AT THE FOOT of SINAI

GEORGES CLEMENCEAU

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By
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AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION BY
A. V. ENDE

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"Bookmen are not swordsmen," says the ancient Oriental proverb. Nor politicians—adds the wisdom of our own time. It is the one thing or the other. The mixture never succeeds. Writers merely dabble and blunder in politics. Witness Chateaubriand and Lamartine. And active politicians stumble over the written word.

Two exceptions prove the rule—Benjamin Disraeli and Georges Clemenceau. Disraeli, who remained a poet in politics and Clemenceau, who could not disguise the politician even under the mask of a writer,—two world-figures striking the

imagination as did few before them, and very few after, both with the indelible stamp of strangeness on their brow.

"The Asiatic riddle" and the riddle of the Tiger. The Jew and the little man from the Vendée with the face of the Mongolian. The same incomprehensible smile, the same unfathomable aloofness. Nobody understood Disraeli, the man and his work, his ideas and his motives. And very few of the contemporaries of Georges Clemenceau can penetrate behind the strange mask of this complicated personality. They saw him fighting, always fighting, with a sardonic smile on his lips, and the ironic twinkle in his dark, scintillating eyes. He fought for forty years, a St. George battling the Dragon. But what was his Dragon? He fought Gembetta and Jules Ferry, Brisson and Rouvier—one ministry after an-

other, even those he himself helped to create. He became a legend—"The Tiger"—the ogre of the French Parliament. But why and whence his unquenchable lust of destruction? One of his admirers enumerated once, in his presence, all the parliamentarian victims of the "Tiger," and counted half a score.

"Well, you exaggerate," interrupted Clemenceau. "It was always the same ministry."

This is the secret of his life-work. He fought always, all these forty years, one incessant, untiring battle against the same enemy. The enemy of Voltaire, the enemy of Disraeli—stupidity and complacence. As Callas finds his champion in Voltaire so does Dreyfus find his defender in Clemenceau. As Disraeli forces upon Roumania the human rights to the Jew, so Clemenceau compels the

recalcitrant Eastern-European nations to accept the clauses of the minority rights, placing the Jews of these lands on an equal footing with the other peoples of the world. The nature of the fight and the weapons are different. Voltaire fought with his wit, Disraeli with his imagination—Clemenceau with his tremendous logic.

Here is his power and—his limitation. Logic is unbiased. The pure logical mind is a surgeon's blade, sterilized by an acid. And Clemenceau is a surgeon by nature; a fencer by training. "A short-necked bull, the horror of the most daring espadas," said his old enemy, the dandy of France, M. Barrés. We would transpose the comparison. He is the finest "espada" who ever lived in France, the terror of the oldest bulls in the arena. An "espada" on the tribune, with his in-

cisive, laconic, sarcastic, trenchant word, an "espada" with the short, daggerlike, swirling, flashing spear in his writing. Short phrases, sentences following each other with rapidity—the "great style" of the seventeenth century. A rich, fluid language. But the fluid is often undiluted acid. A power of evocation, unparalleled in journalism. And he is the journalist, the publicist. Even in his fiction or in his plays.

Art as art is not his domain. His novel "Les Plus Forte," his Chinese play "Le Voile du Bonheur," his short stories of Jewish life, "Au Pied du Sinai," first issued in 1898, and republished in 1920,—they are not creations of an artist, the detached observer, whose only aim is to shape his impression of the world. Clemenceau wanted to reshape the world. Only he was too clever to believe in the

possibility; too ironical to take the world so seriously.

He is the man of side-views and this means broad views, odd views, strange aspects. A Vendean by birth, heir of somber believers and anti-revolutionaries, a Parisian of life-long habit, a cosmopolitan by culture, a skeptic by the bent of his mind, he muses over the problem of religion, chooses the yellow jacket of the Chinese mandarin to give vent to his pessimism, dons the gabardine of the Eastern Galician Jew to emphasize his ideas of man and history, of society and its fundamental principles. Was it his unerring instinct that led him to "Busk" the Galician town, "bois et boue"—wood and mud —a Godforsaken old-time Eastern Galician townlet, where poor Jews are hurdled in misery and abjection? He does not idealize the Jews. He sees them

as they are, but as they are he accepts them, recognizing the reason of the low estate of this obscure section of Jewry. Just because it is dark, his tiger eyes are straining. And this miserable life of an old, superannuated unoccidental community, almost on the border of Europe —the Europe of which Paris is the center, the "Ville-Cerveau,"—brings forth in this arch-skeptic an emotion of human brotherhood. A conception of the tragedy of our modern culture. He looks beyond Busk and sees Busk versus Mundum; Busk-Israel in battle with a world; the struggle within an old, moribund civilization, where egoism is the dominant chord. And he preaches pity. "Less license to egoism, more place for pity." Who would expect this philosophy of pity from the "Tiger," from the ogre of the French political fairy tale?

They did not believe him and he was too haughty to convince them. He concealed his real face behind the assumed tiger-mask, until the fatal hour struck. And Clemenceau, the "Cosmopolitan," the "Anti-patriot" as those fools of the Barrés-Deroulede-Judet clique stigmatized him, became in the direst hour of France, the "Man of Destiny." The skeptic inspired France with indomitable faith, and brought her to victory. Victory not only to a country, but to a principle. And this principle underlying the Treaty of Versailles, "Le Traite de Clemenceau" as they called it in France, is individuality, assertion of the individual against the strangling power of the state, of the Leviathan-Superstate, as conceived by Germany. He dealt a crushing blow to this old snare of humanity, the power of group over group, nation

over nation, abstract idea over the living organism. And he became the liberator of the small, oppressed nations. All the autonomists, all the irredentists, found an eager supporter in this old fighter for the redemption of man. He gave them freedom with a sneer, and made peace with a leering, almost cynical smile. He knew very well that this is not the "End," that Versailles is not an antechamber to the realm of Heaven. He did not play the part of godfather, in this tremendous "Passions-Spiel." His task was merely to awaken energies and to let loose the forces in chains—Poles, Lithuanians, Jews, Greeks, Southern Slavs—all of them, and let them play their part in the world, for good or for evil.

"I never look backward, I see only that which is before me," once said Clemenceau in the French Chamber. And his

work in word and action was to subdue the overbearing past, to free the conscience of man from the dead weight of history.

"I can make war and make peace. Clemenceau makes only war," said of him the master of sonorous words and carver of empty shells, Aristide Briand. But Briand had never understood the wrath of the man of pity against those who had no pity. Clemenceau made peace, to enforce right, not to further commerce. The world is for him not a financial oratorical, or artistic problem, but a moral one. "How shall I give?" asks Baron Moses in one of these stories. And only "from the touch of death that on the threshold of the beyond he conceived the meaning of life."

This moral attitude, this insatiable hunger for giving, the "quantum satis"

of every moralist, distorted by doubt, by the consciousness of the theatricality of this same attitude, intellect laughing behind the back of emotion—this is what makes Georges Clemenceau one of the foremost fighters of our modern sophisticated times. A splendid "espada"—yet despairing of ever throwing down the Bull.

A. CORALNIK.

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BARON MOSES

Baron Moses von Goldschlammbach was rich, very rich, in fact, too rich. He had inherited his wealth from his father, the baron Eliphas, a former broker for contraband tobacco. A Portuguese vessel had saved him from the hands of the Belgian police in the harbor of Ostende and had landed him in the feverish Bay of Santos with nothing in his possession but a portfolio containing a rather dubious contract with an equally dubious speculator in coffee.

In time all South American republics came to know, under divers aspects, that despised Jew Eliphas, who traded in

everything that could be sold and whom an unheard-of stroke of good luck made the right hand of the most honorable and most highly respected magnate of Caracas.

It was a mere matter of chance that a scrupulously kept engagement had secured for him the esteem of Don Jose Ramon y Lopez, whom a victorious revolution placed at the head of a certain enterprise for the building of railroads and the dredging of a harbor. The scheme was of colossal proportions, calculated to satisfy the hostile parties, all of them equally hungry for spoils. By common consent the agreement was sufficiently elastic to suit all occasions. Unfortunately Jose Ramon y Lopez expired suddenly at an intimate dinner with his partner Eliphas, whom general confidence had made the dummy for all those

who had no need or desire to be publicly associated with the enterprise. Nothing was found on Ramon of the package of letters that were to be distributed that very evening. All that was discovered in the dead man's apartment, where Eliphas wept and in desperate grief at the loss of his friend knocked his head against the wall, was a primitive agreement, dating from the very inception of the scheme, which left the survivor in possession of everything.

At first an outcry of rage went forth, moderated by involuntary admiration. A hundred irregularities of form were suddenly discovered in the concession. The contract of the enterprise was denounced, a suit was entered and there was even talk of special legislation. It was then that Eliphas was found to be the possessor of a singular gift: that of golden persuasion.

As soon as this devil of a man began to talk with one of his opponents, however powerful that man might be, he was won over to the cause of Eliphas, how and why he himself did not know. Without doubt the dazzling millions, of which the lucky partner of Ramon was the provisional holder, had something to do with it; besides the conviction was gaining ground, that nothing would make Eliphas lose his grip on that fortune. In time this view was justified, for within five years Eliphas had won his suit and serenely established himself as heir of the vast property.

Notwithstanding his sudden rise in the business world Eliphas remained good and modest. He went about in the towns as before, buying, selling, speculating, but he was prudent enough to have two trusty giants closely follow his steps.

He seemed to have no desire to attract attention by provocative luxury. He had no taste for spending. Gifts to charitable institutions, to synagogues and Christian churches won for him the favor and good will of everybody.

During one of his journeys the bishop of Caracas persuaded him to be converted, and he decided to take this step without hesitation when he learned of what social advantages it would be to his son, young Moses. No doubt it was to prepare him for his future position in society that the youth was promptly sent to the Jesuit brothers of Cordova.

Thus the heir of Eliphas had his life all mapped out. Richly provided for by a heavy bank account, there remained nothing more to be done than further to fit him for the place he was to occupy,

To prove that he did not solely rely upon the power of wealth to pave the way of his offspring, Eliphas yielded to the additional suggestion to buy a title from the Pope. He did not aspire to anything higher than a simple baronetcy. Some asserted that there was in this step an adroit flattery, addressed to the great kings of his race in the hope, were it possible, to obtain pardon for his apostasy.

As Henry IV. after his conversion remained indulgent towards his obstinate Huguenots, so Eliphas secretly assisted his former co-religionists and assured himself of the good-will of Israel while he was building cathedrals in honor of the Holy Virgin and the Trinity. Our capitals offered him their palaces. He bought them and paid for them royally. Thus he won the esteem of their former owners and discreetly rendering them

certain services even acquired their warm friendship.

After he had accomplished all this, Baron Eliphas wisely died, leaving his son Moses in full possession of the powerful position that he had so scrupulously assured for him by divers acts, in which both the good Lord as well as the devil had their share.

It must be admitted in praise of Baron Moses, that he seemed to accept nothing in the legacy of his father with as much joy as the story of the honor pledge faithfully kept towards Jose Ramon y Lopez, which was the original source of the baronetcy of Goldschlammbach. At the death of Eliphas he had the story most artistically printed and published in all languages. Owing to the remoteness of the time and the place, the rest of the biography seemed to have effaced itself

in the memory of his contemporaries.

The question now arose, what Baron Moses was going to do with the enormous wealth and prominent social position, which the restless life of the father had secured for the innocent heir. But whoever may have asked that question, it was apparently not Moses himself. For spontaneously, without the least premeditation, without any thought whatsoever, he continued in all simplicity the work of his father who had accumulated and hoarded in order that he might accumulate and hoard. There was neither vice nor virtue in it. What can one do, if all impulse of good or evil is lacking in a human being? Eliphas had imagined that he accumulated and hoarded for Moses. But Moses had no children.

He had married a Jewess of perfect beauty, a model of the Oriental harem

type, indolent and passive. She loved him well and at set hours fulfilled all her duties towards her lord and provider, not to mention supplementary charities towards others, which the facile custom of our Occidental morals permits.

The baron was not jealous, for the friends of his wife showed him the greatest respect in the world, and it was consideration and homage that his gentle and harmless vanity craved. Happy in his home, the millionaire never thought of seeking love outside of it. What could he have found that he did not have at his own hearth? Besides the feeling that one can buy everything, even what is not beyond price, permits one to enjoy everything in a dream that embraces all, while a conscious act would realize pleasure only in fragments.

Avarice did not enter into his motives

of action. What could be invented, what could be found to appropriate all the happiness of this world, to live one's life in full? Luxury is an amusement that rapidly exhausts itself, when one can desire nothing without obtaining it, when the privation of a day does not whet the joy of satisfying a desire that had become a pleasure by anticipation. So there was nothing to look forward to on that side. What he wanted, he could have: hence he wanted nothing.

The pleasures of the table required certain aptitudes which Baron Moses ostensibly lacked. After futile efforts to develop the vices of the palate, the man who enjoyed simple soups, purees and hashes and remained indifferent to the rarest wines, had to renounce the pleasure of procuring for himself the delights of the table, which his friends enjoyed with

avidity. But as he was obstinate, he tried again, contrary to his innate taste, to compete with them and finally succeeded in making his digestive organs revolt. This had at least the advantage of forcing him to take better care of his health. Two seasons of Carlsbad, however, effected a cure and he soon found himself in the old predicament.

The racing stable was odious to him, since he did not enjoy the singular pleasure of being methodically robbed in broad daylight. Besides he detested all forms of gambling. Why gamble, if you expect nothing from winning? He was persuaded into arranging royal hunting parties and agreed, because he was asked to do so. But when at his post under an oak, like a manorial judge in old royal France, a hare or a deer appeared before him between two game drivers, like an in-

nocent criminal between two officers of the law, he resisted the temptation of summary condemnation and prompt execution. Then one day he seriously wounded a game-warden. That led to sensational reports in the papers, although the man received a generous pension. Another time he himself was struck by a stray shot. From that time he no longer appeared at his hunting parties, but was represented by his stable master, a man familiar with the customs and manners of society.

The theater bored him as much as did life itself. What interest was there in watching people clamoring to obtain by ruse or by force—or even by divine interference—what they do not possess, when the humblest millionaire could have simplified all those tiresome formalities when one has, or believes to have,

the universal solution for all problems, what pleasure could come from watching the development of human conflicts?

There were the arts. Should he yawn at the opera, seated behind naked shoulders, always the same, or buy well-known paintings relying on the word of others, since he himself lacked personal judgment? Or should he collect antiques, snuffboxes, or even bandages, as did a famous baron who was reigning in Paris society? What purpose was there, what pleasure could be derived in the pursuit of such fads?

Finally there were the sentiments of communal spirit, love of mankind, the desire to serve progress by promoting education, the patronage of science, the encouragement of discoveries. All this is deadly stale, monotonous and of no appreciable effect upon the present, upon

the man who expects nothing from these things in furtherance of what he loves, because he loves nothing, and for the simple reason that nothing is given nor refused to him.

Still one must do one's share in the charities, no doubt, in order to be with the current and to satisfy one's own conscience. It is not difficult to do that. At Carlsbad Moses had seen on many bourgeois houses this pharisaical announcement: "Protection against beggary." By remitting a certain sum to the community, the owners of these houses obtained the right to arrest every beggar and to let him starve without danger of being accused of inhumanity, since they had given their share. This is simplified Christianity, the gospel as administrative mechanism. Moses could not conceive of any other manner of rendering assistance. Every

year he remitted to competent authorities a certain sum, a sort of supplementary tax that he had inposed upon himself, and this being done, he would sincerely say to himself that night: "I am a good man."

No, he did not know real goodness, this poor man, since the pleasure of procuring joy to others by personal privation, by personal sacrifice, was necessarily denied to him. As he was not wicked and the beggars besieged his door, he established not far from his residence a welfare agency, the expense of which he defrayed. There experts in charity work opened the letters, soliciting aid, made inquiries and allotted the money which he furnished them as best they knew.

To climb the staircase of some rickety hovel himself, to be moved by the sight of human suffering, to commune in their sorrows with his human brothers, to in-

dulge in the infinite pleasure of changing misery to joy, of distributing happiness with his own hands, to try to correct the imperfect order of the world and by the good coming from an individual to efface the evil which had followed in the wake of creation: this idea never occurred to him, could not occur to the unfortunate prisoner of his wealth.

Immured in the dismal fortress of social conventions, he ordered to give, but never gave himself. If he founded a hospital, if he endowed a public institution of any kind, the gift came from his cashier, from his reason, not from himself, from his pitying heart, from his soul, enjoying the happiness the hand so easily bestowed. Had Moses been poor, he would have followed some trade, as Eliphas had done at his début; he would have paid with his own suffering the hour

of sacrifice for others. But being rich, this was denied him. He felt that something was wanting in his generosities, that cost him nothing. But what, he could not know. "I am not rich enough to wipe out all this misery," he said and consoled his inability with that convenient phrase, without asking himself whether he was destroying what was in his power, what he should destroy, nor inquiring why the vulgar giving of money was not accompanied by the moral support which came from a contact of eyes, hands and souls.

At least friendship could come to him from others and give him that stimulus of affection which he had no idea of offering, but which he would willingly have accepted, unable to understand the need of reciprocity. But the friendship of whom? Beggars, parasites, manu-

facturers and speculators in conspiracy against his bank account, members of the nobility whom he flattered, not without a touch of disdain, and who treated him with consideration and even cultivated his acquaintance, while they secretly despised him? The rest of humanity was for him a closed book. The rough worker of brutal frankness, the simple good man of honest character and warm heart, the unselfish thinker, who could have enlightened him about himself—where could he have met those?

He considered the artizan an enemy, because he complains of a social order which the millionaire thinks tolerable. The little working middle-class seemed to him a mean, contemptible type which can at pleasure be bought; the man of ideas was to him a dangerous agitator, who scatters the seed of future revolu-

tions; the favored of this world were to him a cowardly class of degenerates, who did not know enough to unite for the purpose of defending their possessions against the covetousness of the threatening crowd.

In this state of mind he of necessity plunged into the only occupation which his circumstances imposed upon him. He managed his fortune, bought, sold, speculated ingeniously, profiting by the movements of the stock market, making certain industries prosper as by magic, while ruining others—all by the decisive action of an irresistible force. Success followed him and the useless battalion that haunted his shadow only added to the fatal calamities of triumph. Those men, already the owners of considerable wealth, were benefited by his enterprises and did not grudge him his victories,

though he worked for himself, and not for them. On the other hand, those of all ranks, whom his maneuvers injured, spent their inextinguishable hatred in cries of rage, in maledictions and in threats, sometimes followed by acts of vengeance.

To those who spoke to him of the privileges of his position, he had but one answer: "I work." And, bent under the weight of the enormous nightmare that crushed his life, possessed by his possessions, loving his evil, more enslaved than the slave who out of his inner revolt wins secret liberty, he did in truth work daily for many long hours.

It seemed natural to him that the same word could be applied to the sterile labor from which he could not expect satisfaction of any desire, nor the increase of any joy, as well as to the happy gift of

himself in the fertile effort of acquiring fortunes promptly to be dispersed. Is it the meaning of work to use yourself up without profit to anybody, not even to yourself? Of what use is the gain to him who between two suns, without even the need of knowing it, can lose or win millions that offer possibilities of life for others?

On the other hand, one must not lose. How would envy look upon that mischance! With what exultation would hatred spy upon the loser! Of what use is the unheard-of chance which places into the hands of a few mortals an enormous power, if they prove inferior to what simple conservation of a fortune demands from an ordinary genius? What? He who disposes of everything and of everybody, should be stupidly conquered? That is without excuse. As

soon as his calculations prove wrong and he makes a mistake, prestige is gone and honor is compromised. The colossus has trembled. To-morrow he will collapse.

This hourly anguish without possible compensation! One must live in everlasting torment. One must struggle for honor. Honor is the effort to create a growing tyranny with the tyranny already existing, to pursue with new vigor the frightful struggle of accumulated gold against the effort of flesh and blood which is the stock in trade of the miserable crowds in their will to live.

The lowest possible wages for work and the greatest possible profit on the articles of consumption that promote it, that is the fatal principle of every conceivable operation. Can one wonder that the resentment, the disdain of those who suffer from it, concentrate upon the man

whose colossal power denounced him as protagonist of a struggle in which everything serves the abusive power of one individual against the right of all to live?

Poor Moses was in good faith surprised at it, for he was incapable of viewing it philosophically and of understanding what he would have keenly sensed, had he remained in the obscurity and the poverty from which the inglorious life of his father had so gloriously saved him. He felt that he was envied and this was a rather pleasant sensation, that he was feared, and all pleasure in his power came from the general dread; that he was hated, and his surprise was mingled with rage. Vividly conscious of the good which he happened to do, living by insufficient mentality in ignorance of the evil of which he was the blind tool, he looked upon himself as a victim of fate,

as a living proof of the injustice of man.

The rights which he employed and claimed as his in the established order—in what did they differ from those which the humblest farmer claimed, the most modest artizan? Luck made his father draw a better lot than the others. By the right of inheritance he was profiting by it. One could only bow before the fact. The thought that there might be in these matters a question of degree, and that according to the word of an ancient sage, extreme right ends in extreme wrong, the very idea that there was something to blame in a social organism which makes one member die of plethora, while the other wastes away from anaemia, seemed to him a simple error of ignorance or hatred. Against these passions of disorder, as he said—for his case seemed to him of a pre-established

order—there was no other resource than force: and Baron Moses never failed to resort to it in order to defend his miserable happiness against the despair of misery.

Thus lived the unhappy man, as if bound by an absurd wager, barricaded behind the wall of gold against all joys of normal existence: allied to his fellow-beings only by the innumerable threads of mutual sufferings. He lived, or rather believed that he lived, since he did not know life but from one aspect, the worst: the jaded warped, always whining, embittered by an obstinate defense of his own misfortune. A man outside of mankind: a contradiction of existence, an aberration of folly.

Moses suffered in silence, which was worse. Had he given free vent to his need of expression, he would perhaps

have felt his tragedy less keenly. But to whom was he to speak? Who would understand the incomprehensible? And how could he explain the inexplicable? Sadly he locked everything in his inner self and the evil became daily more serious. A dull irritation against everybody and everything rose in him, increased dangerously in his soul and revealed itself in unforeseen outbursts, in violent rage against unnamed persecutors, in incoherent threats that seemed without point.

Contradiction seemed unbearable to him. It even became difficult to agree with him, unless one repeated exactly his own arguments or exaggerated his sentiments, his fancies. It was curious, however, that these strangely changing moods, which on some days gave cause to fear for his reason, these long intervals of absolute

silence interrupted by outbursts of rage, which even his wife could appease only in trembling, did not in the least seem to impair his business sense, his remarkable perspicacity as financier. He became more and more absorbed in his work, pertinently discussed whatever concerned his business and prolonged whatever was left in him of healthy vigor by his habitual activity.

His friends, if that term can be applied to them, accepted their fate, when the baron isolated himself more and more, fled from contact with his like and entrenched himself in a fortress of irony, from which nobody but the baroness could lure him forth. But he grew worse, his business was neglected with disgust, and after an insignificant loss due to a lapse of memory, it could no longer be doubted that he was suffering from

monomania, so he had to be watched in and outside of his home.

For Baron Moses was preoccupied by and conversed only upon one topic: hunger. He wanted to know why so many letters which he had received in the course of time contained the phrase: I am hungry. He wanted to know the meaning of it. Why were people hungry? He had never been hungry, nor anybody he knew. Why did those troops of beggars repeat this incomprehensible phrase at all street corners? It was a conspiracy against the unfortunates that were not hungry. What was the police doing? There seemed to be no government at all. All the cabinet ministers were anarchists. "The hungry will get possession of everything. We are approaching the end of the world."

Sometimes he varied the theme: "Why

am I deprived of the right of being hungry? That is unjust. Everybody should have his turn. Others should be tormented by those who are hungry. I want to be hungry now." And for days the unfortunate man refused all food in order to experience the supreme joy of a tortured stomach. Then the wretched esophagus did its work and, half suffocated, in spite of his revolt, the man received the nourishment which he had in his folly refused, a folly which really bordered on reason, since the ordeal could only result in prolongation of his ills.

Thus did an incessant struggle begin between the ruses of the madman and his guards, the latter trying to surprise him by forcing some dainty upon him, the former feigning to satisfy them, while he stealthily threw out upon the street what was supposed to have been his meal.

Concentration upon one single object, one idea, however unreasonable, will at the end triumph over the most prudent and best balanced mind. In spite of the scrupulous watch kept over him, Baron Moses was fasting. A meal apparently accepted with good grace created the impression that his resistance had ceased and vigilance slackened. During an interval of greater or lesser duration the spasmodically contracted stomach did not open to receive any nourishment.

One day the ruse succeeded to the extent that the organ, finally revolting, imperiously claimed its due. With closed eyes, silently doubled up, Moses felt a keen pain convulsing him. His thin face contracted in the effort not to utter a sound to attract attention. And when an interval of calm followed, Moses thought "That is hunger," and in spite of his

agony was delighted at the success of his scheme. Motionless, huddled up in his armchair, he rejoiced in anticipating the voluptuous sensation of conquered hunger and the two silent watchers, thinking him asleep, noiselessly retired.

No sooner had they disappeared, when Moses started and ran across the room with the air of a victor. He is hungry, he has cramps and convulsions that shake him are indubitable proof that his intestines are contracting with the vulgar need of nourishment. When one is hungry, one must tell everybody about it, with a plaintive note and outstretched palm. That is the rule, that is the custom which so often disturbs the peace of those whom God has refused the privilege of being famished. Bolts separate him from the street. But he must speak, he must tell the passers-by of his experi-

ence. He will try to get out. He knows where the double key of the door is hidden. With one bound he is in the stairway, in the court. The porter's lodge is vacant. Baron Moses is on the street.

He loses no time. Two steps from his residence he meets a busy bourgeois. The hungry man hurries up to him: "Sir, I beg you, I am hungry, very hungry. I have not eaten in three days." Unconsciously he imitates the very inflections and attitudes of the mendicants that used to pursue him. Imitation comes so much easier to him, since hunger has him really in its grip; for the pangs of hunger, crying hunger, will not cease. That this suffering was brought upon him by himself, he no longer knows. When he weeps, when he whines, when he speaks of his misery, when his poor hand, almost

that of a skeleton, vainly stretches forth and the voice tremulously begs for a sou, this is no longer a comedy. He is really hungry, and he begs for a little bread, and it is refused him, the Baron Moses von Goldschlammbach!

Repulsed with a gesture of disdain or a word of menace, he goes from one to the other, he insists, he laments and cries: "I am hungry." His breast heaves with sobs, his eyes are haggard, his lips are trembling, his head moves in response to the vertigo that seizes him. If people had looked at him, if they had listened to him, they could not have helped pitying that miserable fleshless body, this remnant of a human form; they would have been touched by those cries of mortal anguish. But they did not even glance at him, he was not heard, he was passed by unnoticed.

Neither good, nor wicked, these people had no time to stop for him—that was all. Did he not do so himself formerly? Vaguely, in the whirlpool of madness which was gripping him, the haunting vision of the past made him recognize in gestures and in words, that were once his very own, the idea which closes upon and paralyzes these passive sympathies. "We cannot succor all ills." They did not say those words, but the madman heard them. He heard them in his soul which had so often prompted them. He recognized himself in the others, he felt himself living in that refusal to let live which had come from him and now returned to him. O frightful ordeal! It is he who now implores and who is repulsed. His present need cries for succor, and the callousness of the past will and can not hear and it is his own pain

which palpitates at the barriers of his own closed heart.

What does that mean: "We cannot succor all ills?" Why can it not be done? One could do it, if one had the will. Who knows it better than he, whose useless safe is spouting pity converted into currency? He wants to cry out: "I have the secret of it!" He feels that one must give, give all, as demanded one of his race, whom that race denied.

Now he understands. He will give, for the suffering of want has for the moment conquered the madness born out of the abundance of riches. The light of reason brightens the somber clouds and the truth shines suddenly forth, immediately after to sink into the night. Moses will give all; that he has decided. Nobody shall suffer again as he is suffering,—thanks to him, Baron Moses!

Through him the ultimate misery of hunger will be forever abolished. But for the realization of that supreme joy he must live, he must first appease his own hunger, and succeed in having somebody give to Moses in order that Moses may give in his turn. Hundreds of millions for but one single sou! The wager is made, but nobody accepts it. The passers-by turn away their heads, and the sou which should be given is not forthcoming.

The beggar millionaire becomes furious; he foams with rage; he explodes with invectives.

"Is nobody going to call the police?" somebody exclaims.

At this word, which even yesterday was his own appeal for help, Moses is terrified. He sees himself pursued, tracked, submitted to the brutality of the officers

of the law, who will not understand him, whom it is their duty to protect and defend. And he starts to run, hurling his cry of hunger at random, while the indifferent crowd is absorbed in the attractions of the show windows.

Moses has only one sensation now, one thought, one goal: to eat, eat by all means, no matter where, nor how. He no longer sees the men from whom he had expected relief. With the irresistible will of a beast, haunted by the sovereign instinct, he wants to satisfy a need which cannot wait. He wants food and because he wants it, he acts.

How he got there he does not know; but he has entered a bakery and stretches out his hand. He touches, he seizes, he steals a loaf of bread, the object of his feverish desire, the innocent cause of so many ills, so much sorrow.

Then the congestion is followed by reaction. He collapses, motionless, and human pity stirs at last . . . too late.

If Moses had recovered, who knows what kind of a man he might have become of that crucial experience?

But Moses is dead. The poor millionaire had to become insane, to be illumined by a flash of reason, and it is from the touch of death that on the threshold of the beyond he conceived the meaning of life. . . .

One could philosophize about this story. I have seen it acted on the Shakespearean stage of our real life, that life which knows no pity, and I have only disguised the facts.

SCHLOME THE FIGHTER

The story that I am going to tell is founded upon fact. I wrote it as it was dictated to me by a man who witnessed in the synagogue the dramatic scene of which Schlome the Fighter was the hero. It seems to me that it is worthy of publication, as much for the psychological interest of the plot, as for the light which it throws upon customs foreign to us.

It deals with one of those poor Polish Jews in long trailing coat, with untrimmed beard and shabby locks, whose curious shining side curls tumbling over his ears, suggests a spaniel coming out of the water. Schlome (or Solomon) Fuss was a tailor. It is a very useful trade,

but you cannot become rich by it in one of the poorest villages of eastern Galicia.

The hamlet of Busk, two steps from the Russian frontier, shows unmistakable signs of the most lamentable poverty. However, one should not always judge the wealth of men by their appearance. In spite of the indescribable hovels in which the Jewry of Busk is crowded, it is said that the fortune of some individuals is rated by the thousands. They are the Rothschilds of the place. The rest cut each sou into eight and do not indulge in the luxury of clothes. But, whatever, one may do to economize, the strongest web is bound to yield and when the hole grew beyond reasonable size one had to resort to Schlome to have him apply the redeeming patch. Piecing together, cutting, sewing, Schlome was an expert in his art. Thus he managed to eke out his ex-

istence and that of his wife Leah and five children. At the time when our story begins, Leah was expecting another.

It was in the year 1848. What events crowded into that memorable year! A strong breath of freedom was sweeping across the hills and plains of the old continent, a longing for justice. The people were all rising against their oppressors, and the thrones were tottering. It was a beautiful dawn of hope. But alas! what a night followed that day. . . .

One must not imagine that the poor Jews of Busk were ignorant of these happenings. They perceived very well that an unusual force was moving the world that year, when his Majesty, the Emperor, honored them with three successive conscriptions.

Until military service became obligatory for all in 1866, the Galician Jew had

never ceased to protest against the noble trade of arms. Orthodoxy, not cowardice, made him shun the barracks. Once enlisted, he had to renounce eating kosher meat; a terrible necessity for those who rigorously followed the precepts of their Law. An even greater evil was the fact that they had to break the Sabbath by being forced to work on that day. As for whom and why they were fighting, they did not know. They would have understood, had they faced the eventuality of being killed in the defense of Jerusalem. But to risk their life in some quarrels of the Christians—how absurd!

These were the reasons why the Jewish communities of Galicia tried to save their youth from military service. They succeeded in doing so by the simplest stratagem. What did the emperor want? A certain number of soldiers to be killed

according to the rules of warfare? They furnished him his share. The Emperor was satisfied, and so was Israel. But how was that miracle to be accomplished?

All communities in Galicia, where a sufficient number of Jews resided, were divided into Christian and Jewish districts. The census made known the number of inhabitants of each section and in proportion to the population was determined the number of conscripts which each was to furnish. Now the Galician villages were at that time invaded by Jews from Russian Poland who had fled across the border to escape from the horrible persecutions to which they were subjected under Czar Nicholas.

These refugees fortunately did not share the Talmudic orthodoxy of their Galician co-religionists, and besides, being bare of all resources, they had no

objection to donning the uniform. Thus the bargain was assured in advance. Bribing into complicity the police and the gendarmerie, the Russian Jew, duly paid, assumed the civic status of his Galician brother and served in the ranks, while the latter remained in his Galician home, fed on kosher food, abstained from all work on the Sabbath and dreamed of a restored Jerusalem.

Until the year 1848 this system had functioned to general satisfaction. But that year, with war in the interior, in Italy and in Hungary, the emperor needed more human blood. Thus, as said before, the poor Jews of Busk had to suffer three conscriptions, like all other subjects of the Empire. Such things happened also in France in 1813 and like many subjects of Napoleon, the Jews of Galicia were willing to pay a good price in order to be

spared the glory of heroes. However, the meager purse of these people could not bear the triple demand for human flesh. Those of Busk were still able to buy about four men a year, which was their ordinary tribute, but to furnish twelve men was a sheer impossibility.

At the first and the second conscriptions they succeeded by some chance in getting out of their dilemma. They mortgaged, they sold in order to save the holy ark, and the God of Abraham had the joy of seeing all the sheep of his flock intact. But when the third conscription came, they were without resources. The supply from Russian Poland had become more rare and the demand being greater, the price of a man had increased beyond all proportion. All the safes had been emptied before; the poor people found them-

selves at the end of their means. By a supreme effort they succeeded in obtaining three substitutes. But for the fourth, nobody could be found. They had to resign themselves to choose from Israel itself a victim for the bloody tournament of Christian barbarism.

The idea of drawing lots among the young men who had passed their twenty-first year, as the law required, never occurred to them. The grand council directing the affairs at the Jewish community and composed of the most pious and wealthiest members, realized however, that they should not leave to chance to decide who was to be offered to take part in the holocaust. How could one dare to sacrifice one of the rich, representing a capital of some five to six hundred francs! Does one not even in such crises meet with that oligarchy of money, which

appropriates all it can of the privileges of the less favored classes?

But an even more serious question presented itself. Religious sentiment raised above the ordinary rank persons more or less distantly associated with the divinity: hence it did not permit a "Lerner" to live among the uncircumcised. The Lerner is the man devoted to serious Hebrew studies, he who pours over the Talmud and the Kabala. Such men form the real aristocracy of Israel, which dates back beyond the temple destroyed by Titus. A Lerner, who is neither merchant nor artizan, is readily accepted by the girl with the richest dowry, just as our marquis are by the least attractive among America's young millionairesses. So it was unanimously decided by the Sanhedrin of Busk to put into a hat the names of the lowliest members of the Jewish

community and let chance make its choice.

It was the name of Schlome Fuss that was drawn. When night came, the gendarmes instructed to carry out the law, broke into the home of Schlome, dragged him from his pallet, regardless of the tears of his wife, and having bound him, led the stunned tailor without any explanation to the police station of the neighboring town of Zloczow. With the complicity of the judge he was there furnished a false identification card, his dear side curls were cut, he was stuck into a brand new uniform, and before long he was on his way to the fields of Novare, where Charles Albert was proving the strength of his arm. Did not Candide in the same manner become one of the heroes of the Bulgarian army?

There was only this difference: the

handsome Cunegonde was without offspring, while Schlome's Leah had six children to bring up on the pestilential air which Providence liberally distributed among those upon whom were heaped all the evils of the world, so they could in time better appreciate the everlasting beatitude of the elect. Providence apparently favored Leah and her six children, for none of the trials of poverty were spared them. It was miraculous that they survived. I dare say they thrived on it. That race will never die. What can be more humiliating to our multi-millionaires who feed on all sorts of medicine and see their precious bodies waste away in their palaces from scrofula and tuberculosis! Though they shivered with cold and were faint with lack of food, Leah and her six children persevered in the irritating habit of

living. The community which had rendered them assistance in the secret hope that "this cannot last," finally bravely undertook to care for them.

Two years later, in 1850, when the war was over, there appeared in the village a splendid soldier with braid and gilt and boots, a saber at his side and medals on his chest. Without a word he directed his steps towards the hut of Schlome Fuss. He entered and there was an explosion of cries, a tempest of ejaculations. Men followed him with heavy baskets, which were opened at the door and from which he extracted the most extraordinary victuals. All night the hut echoed with laughter, song and kisses. There was no doubt about it. The soldier who had returned with glory and braid, the sub-officer decorated with medals that meant a pension, if you

please, was Schlome, the miserable little Jew whom the gendarmes had dragged forth from the village, a rope about his neck. Those same men, O miracle!—today exchanged with him the military salute and treated him with respect.

He was surrounded, was questioned by his fellow citizens: but the only answer he had for them was to tinkle the florins in his pocket.* He was a hero. A modest hero, for he did not show himself vain of his grandeur, they remarked. They noticed, too, that he loved to remain shut up in his home and that he especially delighted in the company of his latest-born, little David, who had come into the world during his absence.

*It may cause some wonder that fortunes could so readily be made in war. But the turmoil of those times permitted Jewish and Christian soldiers a rather lucrative trade. They deserted from one army to enlist in another; then they returned to their flag, joining another regiment under a new name. Thus they were able to realize handsome sums in a rather venturesome trade with military glory.

The Sabbath came and Schlome took his prayer-cloak and as before his army experience went to the synagogue, where he participated in the pious exercises of his brothers with customary fervor.

"Schlome is a good Jew," said they on leaving the temple. "He has remained faithful to his God. He will be rewarded for it."

One thing, however, puzzled the people. Whenever any pious man, eager to impress upon him the generosity of his act, boasted of having helped Leah and the children, Schlome would reply only with a brief exclamation of wonder. Never did a word of thanks leave his lips. This was remarked and variously commented upon. Finally it was agreed that Schlome was a good Jew, but an ingrate.

Schlome had returned in time for the feast of the New Year in September,

which is ten days later followed by that of Yom Kippur, the Great Atonement Day. Nobody observed the fast more rigorously than the young soldier, for on this day it is forbidden even to drink a drop of water. At the synagogue he prayed as usual, his prayer cloak thrown over the uniform, for he was only on leave.

After the prayers the rabbi ascended towards the tabernacle to take the sacred Scroll of the Law, and according to prescribed forms read certain chapters. But to the amazement of all, Schlome plunged forward, stepped before the officiating Minister and laying an impious hand upon his arm, barred the way to the tabernacle. A clamor of indignation, terror and rage followed this sacrilege. With an unanimous impulse the crowd rushed towards the blasphemer to punish

him for his crime. He was insulted, threatened to be dismembered, to be killed outright. But Schlome dominated the crowd and with saber drawn held back the most daring. Some coats were torn and some faces scratched, before calm was restored in the sacred place. Standing on the topmost step, the point of his saber against the floor, Schlome said with resonant voice:

"Listen to me. I want to speak."

Stupefied, terror-struck by his attitude, the crowd lapsed into silence, and the soldier continued:

"I, Schlome Fuss, forbid you to open the tabernacle. You are not worthy to read the word of God in the sacred book. For you are wicked, you are sinful, you are an abomination in Israel. You have allowed me to be dragged away from my home at night. You have sold me even

as Benjamin was sold by his brothers. You have exposed to abject misery my wife Leah, and my children, who lived on the produce of my labor. All this you have done, in order that you might cowardly save one of your own. You hoped that a bullet would make an end of me and remove the proof of your crime. But God has protected me and here I am. I return as avenger. I declare to you today, the day of the Great Atonement, that you will not perform the holy ceremony on which depend life and death of each creature, and that you will not be pardoned, unless you offer me full reparation for your odious crime.

A voice rose: "Let us call the gendarmes!" and the crowd burst into cries of insulting approval and dashed out to summon armed force.

But the gendarmes were now the

friends of Schlome Fuss. When they heard what had happened, they found the incident rather amusing and declared that they could not enter the synagogue without a formal order. Who would issue it? There was no tribunal in Busk.

The outraged worshipers went to the Christian syndic, who replied that he had no authority over the synagogue. The police court was fifteen miles from the village. Even had it been nearer, a Jew cannot go on horseback or in a carriage on the day of the Great Atonement. They had to renounce their desire to see Schlome punished at the risk of not performing the ceremony indispensable for that absolution which our weakness needs.

They returned to the temple and found Schlome, his saber still unsheathed, standing guard before the tabernacle.

The rabbi approached in humble attitude.

"Schlome," said he with tremulous voice, "what do you want us to do?"

"You will go with me to-morrow," replied he, "and with the whole council you will on your knees beg pardon from my wife and my children."

"So be it," said the rabbi resolutely, "we shall do it."

"That is not all. You must pay me an indemnity. I need the money to keep my family while I finish my term of service. I have still some years more to serve. I have made my account. I demand three hundred and fifty florins, and not a sou less."

"But, unfortunate man, how can we pay such an exorbitant sum? Do you want to reduce us to misery, commit against us the crime which you say

we committed against you and yours?"

"I need three hundred and fifty florins to-day. Without producing them you will not observe the Great Atonement."

"But you know that our hands must not touch money on this day."

"That does not matter. There is my prayer cloak at my feet. Go home, fetch your silver, the jewels of your wives and daughters. Heap your treasures on this cloak until I think they suffice to balance my claim. The doctor is a just man, he will guard them and to-morrow after you have prostrated yourself in the dust before Leah and my children, you can redeem your valuables in coin."

They tried to postpone action, to protract the discussion.

"Do you not see that the sun is advancing?" said Schlome. "If you wait, it will be too late for the Great Atonement."

Thus the jewelry was brought forth and heaped upon the cloak and when he deemed it enough, Schlome said simply.

"That will do."

The doctor, from whose son I have the story, guarded the treasures and Schlome demanded to be called to read the first passage from the Bible.

"That honor," said he, "reserved to the most pious and most venerable among you, is mine by right, since you have all been wicked and I was your victim."

Having said this, he put back his saber in its sheath and left his post of combat. He took up a prayer-cloak, wrapped it about him and solemnly pronounced the formula of the benediction which precedes the reading of the book.

The sacred writings had been taken from the Tabernacle. Bending over the holy text, Schlome read with loud voice

the first verse; another followed and the ceremony took its course without any other incident to trouble the piety of the congregation. When the first stars appeared in the sky, the Jewish community of Busk, according to their Creator's law, could peacefully, after the cruel ordeal, break the fast of the Great Atonement.

The following day the whole council came to kneel on the threshold of Schlome's hut and publicly made amends. The three hundred and fifty florins were paid. Leah, who was an industrious woman, immediately hired two assistants and reopened the tailor shop. After settling his accounts before he returned to service, Schlome discovered that he had one hundred florins too much. He made a gift of this sum to the poor of all creeds. The synagogue was scandalized, but submitted to this supplementary penance.

Two years later Schlome was honorably discharged from the army, and on his return to the village resumed his old business. He made his side-curls grow again and slowly returned to the wonted life of the Jewish artizan of Galicia. On seeing him pass through the village, so quiet, gentle and humble, whoever did not know his story, would have been surprised to hear that his name was Schlome Sellner, which means Schlome the Fighter.

He had really fought for his right. He had come out of the fight a victor. I wish you the same courage and the same luck, my readers.

IN ISRAEL

Next to the Sprudel, the Polish Jew is undoubtedly the greatest curiosity in Carlsbad. The Occidental who comes here unprepared, is startled by these strange figures. In groups of twos or threes you meet these squalid creatures, drab of color, yet of shining aspect, in the close-fitting sheath of long coats that flap about the heels, the head crowned with a little black skullcap, on which in place of a hat towers a headgear in form of a can made of furlike material, or a cap of black silk rising in straight line and suddenly flattened out like a pancake. A strong nose, between the bristles of a beard that no steel has ever touched, a passionate

mouth, the burning eyes of the Oriental, and the whole framed in corkscrew curls that dance and bob to and fro before the ears: these are the features that strike at first sight.

These Jews of Galicia come to Carlsbad to be cured of Asiatic ailments aggravated by consanguine marriages. Although they resemble one another in habit and manner with all the shades of difference from the most meticulous care of their person to the most repugnant neglect, nothing is more awkward than the attempt to reduce them to a common type. No doubt the Jew of classical model with prominent nose, is frequent, but the majority differs from the accepted type. The Tartar blood is met with frequently, showing itself in flattened faces, a nose that seems to be crowded between two insolently open nostrils; the yellow skin,

on the other hand, the spare beard and the squinting, obliquely slit little eyes reveal the Mongol origin. Then there is the good Russian giant, who, judaized, suggests his Slav descent by his fleshy nose, thick lips and childish smile. How many more signs of divers racial origin the ethnologist could discover among this people, far more mixed than they themselves believe and than those pretend who make war upon them!

In the West the man from Judæa has mixed with Latin or Basque blood, which has completely modified the exterior, if not the soul of the individual. In the Orient, that vast caldron of Asiatic Europe, where so many divers elements met and melted at the hazard of unforeseen movements of invading cohorts or emigrating tribes, it has even happened that a Jewish slave converted a royal

Christian sweetheart and that a whole people were induced to follow their master's example. There is the incident mentioned by Karamsin; he tells about a Mongol people, the Khazars, established on the Volga, who in the eleventh century collectively embraced Judaism, a step which came so much easier for them since they had already circumcision. That accounts for all the strangely mixed types, in whom through their diverging traits, one recognizes a feature common to all: the restless eye of Asia, kind with a kindness limited by shrewd observation, illumined by desires which a feigned humility appeases, obsequiously provocative and playfully sending forth the subtile ray which seeks the weak point like the flash of a fine blade of steel.

This is the one trait really common to

those Polish Jews in whom I daily discover new traces and surprising accents of the most diverging types. The pure Semitic type sometimes offers us images of Jehovah as a beautiful patriarch, abundantly bearded, muscular, well shaped, masterful like the Moses of Michael Angelo. Genuine Christ figures, sad, gentle dreamers, the pale faces brightened by reddish down, the eyes lost in contemplation of I do not know what vision, pass along the street, followed by a legion of apostles, such as Leonardo sketched for the fresco in Milan. A little further on there are the sages of the Temple, with whom the boy Jesus argued, big, white silhouettes, fleshless, with reddened eyelids, or gnomes with contracted eyebrows, agitated by ancient Biblical fury in defense of the Law. The Bible and the Gospels pass before the eye in a mov-

ing panorama, surrounded by lesser coryphees, deplorable descendants of the usurers driven from the Temple, whose business the Church has taken up with so much success. I say nothing of the saintly women represented by frightful little wrinkled old hags, whose heads, shaved as the law demands on the day of their marriage, are covered with caps of black silk or a mess of glued hair as substitute for a wig.

All the men, whether rich or poor, superb or hideous of appearance, of correct bearing or of repulsive dirtiness, have a distinctive costume, the long coat trailing to the ground and the greasy curls hanging over their temples. The hair is almost always cut short, excepting those side meshes which no steel must touch; the hirsute virginity of the beard, too, is supposed to be a homage to the Creator.

As the curls have the quality of curling up in dry and straightening in damp weather, they present infallible means of anticipating atmospherical disturbances. As soon as I see them straighten, I take my umbrella and have never cause to regret it. Moses did not wait for the little Capuchin of pasteboard, whose cowl drops with the rain and stiffens with the sun.

If not all the sons of Israel bear this emblem of those chosen by Jahve, it is simply from false shame, from a regrettable fear of mockery on the part of those who allow the scissors of the impious to touch their temples. They adapt themselves to the trend of the century, those unfortunates, without a thought of how it will be judged above.

Our Polish Jews are orthodox Jews who pretend to respect the law in every-

thing. If they wear a little skull cap under their hat, it is because the law says you should not uncover your head. The Turk, the Arab, the Persian and the Hindoo do the same. The Jew, living among us, consents to exchange with us the customary greeting, but he tricks the Gentile by remaining covered even if he removes the hat, which is supposed to be very gratifying to the Eternal.

When I learned that these orthodox Jews of the peculiar sect of Chassidim did not accept the ordinary ritual of the Synagogue and met simply among themselves for prayer, I wished to see them adore the God of Abraham according to the ancient precepts.

One Sabbath in a small room of a poor restaurant I found about thirty men in their prayer cloaks, mumbling and hum-

ming with noisy ardor. Shabby tablecloths, which had not been removed, betrayed the usual purpose of the room. There was no ornament whatsoever. Big white phantoms, their heads under the veil, seemed plunged into the contemplation of the wall, which faced east. The prayer cloak which they receive at the age of thirteen and in which they are buried, must never be washed. The esthetic side of the ceremony is not enhanced by this custom. But what does it matter to the good Lord?

A big white figure leaning against the wall, was volubly reciting a prayer, punctuated by the amens of the audience. Then everybody prayed individually, in staccato accents, the rhythm marked by brusk nods of the head and movements of the body, which was violently doubled up with the regularity of a machine. It

was a strange spectacle to see all these specters bow and rise as if keeping time with the Creator's breath.

I remained on the threshold. Prayers surging forth from a neighboring room made me turn my head. It had silently been invaded by other white phantoms under whose white hoods I perceived formidable black beards and big dilated eyes, ravished with ecstasy. All these heads followed the common rhythm and I found myself alone in the midst of a crowd agitated like a wheat field in a wind storm.

Suddenly the prayers ceased. But the rocking movement continued and the impression was so much stronger as these apparitions, now voiceless, in painful silence nervously moved those draperies of white, streaked with black, in which silver spangles were sparkling. Then the

rhythmic invocations of Adonai began once more.

Some veils slip down upon the shoulders and I recognize faces familiar to me from the morning meetings at the springs. The movements gradually lose their ensemble rhythm and everybody, vigorously reciting his prayer, rocks or bends or scans the words by a special movement. One plunges his head forward and throws it brusquely back like a duck on leaving the water. I do not exaggerate, if I say that the man continued this movement without interruption for three-quarters of an hour. Another rocks his head to and fro and makes his curls dance alternately from one shoulder to the other. A third is on his feet and executes the half-turns of a waltz. A giant who has a resemblance to M. Poubelle, is practicing contortions with his lips and

eyes, evidently meant to express admiration, reminding of the antics of a prefect before his minister. Beside me is the fine face of an old man, suggesting the gentle philosophers of Rembrandt under the arches of a stairway losing itself in nocturnal darkness, impassive with a discreet little smile. Contortions and convulsions become more violent, whenever some resonant voice surges upward in more ardent invocations of the God of Israel. Then fatigue asserts itself and all quiet down.

This gymnastic performance, I am told, aims to make the body take part in the prayers of the soul. Thus the muscles and the bones in their way honor the Creator. I have often witnessed other extravagant performances in the camp meetings of American Methodists, who are genuine Christians. In reality this is

a nervous phenomenon like cries and dances of the dervish and is to be classed with external manifestations of religious exaltation.

What struck me among my Polish Jews, whose sincerity is not to be doubted, is the ease with which they find their composure in the middle of this epileptic demonstration. A certain snuff-box which was quietly circulating, indicated that at least the noses had during these devotions not renounced their earthly appetite. A sort of Kalmuck beside me who furiously bent as low as the ground, profited at the moment when his head reached the extremity of its orbit, slowly to apply the finger to one nostril and send the surplus of the other under the table; what clung to his beard, was simply removed with the end of his prayer cloak.

It is not necessary to describe the cere-

mony of the sacred parchment taken from the tabernacle, which was really a miserable chest, and handed around in its wrapper to be kissed by everybody. Then it is piously spread on the table around which are called those that are to be specially honored; after the reading it is ceremoniously replaced in its container. These customs are generally known.

The only incident worthy of mention was the arrival of a strange old man, dry and fleshless, head, nose and beard running into a point. He was clothed in a magnificent long coat of black satin, under which were dangling the threads of wool prescribed by orthodox Judaism. An enormous fur cap covered his head. It is the traditional headgear in honor of the Sabbath. Little zibelines had lent their delicate pelts for the pious function. Our

man, known for his austere devotion, soon prayed with an ardor which none of his companions could surpass.

He lifted into the air long white hands, evidently well cared for, struck them passionately against each other, then rose on his tiptoes and brusquely fell back on his heels with a violent shock to his body, the zibelines participating with tremulous agitation. Truly this man prayed not only with a part of his body, but with his whole body. The little zibelines partook of the prayer in their manner. May the Lord of men and beasts have enjoyed it!

We were told that this distinguished visitor was a very rich man who showered deeds of kindness about him. Thanks to the generosity of such men, poor unfortunate invalids can come to Carlsbad to take the waters. Our man, who is a great

traveler, never leaves without his own rabbi. When he goes to a place where there are few orthodox Jews, he always takes with him a dozen companions, for Moses said that there must be at least ten to offer prayer. Under these conditions I am not surprised that Adam and Eve turned out so badly.

As we left, the notables of the assembly came to thank us for the honor we had bestowed upon them by attending their sacred ceremony. We passed through a hall in the rear where we found the women, who in spite of the open doors could neither hear nor see what had been going on. The congregation left with us, carrying the prayer-mantles folded on the shoulder like a traveling cloak; for to take them in their hands would have been equivalent to work, which is forbidden on the Sabbath. With all its beauty this is

the very Pharisaism which had been so odious to Jesus.

The day before we had met many a Jew with his handkerchief knotted about his waist. That means: "We have nothing more in our pockets, we are doing no more business, for the Sabbath is about to begin."

I have recorded faithfully what I have seen. Is it any more ridiculous to shake one's head like a duck, than to do any other movements in honor of God? I do not think so. Christians and Jews are of the same human stock. Yesterday I saw in the woods some women who were kissing the lips and feet of a big plaster Christ besmeared with horrible colors. It would be difficult, I think, to consider this sort of devotion superior to the other. The great conflict between Christians and Jews is after all only a family quarrel.

It is said that an old orthodox Jew on arriving in Paradise, refused to sit down at the right of the Almighty and went to hide in a corner. Called before his Creator to explain such strange conduct, he admitted that he had nothing to accuse himself of, but still refused to accept the honors of heaven. And as the Almighty insisted upon knowing his reasons, the old man, sobbing with rage, said that his name had been disgraced, his race dishonored. His son had turned out badly: he had become a Christian.

"Is that all?" said the Lord. "Well, you are not the only one in that case. This is just what has happened to Me."

HOW I BECAME FARSIGHTED

It was three years ago. I was quietly reading in my study, when "M. Magnier" was announced. I thought that the editor of "L'Evenement" was calling on me and ordered to admit him.

The portière was raised and I saw a handsome old man enter, brisk and rosy, correct without exaggeration, and with an indescribable air of benign superiority. I did not know him. The face was handsomely framed in white whiskers, the gray eyes sparkled with amiable animation, his linen was dazzlingly white and a wide redingote gave him a sort of dignity. Altogether the impression disposed in his favor. I thought vaguely that he

might be some foreign diplomat wishing to obtain information about France. The young man who accompanied my visitor was undoubtedly his secretary.

The stranger advanced with a kindly smile.

"I beg your permission," said he familiarly, "not to remove my hat, for I fear nothing as much as a cold in the head."

Before I could reply he deliberately planted upon his polished cranium a hat of high crown and wide rim. He took a seat, always with the same smile as of condescension. Evidently he wanted me to be at my ease. My face probably expressed some surprise. I waited for him to speak.

"Monsieur," said he, "I must first thank you for having received me. Still I am

not at all surprised. My name opens all doors. When M. Mayer is announced, everybody knows what it means."

I could not suppress a little start, which did not escape my visitor.

"I see from your gesture that you know me," he continued with a slight inflection of modesty. "I was sure of it. General Baron de Z. and Marquise de X. said only this morning that I was the best known man in Paris. But I have talked enough about myself. It is you whom my visit concerns. I have been waiting long to see you. All your friends have been telling me: 'Go and call on him. He is charming. He will be delighted to chat with you.' But you may know that I am very busy. Pardon me, if I could not come any sooner."

I was disposed to pardon my surprising

visitor, when he brusquely exclaimed, "Ah, but tell me, tell me frankly—how are you?"

Completely bewildered, without being able to account for my words, I stupidly replied:

"Oh, I am very well, thank you."

"Ah, monsieur," exclaimed my new friend with beaming face, "how glad I am to hear you say that! You know that your health is that of a man precious to France. It is fortunate that you are well. However, you must save your strength. I am sure that you are working too much. We have need of you."

Routed, dumbfounded, I listened to the flow of words, believing that there must be some misunderstanding, and awaited the end of the adventure.

In the meantime the affable old gentle-

man, radiant with the good news that I had given him, continued, without paying attention to my stupefaction.

"There is something I must tell you. What you must especially care for is your eyesight. There is nothing as precious. How can anybody work with weak eyes or with imperfect glasses? You are approaching the fifties. Your sight must be weakening. Be frank with me. Is there nothing the matter with your eyes?"

To tell the truth my sight had begun to grow weaker since a few months. But my visitor continued to annoy me. Finally I rose, replying drily,

"No, nothing. I see perfectly well."

"Ah, so much the better!" said my obstinate caller, remaining seated in his armchair. "Well, since you have good eyes, do take a glance at this treasure."

The hand from which he had stripped

his glove, flaunted before me the handsomest little Elzevir in the most elegant binding.

I had barely opened the book when the man rose, placed his hand on my shoulder, and said with a note of affectionate reproach:

"Ah, you have deceived me! That is wrong. I would not have thought you capable of it. What? You tell me your sight is good, and you hold the book at a distance, which proves to me that you are far-sighted, terribly far-sighted, sir. Your crystalline lens is flattening, that is all. But it is time to interfere. Well, well, why did you deceive me?"

I was as flattened as my crystalline lens, and very penitent, too, to have deceived so good a friend. I do not know what I might have said in apology, but I had no time to seek an excuse. Some instrument

appeared before my eyes, and before I had time to regain my composure, my visual distance had been measured and the proof of my deceit was scientifically established.

"Number 2314," said the old gentleman with an air of authority to the secretary, who had so effaced himself that I had forgotten his presence.

The words were barely pronounced when the young man lifted a flat box, which on entering he had placed on the floor, and displayed before my eyes an array of glasses, the moving reflections of which filled the room with dancing lights.

I said nothing more, as if crushed by my irreparable defeat. I gave myself up to his mercy. My authoritative benefactor, disdaining to abuse his victory and treating me like an inert object, without a word

placed a pair of eyeglasses on my nose. Oh, miracle! I read the Elzevir without any trouble. The type seemed to be of admirable clearness. The veil which had for some time troubled my sight, without my being conscious of it, seemed to be tearing. I could not conceal my satisfaction. My generous friend enjoyed his modest triumph.

"These lenses are nowhere on sale," said he. "I manufacture them myself. I spent half of my life in computing their thickness and their curvature. They are priceless, for unlike others, they do not fatigue the eyes. It is a revolution that I have made. I can call myself a benefactor of humanity. Your gratitude for the service I have rendered you will increase with your age. I venture proudly the prediction: You will never forget M. Mayer."

Truly this devil of a man had rendered me a service and I could not disguise my contentment.

"I must leave you," said he brusquely. "You are satisfied with me, that is all I care for. I have an operation to perform at Colonel X.'s, who expects me."

It would have been sheer egotism to make the colonel wait. M. Mayer, who had not removed his hat, now touched it lightly with his right hand and then, pointing to the pair of eyeglasses on the corner of the table, concluded in an off-hand manner:

"Their price is only forty francs."

"Oh, never!" said I, recovering my lost energy. "That is too much by half."

"Well, well," said M. Mayer, "I know better than you what they cost me, since I make them myself. I alone, do you understand? I had thought you incapable

of disputing such a trifle when I rendered you this great service."

He did not conclude. He was evidently suffering from my meanness and his pity spared me. I was at that moment ashamed of having protested. With a gesture of injured benevolence he said in a low voice:

"We'll let it go at thirty francs. I am in a hurry."

Since that day I am far-sighted.

Should I add that, having broken one of the lenses of M. Mayer's eyeglasses, I easily replaced it with one that cost me forty sous?

Oh, race, vilified by the whole world, what Aryan could ever compete with you?

IMPRESSIONS OF GALICIA

Napoleon sank deep into the mud of Poland. I had never been able to understand that stock phrase of history, until one morning I awoke in the train that carried me from Vienna to Cracow. An endless plain of blackish mud faced me, with a few crippled pines or miserable birches that emerge from it at intervals. Everywhere were puddles of water, in which the dreary light of a dull sky, bored and dripping, seemed to be gradually fading. Remnants of a meager harvest alternated with weeds, marshes and somber spots of stagnant water. As the train was speeding along the railroad tracks full of coal dust, they themselves seemed to revolve like wheels.

There was no horizon, only one confused chaos of gray; there were no elevations, no depressions, no hills, no valleys, nothing but an immovable plain, harboring no surprises, no mysteries. The only sign of life were the ravens, silent monarchs of this desolate earth; caked with black mud, they were seeking food in the puddles of this swampy land. Farms passed by, hamlets all built of wood. There was not a stone visible in this immense mud hole. The straw roofs, the lathed walls, their thin coat of paint, barely perceptible, harmonized well in their naked sadness with the general desolation.

On the roads long teams were lumbering along, their ladder-like sides arched like the skeleton of some monster. The low wheels up to their axles immersed in mud, painfully turned about in response

to the efforts of the little horses with their mud-caked manes. Upon a bed of straw were stretched out the travelers: earth-stained peasants, immobile, silent. The men in long white blouse-like coats, held at the belt by a buckle, a leather band ornamented with copper nails; the women gay in the pink or yellow cotton kerchief draping their head and the dazzling loud colors of their waists and skirts. Everybody wore high boots, almost up to the chin.

The agile Pole, *slavus saltans,* is of handsome presence and martial aspect. I could not exactly say whether his kindliness is real goodness of heart, but he has a charming manner and his vivacity saves him from the Asiatic perfidy of the meditative Slav. With his pipe, his mustache and his boots, he could go far. Perhaps

he was on the road when his tragic history ended by an act of infamous brigandage which is familiar to everybody. After all he has maintained himself; his enemies tried to kill his language, but it is as alive as ever. The annals of that nation are by no means closed.

In all social strata the Tartar type is found to be remarkably tenacious, especially among people that rarely enter international marriages. At the railroad station I saw strange figures that looked as if they had escaped from the steppes of Asia: yellow skinned, flat-faced, with prominent cheek bones, depressed nose, open nostrils and a strong jaw. The small black eyes, ever shifting and moving in their orbits, form a curious contrast with the motionless placidity of the face, framed by ill-kempt hair and by the spare

beard of the Mongol. Their aspect of gentle savagery suggested candor stolidly fortified by shrewdness.

But the most striking feature of the railroad stations are the Galician Jews, strange black phantoms gliding like dream silhouettes across the realities of life. They wore the long dark coat prescribed by the Talmud, with the threads of wool hanging from belt to boots amid the folds of the garment. Their headgear is a confection of rabbit skin or a cap of black silk or a tall hat, furry, with many dents and stains of the rust of perhaps thirty years. Under these coverings, fantastic pale faces with big shining eyes, move about like little black balls from which the inner life occasionally emits sparks of fire. Long strands of hair hang down upon biblical beards in greasy corkscrew curls. The obsequious smile

of a victim that abandons itself lurks about their lips. Silently, as if to escape the glances that follow them, they slip through the crowd. They seem incarnations of that state of poverty which is coupled with absolute squalor, yet one senses an ardent thought under the mendacious surface of exaggerated resignation. There is about it the suggestion of a prostitution that smiles with deep reserves of revenge.

All these poverty-stricken people come and go, never without some goal, accumulating patiently crumbs of profit that accrue from their traffic with all things. Spreading over the earth, apparently dreaming, their eye is watching the cash-box. They are on the alert for every chance that presents itself, now and then exchanging a word in a subdued voice, the body always that of the vanquished,

the soul ever ready for combat. It is said that some of these people are wealthy. The most miserable among them certainly possess the most precious treasure: the gift of willing and doing.

On arriving in Cracow I find the town teeming with Jews. A drizzling rain—not without good reason—is washing the Ghetto whither my curiosity leads me first. In ill-smelling alleys, men, women, and children are slowly circulating, resigning themselves to accept the bath which Providence sends them. Everywhere at the windows, between unnamable rags, eyes are spying, one knows not what. In the depth of the black little shops, among dress goods, metals, victuals and what not, eyes shine out of the silvery waves of a prophet's beard. Hooked noses, clawlike hands seem to grip obscure objects and refuse to release them unless

the tinkling of money is heard. The lips invite and the gesture withholds —a hint of which the Christians, so ready to blame them, everywhere take advantage.

In the rear shops, huddled together in sticky clumps, old women are napping on the floor. Handsome young girls with big Oriental eyes pass by with engaging smiles. The law which forces them on their wedding day to replace their luxuriant growth of hair by the frightful wig of silk, will soon with the early maturity of their race succeed in disfiguring them beyond redemption. Grotesque, beardless dwarfs from under immense hats throw wicked glances at everything that towers above them. Young men with sallow skins and long corkscrew curls that form a sort of dancing beard about their faces, seem lost in the long coats of their

grandfathers and look about with startled eyes of an owl in daylight.

In front of the Jewish restaurants crowds stand about talking, regardless of the rain. Here are the over-dressed who do not hesitate to advertise their wealth, as the fine material of their coats and their well-kept hats attest. But why is it that even under an attractive exterior one still suspects that Asiatic neglect of the body?

We decided to lunch in a Jewish restaurant of some reputation. I found nothing striking about it, but rare untidiness and a stale odor of rancid fat. The white of the tablecloths appeared only in spots. Boiled meats and dumplings were floating in oily gravies. Coming out of this woeful hole we visited a poor Jewish school, the teacher of which, sadly ragged of appearance, seemed full of enthusiasm.

A few steps from the school is a cemetery, a field of weather-worn stones with crudely carved emblems, hands presenting the palm or mythical birds hovering over an epitaph. The caretaker suggested a model for Jehovah; his head was so beautiful and so imposing that one of us wanted to photograph him. But the man refused. He had been offered five hundred francs for a picture, he said, by a photographer who wanted it for a paper. But the ancient prejudice against representation of the human body—still kept alive in Islam—had taken root in this Oriental brain and could not be dislodged. While an energetic gesture of the old man emphasized his implacable refusal to pose, a click of the camera gave us a snapshot. But the God of Shem had been watching. In the evening the plate showed in place of the long silver beard,

the big black eyes and the noble smile of imperious gentleness, nothing but a big hand that hid the whole face. A fly had providentially alighted on the nose and brought about this miracle.

A visit to the castle of the Polish kings is really indispensable. Little seems to remain of the edifice erected in the fourteenth century by Casimir the Great. But the monument on the rock has still an air of grandeur. It is now used as barracks and military prison. From the heights of the walls one can see the whole city with her towers and cupolas. Beyond is the dreary plain of the Vistula, desperately monotonous in its uniformity. Somewhere within the ramparts are the tombs of the kings. But the caretaker is sleeping off a jag one knows not where. Though the whole garrison has been aroused for the purpose, it is impossible

to discover his retreat. Perhaps he has locked himself in with some Jagelon or Beleslav in order to be certain of peaceful slumber. Hence there could be no interview with the dead kings.

After a brief walk through the cathedral we descend into the city. The big market place is humming with the noise of rustic bargaining. Peasants in white or blue coats, profusely braided with red, a bouquet of artificial flowers on their hat, are absorbed in the smoke issuing from their pipes. They accompany their wives, who are carrying loads like beasts of burden. In a big sheet, tied by two ends about their shoulders, are kindling, cheese, liquor, eggs, poultry, and on top of all the boots of the peasant woman, which on entering the city were quite naturally removed and hung over her shoulder. Heavier burdens are heaped

on carts. But be he driver or pedestrian, it is the man who wields the family scepter and who judges the carrying capacity of his patient drudge. In all countries of the world the market is one of the most picturesque sights. Like all races of primitive visual education the Slavs are fond of glaring colors and brighten by the vivid tints of their clothes the unbroken sadness of their plains. Blue, red, pink and yellow smiles the market square of Cracow beneath the drizzling rain.

The forward surging movement of the crowd carries me to the door of St. Mary's, the belfry of which is topped with a crown. The nave is full of people. No peasant would come to market without saying his prayers at St. Mary's. All these people, very self-contained, are absorbed in their devotions. The eyes are at first dazzled by a barbarous riot of col-

ors and when they turn from the profusely gilt ceiling to this human crowd, prostrate in their dream, the Middle Ages seem to be alive once more, challenging modern criticism, science and philosophy. Men and women are on their knees on the tiles. Some immovable, their eyes wide open, as in rigid ecstasy. Others, less numerous, touch the stones with their brows and beat their breasts with clenched fists. At the height, where in our temples are usually seen the faces of the faithful, rows of naked feet seem to rise toward heaven from heaps of skirts and cloaks, all this mass bobbing up and down with every movement of the penitent. Evidently one can pray as devoutly with the feet as with the hands. It seems, however, that homage to the Creator might nevertheless be preceded by other ablutions besides those to be had in muddy brooks.

Two steps from the church is the hall of cloths, Soukiennitza, where Israel is enthroned in all glory. In the attenuated light of the long arcade are dancing in the breeze cottons and silks of all colors—traps for a curiosity soon to be punished. The danger is evident from the first, yet, as always, heeded too late.

To the right, to the left, on little seats under the silks and the multicolored textiles are hidden the Jew and his companion, spying on the passer-by. The most absent-minded glance at the display is immediately seized upon by the couple in ambush, and from their fascinating lair they plunge upon the innocent, two perfidious tempters whom no rebuff discourages. The man in luxuriant long coat with the side-curls tumbling from beneath a tall hat, and the handsome smiling woman engagingly wave little squares of

silk which flap like flags and make rainbows dance under the gloomy ceiling.

"There is nothing here," says a gentle voice to the right, "come the other way, sir."

"This way, look here," says a voice to the left.

As you hesitate between these contradictory seductions, affectionate hands touch your shoulder or your arm. But do not resist, for the caressing fingers suddenly contract and you are caught. However, you can not please everybody. At these inviting appeals of the silks, dancing sarabandes of color, people have come running from all sides at full speed. What is to be done? You are held by the tail of your coat, you are embraced, gripped, dragged forth. What is even more annoying is the fact that the silks apparently of their own volition seem to

alight upon your arm, with a rustle and a flutter as of a million wings.

"Take, sir, good evening, sir, carry it all away!"

And there you are, burdened with gifts from twenty benefactors who stuff them into your yawning pockets. If arrested by a naïve scruple, you stop—you are lost. Willingly or unwillingly, your pocket-book must open.

The well-warned man forges straight ahead at the risk of leaving something of himself in the hands of these far too numerous friends. That is what I did, not without some regret at rewarding so poorly so much affection. Then as by magic, with little flutterings of farewell, all the light satins vanish at the magnetic bidding of Israel. Everything disappears. The Jew is silently hurt at the ingratitude of the Christian and his precious gifts

fly away as mysteriously as they arrived. The wonder is, that one finds one's pockets in their previous state. I must state the fact in praise of the shop keepers at the Soukiennitza that there is nothing extracted from nor added to them.

The national museum, which is rich in revolutionary souvenirs, presents a striking contrast of the bloody dramas of the past with the present peace of mind which perhaps conceals hopes that bear the secret of the future. By a strange revenge of fate, it is the great Polish magnates who at this time govern Austria. The interest of caste, which remained all-powerful under the foreign reign, is employed in the service of similar interests in other parts of the motley monarchy and obtains in return certain advantages for the national cause. The insurrections in Russian Poland have found no echo in Gali-

cia. The scepter of Francis Joseph is light. The clergy, being satisfied, succeeds in keeping the people contented. The Diet manages the affairs of the province in perfect freedom. Badeni and Goluchowski govern the conquering people—miraculous return of one of the most famous thefts of territory. Russia itself, at this hour, offers a no less curious spectacle, the industry of Warsaw being about to conquer the immense Russian market.

Lemberg (Leopol), the capital of the province, is an uninteresting city. There I only admired the good Polish faculty of drinking and eating everywhere. In the groceries, in the confectioneries, at the pork butchers, you see nothing but stomachs that are being filled and flooded. The Galician pig ingeniously tempts the jaded palate. It does not exert itself in

vain and is mightily aided in its mission by a delectable beer.

One evening, attending the performance of an operetta, I had occasion to admire the unusually musical quality of the Polish language, which to me seems no less liquid and sonorous than the Italian. I saw pale beauties there, noted as types of their race. What especially struck me, however, was the perverse innocence of their glance, a characteristic trait of Slav women.

I found the synagogue in festive attire. In an indescribable turmoil, contrasting strangely with the ecstatic silence of St. Mary's, I heard the call of the Shofar, in our times the last echo of the trumpet of Jericho.

The next day, in the country about Lemberg, I visited the white cottages of Ruthenian peasants, where the eternal

lamp is burning before saintly images, and noticed, not without some surprise, farm laborers with Talmudic locks pushing their wheelbarrows with vigorous hands. Who has said that the Jews shun manual labor? They certainly have the rarest aptitude for trade as the Christians of the Gospel themselves understand and practice it. But you find in the villages of Galicia Jewish artisans of all trades, and not far from Lemberg is a colony of Caraite Jews, who devote themselves exclusively to agriculture.

By a singular fatality this energetic race, spread all over the earth, always attacked, yet always alive, has been represented in the Christian world by two extremes; the most abject poverty, and the most insolent money power. The sons of Christ, who do not scorn at proper times to rake up gold, curse the bank of Israel

which they are doing their best to emulate. Who will speak the word of pity which one has the right to expect for the wretched strugglers against the severe law of life and against law itself? When shall one see in the victims of fate and of man himself, without distinction of race and regardless of history, nothing but a misfortune which should be remedied?

BUSK

A desolate village at the end of Galicia close to the Russian frontier, it is, all built of wood and mud. In the leprous houses the plaster is crumbling, the woodwork shows cracks and fissures, and attempts at repairs have been made with patches of leather, tin and filthy rags. On the corduroy road-bed of the marshy streets long teams are painfully swaying to and fro, making the weary traveler bob up and down on his couch of straw. Ducks and geese are waddling about among the coming and going of big muddy boots. Out of these boots rise the forms of emaciated Jews with glowing eyes under Talmudic locks; Ruthenians whose coarse hair

mingles with the sheep wool of their garments, Mongols and Kalmucks, red, blond or black, with powerful jaws, cheek bones abruptly protruding beyond the flat noses and little slanting eyes shining out of haggard faces; Slavs of divers origin, in long white coats, their starlike blue eyes beaming a false innocence. A camp that has migrated from Asia and been suddenly arrested in the mud; and to complete the vision, in the open plain a village of tents, around which are slumbering a black crowd of half-naked gypsies.

What is most striking in Busk, next to the ducks and the geese, is the Jews; unkempt, restless and gentle, carrying on all industries and all trades. The poverty of this people is extreme. One does not know whether they suffer from it or not, as they pass along, sordid, lamentable,

with a perpetual smile of obsequious envy. Perhaps they are not unhappy.

Their domain is the village square, a large parallelogram of greenish swamp lined with low huts that are filled with a hideous din and bustle. All the length of the road, raised in the form of a sidewalk, on the trunks of trees or on boxes used as benches, huddle frightfully ragged forms, motionless, in Oriental resignation. Sallow-skinned children with open mouths and big sheepish eyes, long wisps of hair fluttering about their cheeks, fraternize with the ducks on the dung-heaps. Strange housekeepers, draped in nameless things, carry pails emitting unpleasant odors. Through the open doors of the wretched habitations, miserable pallets show their rotting straw amid all sorts of decaying refuse.

Here dwells a race, active, industrious, with long agile hands, reaching out for sustenance, a patient people, capable of the most marvelous endurance as of incredible persistence of effort, contented with little, ambitious of everything, humble, timid, implacable, charged with four thousand years of will power. The Pole governs Austria, it is said. The Jew, being a universal negotiant, holds in his hand the Pole, whether peasant or magnate.

"When I want to buy or sell anything," said the Baron of Busk, "whatever it may be, I call a Jew. His relations with all the markets of the country, his understanding of business, his interest in keeping me as customer, are to me an assurance that I am going to be served promptly and well. There is no large

landholder in Galicia who for business of any kind is not forced to address himself to the children of Israel."

The man who spoke thus owns sixty thousand hectares. His estate is a manor. The greater part is forest, of course. The hour of the revolution which will cut up into parcels these vast Galician domains has not yet struck; I doubt whether anybody thinks of it. The Galician, whether Slav or Jew, is accustomed to his poverty. The agricultural industries bring the proprietor but little profit, and assure the worker only a rather precarious existence; but each seems contented with his lot. There is fatalism in the blood of Asia.

The very plain castle with large servant quarters is surrounded by a beautiful park through which flows a river. Strange contrast of aristocratic lawns with

a sprinkling of horticultural artifices and the savagery which begins on the other side of the wall.

I was advised to visit the Ruthenian church. Irreverently we push open the gate of a wild garden, and meet a tall old man in black garb and a straw hat of vast proportions, absorbed in smoking his long pipe. It is the curate. As he bows in welcome he displays his handsome, smooth, firmly modeled cranium, a profile of aquiline distinction, softened by a pair of eyes, blue as a baby's.

A certain vessel hanging on a pole near the door receives the friendly pipe and the good smoker, without smoking, accompanies us across a field with here and there a few centenarian trees, in the generous shadow of which nestles the modest church, its skeleton of laths covered with unpainted tiles. Beside the

sacred temple is a barnlike structure with gables and a heavy wooden belfry with absolutely bare sides. The interior of the church is luxuriously ornamented with barbaric images, of which the excellent old gentleman seems quite proud. He shows us his gold embroidered vestments, a handsome chasuble with flower design of the last century, and he makes us notice that it is of French tissue. Some court gown of a friend of Louis XV, perhaps, which after strange vicissitudes is in this quiet place piously expiating the sins of departed flesh.

While the priest naïvely makes us admire a little chapel crudely carved in wood with a simple knife, the work of his hands on long winter evenings, a dozen peasants, men and women, have entered and eagerly share the feast spread before our eyes. As we pass the altar we find

on the floor a little wooden box which these people had placed there. His last art object duly exhibited, the saintly man politely salutes and without any transition, slipping on a black soutane, intonates pious chants which the chorus of peasants, candles in their hands, duly repeat.

We are expected at the Jewish cemetery. We accompany one of our friends, who after a brilliant career in the Viennese press, has come on a pilgrimage to the grave of his father, a physician of Busk, who had spent his life in nursing, succoring and tenderly caring for the poor of all races and creeds. As a Jew he had helped all the unfortunates of his race whose suffering gripped his heart by so many bonds of common history. As a man, he served humanity, unselfishly, as one may well believe, for, judging from

the Busk of to-day, the Busk of fifty years ago can hardly have assured a fortune to the healer of countless ills that Providence sent to the poor. The old wooden house which had been his home, now resplendent in a coat of fresh white paint, was pointed out to us. After fifty years of faithful labor and service, he had simply, without any pomp, left it for his resting place in the graveyard.

At the gate some ragamuffins were watching for us and joined us without a word. I had once visited the ancient Jewish cemetery in Prague, which all guides recommend to the tourist. It is like an avalanche of old gravestones, that had been tumultuously tossed about by the hurricane of ages. Elder bushes, a century old and never trimmed by human hand, cover the stones with their dark foliage. It is difficult to find one's way

through this thicket. Fragments of inscriptions are still discernible, clasped hands, too, and symbolic birds and heaps of little stones deposited by pious visitors in homage of the departed. It is an ancient custom of the desert, where the traveler devoutly adds his pebble to those heaped on the mounds.

I found no trace of this custom in Busk; but the hands were there and the birds too, still enliven the tombstones with their primitive images. The Jewish cemetery of Busk is a virgin forest, an impenetrable jungle of trees, brambles and weeds growing in untrammeled freedom. Old trunks are molding at our feet; heavy branches, beaten down by age or storms, burden with their long agony the young shoots that sprout between them in the will to live. There is no path or anything resembling one. White birch stems crowd

close together, as in battle array; interlacing twigs, spines bristling in defense, arrest the explorer.

The miserable troop that had followed us in silence got ahead of us at the first step, and, passing between the trunks, holding apart the branches, slipping like adders into the densest thicket, guided us to the grave we sought. Humble creatures they were, with long bony faces, their beards, coats and boots shining with the same sticky ochre-like dirt. But there was an incredible intensity of life in their vivid black eyes, well protruding from their sockets and glowing with fire. We followed them through the underbrush, accompanied by the noise of broken branches, lashed by rebounding twigs, stumbling perhaps over mossgrown stones buried in a mess of dead wood. A sumptuous living frame for this picture of

death they were, and they suggested a sensation more powerful and more beautiful than our pretentious cities of the dead, full of grimacing figures and disgraced by mendacious epitaphs.

At last we reached a group of four stones which our guides had already stripped of their covering of vines and brambles. Their fingers scratched the lichens to lay bare the writing which the stone would jealously keep secret. Then all the hands pointed to a stone leaning over as in a faint: "There it is."

And suddenly all these haggard faces, even when they smiled, contracted as with suffering, were ennobled by the solemn gravity of the sublimest sentiment known on earth. The eyes were fixed in contemplation of the mysteries of the world; thoughts that commanded respect rose from under the fur of worn-out bonnets,

greasy little caps. Each of these beggars was at this moment a pontiff. One of them, sacristan or rabbi, I know not which, with authoritative voice and in well-scanned lines pronounced words that ravished, transporting with ecstasy all who heard them:

"Here we are before your grave, friend. We bring to you your son, who had not appeared before you since the day when he marked with this stone the place of your great rest. Life had taken him into the world, where your long-continued efforts for his good through your continuing to live in him, assured the success of your progeny. Ever present among your kin, you thus carry on your work on this earth. That is why your son comes to pay grateful homage to you. In times gone by, before life, you were united in eternity. His birth separated him from

you, gave him a life of his own. And now, in thought he comes to reunite with you and to revive you in himself even as you did."

The invocation, of which only this brief passage was translated for me, seemed to me of superior beauty. I wish I could literally quote the naïve address to the neighboring dead that followed, asking them to entertain friendly relations with him, whom we had come to honor and expressing the hope that they, too, would be thus visited by their kin!

With difficulty we groped our way back through the thicket and found ourselves before a sort of barn, where on the solid earthen floor were huddled in a circle women, children and old men, the poorest of the poor in the village. It is customary to give them alms and my friend passed before them and dropped money into

their outstretched hands. Then there appeared a board with bowls, decked with inscriptions that claimed the generosity of the visitor for various institutions. I saw bills dropping into one after another; not one of these charities was forgotten.

As soon as we came out a mob of paupers presented themselves, pressing forward at the news that a son of Israel, who had gone forth from Busk, had returned with unheard-of treasures which his hands were dropping into every yearning pocket. It was a veritable race as to who would get closest to him. The twelve tribes were there, seeking the occasion to ameliorate their condition.

"I knew you when you were a little tot," said an old man.

"I am a relative of—"

"I am a friend of so-and-so whom your father cured," they eagerly proclaimed.

Thus the beneficence creates a claim against the benefited or his descendants for the benefactor and those that follow him. One of the speakers had lost his calf, the other his horse. All had been victims of some accidents. Never in so short a space of time was heard such an accumulation of catastrophes.

Implored, caressed, dragged forth, deafened by a hundred stories, our friend, followed by those poor whining wretches was forced, in order to reach his hospitable lodgings, to pass through a crowd of persistent claimants that barred his passage. By the use of our shoulders and our elbows we succeeded in breaking away from them. But at the gate of the castle another formidable attack awaited us. The whole synagogue was there, with the great rabbi in the lead, a marvelous Moses of Michael Angelo, whose head, crowned

with a high fur bonnet, lost itself in a torrential beard, in which the waves of silver alternated with those of ebony. A long discussion took place; for the house of God was still unfinished, and if the visitor would but move his magic wand of gold, it would be built and all Busk would rejoice. I must admit that our friend did not strike me as a very fervent devotee at the altar of Jehovah. Nevertheless, it would have surprised me, if childhood memories and the natural feeling of solidarity with a great tragic race had not made him add his stone towards the erection of the edifice where his forbears had worshiped.

The gate was finally locked. While the chattering crowd retired, disappointed that the galions vanished as dream-like as they had appeared, we gradually regained our composure. The neighboring

gypsy camp was tempting me and I suggested a visit before our departure. I had retained the vision of a little gypsy of perhaps ten years, who that very morning had for a copper coin frantically followed our car across the holes in the road, while at each of her leaps, like that of a rag doll, the smiling head of a bronze marmot bobbed up, madly tinkling its bells on the shoulders of the swift runner. A gate of the park permitted us to get out into the plain, unnoticed by the eyes of restive Israel, and soon we were in the midst of the tents planted at the border of the forest.

Compared with the Jews we had just met, these people live in happy serenity. Pariahs, the degraded refuse of the castes of India, they carry in the folds of their cloaks what was left of them of their native land. Towards the horizon which

ever recedes they are going all the time, marching towards the unknown, disdainful of the present sojourn and ever hopeful of a better one. Serious without restless agitation, without the rudeness of conquering races, they take across the planet their tranquil contentment with everything. What is to them the possession of some earth? Where chance guides them, they plant their long poles, attach the canvas, and their palace is ready. Their little horses feed on the grass, while the gypsy, resplendent in copper buttons, goes from farm to farm in quest of worn out pots and kettles that need the restoring hand of the itinerate tinker.

Earth offers plenty for her children, and the troop, enriched by beggary and occasional depredations, appears to enjoy the solid comfort of nomads living on next to nothing. The depth of their eyes, dia-

mond black, their placid features, their solemn gestures, reflect the fatalist soul of the Orient. Little boys of ten to twelve, stark naked, voluptuously recline like young wild animals, only their head of heavy coarse hair now and then bobbing up from the couch of green. Women, likewise crouching on the grass, look at us with supreme indifference. Their shining tresses end in chaplets of silver coins, evoking a vision of brilliantly decorated idols.

Under a big tent is gravely reclining a handsome black divinity, radiant with silver coins. Her couch is a rug of violet coloring, forming a frame of sumptuous brightness. Blue spirals are rising from her pipe and seem to fascinate her like a dream. At her feet is a little girl of about six, who lights one of her mother's pipes on the hearth fire and seems to derive in-

finite joy from it. It is a certain view of life which makes the Oriental, with all his inwardness, adapt his customs to life under the misty skies of the Occident.

The Orient has also given us this Slav peasant, fashioned by the despotism of Asia, who doubles up at our sight and without even knowing us, in passing, kisses our hands.

From the Orient, too, come these restless Jews, whose contemplative faculty is so seriously disturbed by militant contact with occidental society. Of a philosophy less disinterested than the Aryan, a stranger, who as harmless wanderer carries with him the implacable malediction of his brothers, the Jew, however accursed, has attempted to conquer the hostility of the world, into which dispersion by conquest has thrown him. Scorned, hated, persecuted for having im-

posed upon us gods of his blood, he has wanted to redeem himself and to perfect himself by overcoming untoward circumstances. For this task nothing was spared; no suffering, no torture counted, no vengeance was scorned. There is no more astonishing history in the world.

And because it now happens that these people have resisted menaces, stakes, forced conversions, because with all their vices and their virtues they have entered the social organization of our own vices and virtues, because they have drawn from their stock of good and evil a power of action at least equal to our particular power of good and evil, combined for the conquest of wealth, because they have possessed themselves of our weapons and have learned to turn them against us, I hear that their systematic extermination is desired. Thus one can revive the hatreds

of those defeated in the contest for domination, one can resuscitate plans of persecution, which are but an admission of defeat: but how can one found upon all this something that will last?

The enormous power of Israel in contemporary Christendom can not be denied. All things remaining as they are, the activity of this enduring race, this marvelous producer of energy, can in my opinion only increase. For Aryan idealism I would not consider this a misfortune. Besides, each people has good and bad characteristics, and all supremacy of race seems to me to contradict the deepest interests of our manifold humanity. But when the faculties of a race have so miraculously adapted themselves to the social order of the present, as different from the past as it is certain to be from that of the future, what can one say, un-

less the race and the economic order in changing give us other results. The Jews will not be destroyed. The Sultan himself, with hundreds of thousands of Armenians massacred, will at the end be conquered by Armenia. Israel, having gone forth alive from the Middle Ages, cannot be suppressed.

Instead of condemning a race whose lucky or unlucky faculties have made it a factor in present society, instead of crying cowardly that it must be annihilated to give us room to live—why do we not try, simply and more justly, to frame a more equitable, a more disinterested social code, in which the power of selfish appropriation—be it Jewish or Christian—is rendered less harmful and its tyranny less crushing for the great mass of humanity. Then the Judaism of Judæa, if its cleverness made it sovereign of a

society of barbarous egotism travestied by the false gold of charity, and the no less triumphant Judaism of Christianity whom fate has permitted to have its chance, will no longer know the evil temptations of to-day and will be contented within the limits of an individualistic development compatible with a superior notion of social justice. Without violence, without massacres and persecutions, Semitism, remaining what it is now, as it is typified in many children of Ham and Japheth, could no longer present the danger which it is said to be today.

Fools are those, who believe in founding liberty upon the growth of tyranny! Less license to selfishness, more room for pity. Clear the roads that lead towards justice; bar the avenues through which unhindered triumphant oppression is en-

tering. How short-sighted it is to dream of a change of oppressors! To kill the oppressor is but to replace one by another. What is needed is to attack him in his possibilities of action. Thus the wretched Christians of Paris or the wretched Jews of Busk will be efficiently assisted in their personal efforts against the heavy yoke with which they are burdened by their big brothers of all races, to whom the law at present is contented to say, "Crush, dominate, abuse!" and who do crush, dominate and abuse. What the Christians, who are after all still masters of the world, need above anything else, is to better their own ways; then they will not need to fear the Jews who may be reaching out for the crown of opulence, which has ever been coveted by men of all ages and of all countries.