Christian Fredric Daniel Schubart, who for ten long years was supported by Christian charity in the penitentiary at Hohenaspurg, because he had said and written things which priests, princes and policemen, and other fat boarders of the German people did not like—wrote also that beautiful poem *Der Ewige Jude*, and points back to the 13th century A. c. for the origin of this shifting myth. This poem is the source from which

Eugene Sue took his idea of *Le Juif Errant*; and which a German-American poetic soul, ill-favored by the Muses in our days and country, tortured and stretched to a volume of rhymed wooden lines.

It was in the German civil war between Adolph of Nassau, and Albrecht of Austria, toward the end of the thirteenth century, when all furies of destruction were let loose against poor humanity, that under the leadership of a fiend called *Rindfleisch* over 100,000 Jews were slaughtered in Southern Germany, and the destruction of all of them was threatened who would not embrace the cross. Then it was, it is supposed, that the myth of the Wandering Jew originated, seeing that all the violence of mobs, the extermination of the Jew. *Der ewige Jude*, "the eternal Jew," was first his name, which meant the indestructible Jew. This outlawed, persecuted, hunted and down-trodden individual could not possibly be happy, it was believed; how could a man be happy who did not believe in Jesus? He must be namelessly wretched, miserable, crushed down to despair. Why then does he not die? Because he is cursed with eternal life on earth to be miserable forever. So the barbarous phantasy of that age depicted a typical character of the Jew and called it *Den ewigen Juden*, the eternal or deathless Jew. Ahasverus was imagined to be an old, feeble, sickly, bent and broken man, with a hook nose and an evil eye, disheveled hair and beard, peeping looks, a squealing voice and trembling steps, weary of life, exhausted by misery, always at the brink of despair, yet unable to die and condemned to suffer forever. People, blind with fanaticism and stunned with stupidity, could not see how in his domestic life and religious faith the Jew was so much happier than his persecutors. They could! not comprehend that there is something incomparably great, noble, soothing and cheering in the heroic conduct of those who rather suffer than lie, prefer misery to hypocrisy, martyrdom to treachery, who live and die for an idea. They understood the character of the Jew as little as Shakespeare did when he depicted his Shylock;

### Le Juif Errant.

This, however, is the *ewige Jude* of the Germans. The French *Juif errant*, and partly also the English Wandering Jew, is a different character. He is a sound and robust man with the evil conscience that he is a curse to all around him. His look destroys blossoms, flowers and the merry birds. His breath poisons the atmosphere. His steps singe the verdant carpet of nature. He is the carrier of misery, tears, pestilence and death. He knows and feels all that, yet he must live in remorse to be a burden to himself and a curse to others. This is no popular fiction; it is a metaphysical type, a personification of skepticism by a theological priest, and the things suggested in the Christian priest skepticism personified, and the Wandering Jew is the type of the Jewish character. Then skepticism was a crime. It destroyed the faith of the millions; it engendered misery, pestilence and death, certainly in the estimation of the Christian priest, and So was its typical representative, the Wandering Jew.

### Skepticism.

It is certainly true that the Jew opposite all positive religions always was the invincible spirit of negation, a living protest against all dogmas of all creeds; hence lie was to them the source and exponent of skepticism, of perpetual doubt. The only question is, Could the human family exist and reach this state of civilisation without skepticism? I say, no, no, no. Without skepticism, hence without the Jew, the human family could not advance, as little, indeed, as a planetary body could move in its orbit without the co-operation of the centrifugal and centripetal powers. Let us examine the records of history; they will, perhaps, substantiate my proposition.

In our days the word skepticism has lost much of its horror. It is now a philosophical term, denoting even a particular system. Everything has changed. The old-fashioned devil, that northern coarse phantom, in the hands of Goethe, has become quite a polished Mephistopheles and an amusing companion. The bottomless pit is not as deep, hell not as hot and sulphurous as in olden times.

### The Caucasian Race.

History presents this picture: In pre-historic times the Caucasian race, the only race known to Moses, was divided by migration in two families, the Aryan and Semitic. The Aryan traveled from the cradle of humanity, at the basin of the Euphrates and Tigris, to India, and from thence *via* Egypt and Greece into Europe on the one side, and over the Ural Mountains on the other side. The Semites spread over Western Asia and penetrated into Egypt and across the Caucasian Mountains into Europe. Among these two families of the Caucasian race all elements of modern civilization were conceived and begotten. The ancient Aryan civilization culminated in Greece, when the two families were represented by persons and ideas. The ancient Semitic civilization reached its highest point among the Hebrews of Palestine. The history of modern civilization begins where Greek and Jew met and compared notes, and that was in Egypt, especially in Alexandria. For us Alexandria is the starting point. There the Wandering Jew with his skepticism first began to undermine the Greco-Roman idolatry, and the civilization based upon that system. Some innocent people imagine the Jews always sold clothing, new or old, handled money at low or high rates, ate no pork, and wore long beards. The Jew has a history, and that is the point least, taken into consideration.

#### The Hebrews' Second Commonwealth.

The Hebrews established their second commonwealth in Palestine in 536 B. c. The little country up to 331 B. c. was a quiet, peaceable and loyal nook of the Medo-Persian Empire, where agriculture, monotheism and letters were cultivated, and commerce was of a secondary consideration. The Book of Job, written then and there, tells the story of the nation's culture, enlightenment and skepticism. In the year 331, Alexander the Great conquered the Medo-Persian Empire, and died in the city of Babylon a confirmed drunkard. That was before the time of Mr. Murphy's blue ribbons, before our distinguished general's temperance lectures were

delivered, before the beginning of the Christian era. Now such a calamity could not occur, of course.

After Alexander's death, however, and twenty years more of steady warfare, his generals divided the empire among themselves, in four kingdoms, two of which interest us here, viz., the Egyptian and the Syrian. Palestine was first an Egyptian and then a Syrian Province up to 165 B. C., when the Maccabean rebellion broke out, which ended in the independence of Palestine. The Hebrews had been five hundred years in perpetual contact with Gentile nations and governments, and had given birth to the most cosmopolitan orators and writers, such as the second Isaiah, the authors of the Books of Jonah, Ruth and Job, and quite a number of Psalms like the 104th; men of broad, humane and universal principles.

Previous to the conquest of Persia proper, Alexander had conquered Asia Minor, Syria, Phoenicia, Palestine and Egypt. In Egypt he pointed out the site for a commercial metropolis of the world, which was built and called Alexandria. He and his successor invited to Alexandria merchants and artisans of Greece, Macedon and Palestine, and guaranteed equal rights to all. The Jews had come into Egypt in large numbers, and many of them settled down in Alexandria and other maritime cities. They flourished there wonderfully. In the second century B. c. they built the gorgeous Onias Temple in Egypt, in imitation of the one at Jerusalem. Their great synagogue at Alexandria was one of the largest buildings of that city of palaces. About the same time the Jews came in large numbers into Asia Minor from Mesopotamia, then into Greece and Italy; although both in Greece and Egypt they must have been quite numerous long before that period, as the Spartans claimed already then to be cognates and cousins of the Jews.

The Jews had come among the Western Gentiles long before the advent of Christianity, as warriors and captives of war, princes and slaves, voluntary and compulsory immigrants, agriculturists, mechanics, merchants, soothsayers, beggars, impostors, sages and men of letters, all classes and

Since we burn gas, gasolin, and vulgar coal oil, we have not burned any witches. Everything has changed. Just think of Mr. Beecher's Holy Ghost, Mr. Renan's Jesus, and the very accommodating godfather of our modern sugar-and-molasses theology? and you will rather be inclined to think skepticism also has lost its horror, and so has the Wandering Jew.

### Old Testament Heroes.

But now to the records of history. I will not dwell long on the Old Testament heroes, who were already Wandering Jews, carrying far and wide doubt in the veracity of heathen teachings. The prophets carried their messages to all nations around Palestine. Elisha appointed a king of Damascus. Jonah preached repentance and righteousness in the distant Nineveh, Daniel brought two mighty kings down upon their knees before the God of Israel, and made proud conquerors worship the God of the conquered people. These ancient prophets were everywhere, it appears, in Persia and Ethiopia, Armenia and Egypt, China and the Ionian Islands, and centuries before the Christian Era. Yes, it appears the Jews were everywhere almost, widely dispersed as early as 700 B. C., with new homes everywhere, and one of them even in the belly of a fish. That was strange. You may have heard of an undigested fish lying for three days in the stomach of a Jew; but you certainly never heard of an undigested Jew lodged for three days in the stomach of a fish. That was a hard-boiled fellow. However, that is a miracle, and miracles, of course, must be believed, or else in these anomalous times of returning to the father's silver dollar, with a President without a party and a party without a President, people might go so far as to maintain that Christ did not resurrect, the Pope is not infallible, the Westminster catechism and the Apostle's creed could not stand criticism, the Jewish Messiah would not come riding on an ass. You see, miracles must be believed, all of them, although in our particular case they prove nothing, and we rely on none.

Apart from all miracles, however, how was it that those ancient Hebrews were, the oracles of kings and nations? It was because the ideas from Sinai and Moriah had been carried by those messengers far away from home and accepted by the enlightened portions of the Gentiles. It was made known that there is a God and a loftier intelligence in Israel, together with law, justice, freedom, righteousness, virtue and wisdom, of which those heathens of old had but dim and undefined notions. It was before the idea that kings and nations bowed down with reverence, bent their knees with awe, and looked up with veneration. Was not that new idea in the first instance one of doubt to the Pagan, whose belief in his gods was undermined by the light from Sinai and Moriah? It was skepticism carried into the Pagan world by the Jew; it was the Wandering Jew who was the terror of heathen orthodoxy.

### Unjust Critics.

It is, perhaps, proper to observe here that modern critics often are as unjust to the ancient Hebrews as Russia and Roumania are to modern Jews. They always are at work to point out what the ancient Hebrews might have learned of Egypt, Phoenicia, Assyria, or Persia, and never tell us what those nations must have learned of the Israelites. Centuries before the Ptolemys, the Hebrews were in perpetual and friendly contact with the Egyptians. Must not the influence have been mutual? It is never taken into consideration what Confucius and Zoroaster must have learned of the then widely-dispersed and traveling Jews, although the Jewish elements in both those systems, as well as Hebrew words and names, can not be overlooked. We are told what the Hebrews have in common with the Hindoos, but we are not told what the Hebrews in ancient times carried into India. I can not dwell upon these points, because the march of empires is westward, and that much is certain, that the western nations have derived little or no benefit from the ancient learning of the distant East, notwithstanding all the Chinese culture and wisdom, long cues and roasted rats,

clans. They carried westward the civilization from the Jordan with all its ideas and peculiarities, and became among Heathens the spirit of negation, skepticism, the Wandering Jew.

### **Greek and Jew.**

When Greek and Jew first met they could not understand one another. Grecian, like all Aryan direction of mind, was to the exterior, to matter, its phenomena, color, shape, proportion, form, symmetry, harmony or otherwise. Therefore, all Aryan theology is materialistic, and the Greeks became the master; minds in the plastic arts, in the form generally. In their literature, also, it is the beauty of form more than the wealth of ideas, which makes it so attractive and instructive. Greek philosophy also, especially with Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, and their expounders, is Greek in form and Jewish in substance, as ancient writers well maintained, so that an immediate disciple of Aristotle said of his master speaking of a Jew met on one of his journeys. "And we learned more of the Jew than he could learn of us." The Greek lived and worked in the exterior of nature, so did his gods; therefore he became the high priest of the beautiful, the apostle of the fine arts.

The Hebrew mind had the opposite direction. Caring little about the form he looked into the interior, the spirit, the cause, the soul, the metaphysics of nature and nature's objects, which he penetrated to the eternal Jehovah, while he looked into the human being to the eternal breath of life. The substance of all philosophy is Hebrew, its last watchword is Jehovah; the form is Greek. The Greek grasped the present moments, momentum and memento, and became **THE** artist; the Jew looked by the timeless spirit into future evolutions and became a prophet. Both were great, each in his own way. The Greek was a gay and beautiful boy, the Hebrew a grave and earnest man. The Greeks were men of the world, the Hebrews a kingdom of priests. Therefore when first they met they could not understand one another. Still representing the highest intelligence they were obliged to learn of one another, and they did

it very fast. Alexandria was the first school-house. There modern history begins, in the sciences and criticism, as well as in ethics and theology; for there met Jew and Greek.

### **The Beginning of Modern History.**

Modern history begins not with the advent of Christianity, which is itself the product of evolution. It begins with the Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible at Alexandria. Since then all reformati<sup>o</sup>ns have commenced with a new translation of the bible, as under Hieronomus, Saadia, Luther and Mendelssohn. It was quite a natural affair—holy ghosts, angels and such anomalies had nothing to do with it. The spirit of inquiry and learning advanced in Egypt. The Jews were a prominent element of the population, living according to their own laws. The king was eager to know those laws, and they had to be translated into Greek. It was the Palistinian Jews, who laid down the outlines of their philosophy in that translation, now called the Septuagint, which soon after comprised the whole Bible. From and after that time the Wandering Jew appeared in the company of the Muses and in the society of Minerva. An entirely new literature in the Greek language was produced. All species of poetry, lyric, epic and dramatic, were called into requisition to produce Jewish ideas in the Grecian form, going as far as to interpolate Homer and Orpheus in magnificent hexameters, to make Gentiles believe that the ancient poets already had taught the doctrines of monotheism and heralded the praise of the Hebrew ancestors and legislators. Jews and Gentiles were engaged in writing Jewish history in Greek, finally culminating in the master works of Josephus Flavins. Jewish philosophy, amalgamating with the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, or also Zeno and Epicure, was produced in pompous Greek, towering up at last in the works of Philo, the Alexandrian Jew. Living in the hopes of the future, as the Jew always does, the prophetess also had to be called into requisition, and there were produced the Sibyline books, apparently written by prophesying women, to whom all future glory of Israel naturally

appeared to concentrate in a gentleman, whom they called a *Messiah* or *Christos*. As regards the Messiah, it is evident the women have done it all, anyhow. So the Wandering Jew threw the burning torch of skepticism, of new ideas, into the Greek literature, and the Greek was then and for many centuries after the language of culture. So the Hebrew ideas, views, opinions, doctrines, truth and error, wisdom and folly, religion and superstition reached the European nations in all forms of literature.

### Propagation of Judaism.

About the same time the Jews came in large numbers to Greece and Italy, especially to Rome, most likely also to Spain, France and Belgium, as the successors of the ancient Phoenicians and Carthaginians in the world's commerce. In Rome, for instance, they had become so numerous that thousands of them wept at the urn of Caesar when that great captain had been slain and cremated; for he was the friend and patron of the Jews. In the time of Augustus, when Herod's will was read in Rome, 8,000 Roman Jews protested against its main stipulations. The Emperor Tiberias took 4,000 Roman Jews and sent them as soldiers to the Island of Sardinia. With the Jew Judaism also went to Rome. He had no apostles and no evangelists, hired no missionaries, paid no bounties for souls enlisted, had no professorships and no government offices to bestow on proselytes, and made of them neither saints nor priests, nor even colporteurs or holy book-peddlers, and yet he made numerous proselytes. In the East, Queen Helen, her husband and two sons tell the tale, how far Judaism had progressed. Its progress in Rome and the provinces was still more rapid. It reached all classes up to the palace of the Caesars, so that the Emperor Damitian, in protection of the State religion, enacted stringent laws against Roman proselytes to Judaism. One of them, Aquila, made a new Greek translation of the Pentateuch, and another, Clemens, was of consular dignity, and his wife a near kin of the Caesars. The Jews added to their daily prayers one for the righteous proselytes (ועל גרי הצדק). Tacitus, Juvenal

and other Roman Writers were astonished that the Romans and especially the women believed so largely in the Jewish God, observed the Sabbath and Jewish ceremonies; and scorned' in bitter satires. -Paul., the actual author of Gentile Christianity, on his journeys met everywhere devout Gentiles, who believed in; the Jewish Bible as final authority; hence they must have been proselytes in fact, if not in form.

### Origin of Christianity.

So the Wandering Jew with a large Greco-Jewish literature and a host of camp-followers, traversed the Roman empire, and reached the heathen temples and altars. He spread skepticism among the pagans, doubts, grave and alarming, in the reality of the gods worshiped, the efficiency of the sacerdotal observances, the truth of doctrines accepted, and the veracity of priests and priestesses, until the altars were shaken to their very foundation. So the soil had been prepared by the Jew's skepticism, and a new tree of knowledge had been planted in the irrigated ground, when by the fall of Jerusalem the Jew was disabled, and the first teachers of Christianity stepped in with their policy of conciliation and accommodation and, by natural evolution from Judaism and paganism, Christianity came to the surface. Whatever merits there may be in primitive Christianity, it came into existence by the revolutions in the Gentile mind, started and prompted by the skepticism and instruction carried by the Jew into the Aryan mind. It was the first great work of the Wandering Jew, the first result of his westward tour. He was condemned, ridiculed, cursed and hated by the ancient Greco-Roman orthodoxy, because he had spread the pestilence of skepticism, and undermined the old State religion; but done it was, it had to be done. The work was done by the Jew, and Christianity earned the fruits and the honor; This is the first act in the great drama of the Wandering Jew.

### Jews in Western Europe.

And now the scenes must be shifted, a catastrophe, terrible and bloody, closed the

first act. Democratic Palestine after a heroic struggle of two hundred years was vanquished by Caesarian Rome with her monstrous emperors. Jerusalem was laid in ruins, its temple and palaces were destroyed, and after a heroic resistance Bethar also fell, and the Jew was crucified and buried under the ruins of his country. There was left a land of smoking debris crimsoned with the blood of its champions. The land once flowing with milk and honey became a howling waste. The sycamore groves, which once reechoed the somber melodies from the mysterious harp of Judah, resounded now the whining and hissing of jackals and serpents. The lonely cedar, shaken by the storm, sighed upon the hill-top. Hermon sent down bloody tears, and Jordan rolled on with mournful accents into the abyss of the Dead Sea. The woe-stricken Jew, who outlived the catastrophe, went forth a slave or a fugitive to the lands of his captivity and tormenting sorrows. He left behind all that is dear and near to the human heart. The flower of his youth, the golden fruits of his manhood laid there, slain, bleeding, dead. There were the ancient graves of his sires, his kings, prophets, heroes and inspired singers; there rested the bones of his dear and beloved ones. There were the monuments of his glory, the illustrious reminiscences of 1,500 years of most wonderful history, and every spot of the land told a tale of sublime deeds. He left there his independence, his freedom, his human rights, his happiness, and went forth a slave, fugitive or exile to the land of the strangers, a lonely pilgrim in the cheerless desert. The Jew was crucified and buried. Did he resurrect? Let us see.

Prom and after the time of Pompey's conquest of Jerusalem, the Hebrews, especially of the over-populated Galilee, migrated in large numbers westward, and came in large colonies with the Romans to the Rhine and the Danube. Thither came also many of the fugitives after the fall of Jerusalem and Bethar. The Jew carried the ancient civilization from the Jordan, with its agriculture, language, law and religion, to the semi-barbarous tribes at the banks of the Rhine and

the Danube. Up to this day the largest number of Jews is Germanic in language or jargon, names and inclinations; because they came first to Germany, in largest numbers, became there a governing class, until they were persecuted and many of them driven into Hungary, Poland, Russia, down to the Black Sea and the Balkan Mountains. Germany, as Caesar and Strabo described it, was an unbroken forest, thinly inhabited by barbarous tribes. The Jew came with his ancient culture, and impressed his civilization on the aborigines, the Anglo-Saxons included. Therefore you find in the ancient Germanic dialects as many and more Hebrew than Latin roots. Therefore the laws of those tribes, partly embodied in the common law, are so much akin to the Jewish laws, although the Roman Empire was originally between these two nationalities. The Jews were the merchants, mechanics, doctors and largest agriculturists among the ancient Teutons. They were their teachers and benefactors, and lived with them in perfect peace and harmony up to the close of the sixth century, and in tolerable circumstances to the beginning of the Crusades, when the devil opened the flood gates of hell and sent forth his myriads of destructive furies.

### **Origin of Western Christianity.**

The pagans on the Rhine and the Danube learned also the Jew's religion, which was so intimately interwoven with his laws and civilization. Although many a German was by faith a Jew and the communities were permeated by Jewish ideas and doctrines, yet Judaism at that stage of its history could not triumph over paganism. The Jew pointed back to the distant Jerusalem as the center of all religion and earthly hopes of man. None could feel his yearning after his country, his love of home and his respect for the history of his ancestors. The Jew spoke of a sacrificial polity and the Aaronic priesthood, the glory of Mount Moriah, the pomp and grandeur of Zion, the hopes of mankind as one great family, and he spoke in the accents of Oriental poetry, in the language of liquid fire, which Northern hearts, could not feel—it was unintelligible

to the sons of the forest. He praised a God too sublime and spoke of ethics too humane for the worshippers of Thor and Wodan. Therefore, although largely Judaized, the Germanic and Celtic tribes did not fully embrace Judaism.

When thus heathenism was undermined, thus the soil prepared toward the close of the sixth century, the Christian missionary, backed by the power and wealth of Rome, the Christian missionary from Ireland, stepped in and built on that very soil the Church of Western Christianity. The Jew had done the work and the Christian reaped the benefit. Christianity was planted upon Jewish soil, Jewish culture and Jewish sentiment. Therefore the people, though Christians, continued to live in peace with the Jews, kept the Jewish Sabbath, observed Jewish ceremonies, Jews and Christians intermarried and were still one people, until the priests saw that the Jew's belief was the very skepticism, which undermines all their religious dogmas. Then came the councils and prohibited Christians from observing the Jewish Sabbath, and practicing Jewish observances. They repeatedly interdicted intermarriage of Jews and Christians, and it took years of cruel consistency to carry out the measures of the church, although enforced by the arm of worldly power. Then came princes and mobs and disinherited the Jew of his landed property, robbed his treasures, made him poor and miserable, and forced him to become the broker, trader, merchant and doctor of the Christian. But, all these measures proving fruitless in the main, the people after all inclining more to Jewish doctrines and practices than to those ordained in Rome, the mad cry was raised at the heel of the Jew: "He crucified Jesus." The priests of the Occident had learned of their predecessors of the Orient this patent remedy against all humane and generous feeling, and they raised the bloody and barbarous outcry, The Jew has crucified Jesus. They knew it was a falsehood, but they also knew it would do the work of making the Jew odious, it would rend asunder Jew and Christian in two hostile factions. When, however, also this barbarous war-cry proved a failure in

numerous instances, they brought out the myth of the Wandering Jew, the indestructible personification of the skepticism, which the Jew, by his very existence and consistency, spreads as a pestilence against all orthodoxy in all lands and ages. The Wandering Jew spreads misery and death, they cried; down with the Jew! The Wandering Jew with his indomitable skepticism brings life, progression, reformation, intellectual advancement; he brought your Christianity East and West; without him you would stagnate or be petrified in a dead letter dogmatism, said the genius of history; and, lo and behold! the Jew, crucified a thousand times and buried out of sight, always resurrected again, and became *Bet Ewige Jude*, the "eternal," indestructible and invincible Jew, the immortal principle of progress by the switches of skepticism, and all demons and furies can not change it. This is the second act of the long and spectacular drama, enacted during the time of man's crazy flights before the foot-lamps of ignorance and fanaticism.

### Origin of the Islam.

Shift the scenes, turn on the light, bring up Oriental gardens, palms, caravans, bright colors, let us look up another act of the drama. While myriads of the exiled Jews went westward, other myriads of the same people went eastward to their brethren on the Euphrates and Tigris, on the Indus and Ganges, also into Arabia and Parthia. There between the Caspian Sea, the Indus and Western Arabia, were the ancient Hebrew colonies since the days of Salmenasor, with their center of gravity on the southern end of the Euphrates. For nearly a thousand years they had formed there a State within the States under a chief of the house of David, with the title of *Resh Golutha*, "Prince of the Captivity," being governed by their own laws and officers from their own communities. When Palestine was no longer the home of the Jew there were established in the region between Arabia and Persia those seats of Jewish learning, the celebrated schools of Sura, Nehardea, Pumbedita and Machusa. There were the chief justices of the Eastern Hebrews and their head teach-



ers. There the national material of learning was enlarged and systematized as now before us in the Talmud Babli. In this region of Asia, the Jew was orientalized, and a considerable portion of Oriental heathens were Judaized. The mutual influence was perhaps most conspicuous between Hebrews and Arabs, as is evident from the ancient religion and literature of the latter. They worshiped Abraham and Sarah and Moses, besides Adam and Eve, gave currency to many Jewish tales and traditions and adopted Jewish laws; while the Hebrews have embodied many Arabic views, tales and terms in the Babylonian Talmud and Midrash, and preserved many legends concerning Jews in Arabia devout Arabs and Arabian prophets.

Here, and especially from the second to the end of the sixth centuries, we see the Wandering Jew performing a wonderful task. The crucified and buried Jew resurrects again as the civilizing agent, the carrier of ideas and principles from Horeb and Moriah. The thunders of Sinai re-echo in Arabia, the heathen temples are shaken, their altars are overthrown, the Wandering Jew has sown the seed of skepticism and cultivated the tender plants of progression and reformation. Again a revolution by evolution, a new world grows out of the fragments of the old, imperceptible first, self-evident then, and at the surface thereof its last architect appears, who in this case was Mohammed with his Koran, the source and beginning of the Islam, now the religion and fundamental principle of government and ethics of a hundred millions of human beings. As little, indeed, as you can imagine the New Testament without the Old, you can think of the Koran without the Jewish lore, as represented in the Talmud. The one like the other is an offspring of Jewish mind in connection with inherited heathen ideas. The Wandering Jew is at the bottom of both. He has sown the seed and others have reaped the harvest. He has fought the battles and others earned the laurels. He has done the deed and left the credit to his competitors. He has earned ingratitude and scorn where he had spent blessing with munificent hands.

### The Middle Ages,

But here it ends not, there is another act in the marvelous drama, perhaps as wonderful as the former. Progression and reformation, like evolution and thought, can not stop; therefore, the Wandering Jew must proceed on his endless tour, and I must invite you, ladies and gentlemen, to follow him just a little longer.

The followers of Mohammed and the Koran first appeared on the stage of history as fierce and irresistible warriors and conquerors, forcing upon the nations the religion of the Arabian apostle, the poetical son of a poetical people, wild with combativeness, thirsty after conquest and glory, inspired by the force of truth, and fanaticised by the alloy of fiction and falsehood. The Orient yielded to the crescent, which was carried in triumph into Constantinople, closing the Byzantine Empire, and into Spain to the very doors of France, where the Pyrennes and the French army stopped its progress.

When the fury of warfare had spent its rage, the Arabs settled down to civilized life and cultivated the arts of peace. Gradually they rose in the scale of culture to a civilizing factor. They sought again the Greek classics and studied them carefully, translated and imitated them. Through the portals of poetry they reached the halls of science and philosophy, and here again they translated and transcribed, till they became independent and Original thinkers, philosophers and scientists, especially in medicine, mathematics, astronomy and physics, and their schools became famous, and beneficial to humanity.

The Hebrews, who, like the Christians, at the start of the Islam suffered largely by its barbarous fierceness, gradually became an integral part of the Mohammedan kingdoms in Asia, Africa and Europe, and were well treated. With some interruptions, they enjoyed all the privileges of the man and citizen among the Mohammedans during the dark periods of the Middle Ages. The consequence was that the Jews also became hard-working students, prominent poets, philosophers, scientists, statesmen, financiers and merchants of great enterprise.

Titer produced a galaxy of ones, between the tenth and fifteenth centuries, marked in the horizon of history as stars of the first magnitude from the Orient to the Occident and vice versa.

However, while half of the horizon was thus illuminated by Mohammedan and Jewish learning, research and culture, the other half assumed a midnight darkness by the retrogressions triumphant ignorance, bottomless fanaticism and intolerance in Christendom after the death of Charlemagne, idling from the ninth to the sixteenth century without modification of any consequence to suffering humanity, with its thick clouds hanging over the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the terrible debris of its destructive fury deposited in this nineteenth century, especially in Russia and her allies, in the claims of priests, feudal knights, princes by nativity, the fanaticism, ignorance and hatred of the masses. In the factions and fractions of modern society.

The dark, centuries presented the anomalous prospect that the Wandering Jew, being the persecuted, burned, outraged and outlawed beast of burden in Christendom, the dog of priests, princes and mobs, was at the same time the prince of commerce, the lord of the finances, the people's merchant, the princes' counsellor, the physician of popes and emperors, the apostle of science, and the exponent of the ancient and modern treasures of human intelligence. The Jew was the only human being in Christendom, whose intelligence was not under the control of Pope and Council, and was not benighted by a stupendous dogmatism and scholastic quibbles. The Jew, except by persecution, had no Middle Ages. While he was robbed and persecuted in the one place, there sat at another place the prominent Christian doctors, Albert the Great, Thomas of Aquina, and other great lights of the church, and studied carefully what the Jew Avicbron (Soloman Ibn Gabirol) or E. Moses, of Egypt, (Moses Maimonides) had written, to quote, expound and imitate them for the benefit of the church. Popes and potentates had their Jewish translators engaged to reproduce in Latin what Jews had written in Hebrew or Arabic. The Jew was the merchant and

the scientific tourist who carried books, information and learning from land to land, from the Orient to the Occident and vice versa.

It was an anomalous state of society. The civilized world was cut into two hostile factions, held apart by relentless and implacable hatred, Christendom on the one side and Mohammedanism on the other. In Christendom darkness, ignorance, slavery and oppression advanced from century to century, and none was permitted to think a free or new thought. The science and learning of the Mohammedans were useless to the Christian, for none dared to read the books of the infidels and hounds, none would venture to know the language of the enemies of the cross. It appeared as though the night could never end; no morning would ever dawn upon the downtrodden portion of the human family.

#### Origin of the Reformation.

It was again the Wandering Jew who stepped between the hostile factions and brought progression and reformation. The Jew rendered in Latin what had been written in the Semitic. He brought in Latin and in Hebrew the new ideas from the other camp into Christendom. He brought to Christians the new philosophy, the new criticism, the science, learning, letters, arts and industries of other countries. Christians began to study Hebrew, read and inhaled new ideas in a new atmosphere. The Wandering Jew had sown again the seed of skepticism, the tender plants of progression and reformation began to show in the Humanitarian school. The soil was prepared, the seed was sown, and upon that soil there rose Martin Luther and the Christian Reformation. As little, indeed, as the New Testament or the Koran could have come into existence without the long and consistent labors of the Wandering Jew, so little the Reformation could have possibly evolved from the Christian soil without the labor of the same Wandering Jew, the works of Ibn Gabirol, Maimonides, Ibn Ezra, Kimchi, Gersonides and ever so many other Jewish thinkers with their free and untrammelled research, their wide range of philosophical

thought, their ingenious conciliation of faith and reason by making faith philosophical and philosophy religious. If it had not been for those Jewish thinkers and the Wandering Jew to carry their ideas and thoughts into Christendom, theology would have remained the divine comedy for the men in power, and a fabric of oppression for two-thirds of the human family, an ingenious contrivance of words to terrify the masses and to satisfy despotic rulers. And as is the theology of a people so are its polity and policy, so are its social institutions and conceptions.

You have heard them say that the Jew is revengeful, and it is so. For all the wrongs benighted barbarians have done him, he did not claim a pound of flesh—that is a poet's fiction who, perhaps, had never seen a Jew, and turned against him an Italian anecdote. The Jew's revenge, was of a different character. He destroyed the small and the big gods of his persecutors. He dispersed the illusions, exposed superstition, battled against pious ignorance, protested against slavery, claimed freedom of belief, thought and speedy, and raised his voice powerfully against all kinds of folly, prejudice and oppression. He carried skepticism and learning from land to land, was persecuted and cursed for it, gave the impulses to the world's main progressions and reformations, and stood watchfully at the cradle of every new born idea of light and freedom. That was the Jew's revenge.

### Modern Philosophy.

Shift the scenes once more, turn on the lights, let modern actors appear on the stage, let come in Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler, Guttenberg, Faust, and Christopher Columbus, Lord Bacon, Descartes and Leibnitz; let rise the spring sun of modern civilization, raise the May tree of freedom, and let the musicians play the Marseilles and Hail Columbia. Do not forget, however, to call in also the men in the long black gowns, the professors, with powdered wigs and cues. For the custodians of the Reformation soon after the first start fell into a new-fangled mysticism and fatalism. Hand in hand with priest and soldier they worked in the

sweat of their brows to keep up the little, narrow universe with the small local god of the Middle Ages in support of the lords and rulers, on earth and their hosts of hirelings, all sustained artificially by the scholastic philosophy of the dark ages.

Where is the Wandering Jew, the horrid harbinger of skepticism? Is he hunted down by persecution, or intimidated by the new Christian love? Yes, he was hunted down in Germany, France, Poland and elsewhere, and slept. But he woke up so much more powerful in Holland, in Amsterdam, a lean tall, hook-nosed Jew, and his name was Baruch Spinoza, the most terrible of all horrible infidels, the most formidable of all enemies of the old and outworn dogmatism and mental slavery. Orthodoxy whined under his lashes, and went in sackcloth and ashes. He upset the whole host of localized gods, as Copernicus had destroyed their palaces on high. He broke through the tine scholastic spider-webs of artificial theology, made room for science and new philosophy, claimed freedom of research and word, and became the apostle of modern philosophy all over the civilized world. He was the necessary consequence of the past, the last link in the chain of Jewish reasoners from the Euphrates to the North Sea, beginning with Saadia in the tenth century, and ending—where?—yes, where? Echo says, nowhere. All Christian philosophy turns about Spinoza, pro and con. Two-thirds of all modern philosophers and scientists have become wandering Jews with a burden of skepticism which threatens suffocation to all dogmatism, all mental slavery. Our Christian neighbors have become wandering Jews themselves, in name and practice. The Puritans and Presbyterians are the Pharisees of old. The Episcopalians are the aristocratic Saducees of days gone by. Our Quakers are the Essenes from time of yore. They call themselves Abraham, Moses, David, Habakuk, Obadiah and Zachariah, or Sarah, Rachel, Abigail, Miriam, Hannah, or any other Jewish name. They sing Jewish psalms and read the Jewish Bible for the sake of salvation, eat, drink, do business, and get rich as a Jew, and take as high a rate of interest as they can get. They

are Judaizing and do not know it. Little is left for the Wandering Jew to do. Still he has no rest. He must reappear and do his work; until there shall be no more superstition, no ignorance and no intolerance, no hatred, no self-delusion and no darkness among sects.

He must reappear and wander on to the end of all woe and misery in society, till the habitable earth shall be one holy land, every city a Jerusalem, every house a temple, every table an altar, every parent a

high priest, and Jehovah the only God; till light and truth shall have dominion over all, every land shall be a home of the free, every government the beacon light of liberty, and mankind shall be one family of equal rights and privileges. Then the curtain will drop on the grand drama of the Wandering Jew. Then a kind good-morning to all nations and tongues; but now to this respected audience: Good night! good night, all!