

100 YEARS AGO: EXTRACTS FROM THE JEWISH HERALD

Compiled by Lorraine Freeman

The Jewish Herald.

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 25th APRIL, 1860—1890.

Onto the simple question, what are we to do with our girls? Why, get them married, seems to be the answer that naturally suggests itself. But people who have marriageable daughters well know that this is more easily said than done. There seem to be many difficulties in the way, as our correspondent has pointed out; but we confess that these difficulties are more apparent than real. It all depends how people look upon the marital state, and what they consider the aim and purpose of married life. For it is pretty certain that the views which they entertain on this subject, they instil into the daughters' minds. Now, we have no hesitation in saying that, to our mind, "Father's" views in this direction are neither sound nor in any way calculated to solve the problem, but rather to add to its difficulties. He says--"Is it the duty of parents to ally their daughters to unsuitable partners—unsuitable in social status, in means, in education and in culture?" That is to say, supposing you have given your daughter a first-class education, she is well-accomplished, can tastefully play Chopin's compositions, sing "Una Voce" with faultless execution, and paint a landscape fairly well, you must not marry her to a man who is inferior to her in all these things. He may, in point of character, give every reasonable promise that he will make your daughter a good husband, will love and cherish her, since he cannot boast of a high-class modern education, cannot talk of the latest addition to the circulating library, nor grow enthusiastic over Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony," he is no suitable partner for your daughter. Why, the idea is not

only preposterous, but also extremely mischievous. Have the unions of highly-refined people *invariably* proved happy? Is there no domestic unhappiness in artistic circles? What parents have to look out for is that their intended sons-in-law shall have all the characteristics that go to make good husbands, honourable and upright men, kind and considerate to their wives and families. These qualities outweigh all artistic taste, and if a girl cannot appreciate them, she does not deserve to be married, for in that case it is tolerably certain that she has not learned to understand a woman's duties, and is therefore not likely to make a good wife.

Now, as to the means or position of a man willing to enter the matrimonial state. We are afraid that in this respect also the ideas of some parents are very extravagant, and not at all calculated to promote matrimony. This is, no doubt, owing to a certain reaction which is apt to set in in young countries when matters in general assume their normal character. Time was when in this country fortunes could be made in a very short time. The population was small, competition almost unknown, and the natural resources of the soil, often quite unexpectedly, poured undreamed-of treasures into men's laps. But all this is over now, and from year to year people become more convinced that here, as elsewhere, it is only by arduous labour, combined with economy and sobriety, and extending over many years, that men in every department of human industry can ultimately rise to a greater or smaller degree of independence. Of fortunes made during a "boom" time we need not speak; everybody knows that, as a rule, they are not lasting and rather a curse than a blessing. Now, why should not young people, otherwise suited to each other, join together in matrimony and work their way up in the social scale? Is the young man, who is honest and industrious, but not possessed of a fortune, to be debarred from marrying? Or are we to suppose that the engagement ring that is not set with big diamonds is, on that account, less emblematic of life-long faithfulness and honesty of purpose on the part of the donor? It goes without saying that the man willing to get married should be in a position to maintain a wife and family, but it is unreasonable for a girl to suppose that wealth is indispensable to true

matrimonial happiness or to expect that it is necessary for her to commence in life where her parents, after years of arduous labour, finished. Neither should a girl insist upon marrying no other than a man in a large city where every season brings fresh pleasures—mostly exciting and not always health-producing pleasures. Life in the country has also its charms, and above all a good wife will find an endless source of happiness at her own domestic hearth. We have every reason to believe that there are a good many girls in these colonies quite willing to contract marriage on these terms, but not all, and we fear that in this, as in many other cases, the minority has been instrumental in spreading an unfavourable impression which one gone forth is not easily removed. Let it once become known that *all* parents in these colonies instil these views into their daughters' minds, and we feel sure that marriages will be far more numerous than they are now. It is not wise that young men should lead a bachelor's life until youth is gone and the poetic freshness of life has departed: they should be directly and indirectly encouraged to enter the matrimonial state as soon as they are in a reasonable position to do so, and parents should unmistakably show that in choosing partners for their daughters their hearts are not set upon wealth, but upon good, honourable and industrious men. There is another point in connection with this subject upon which our correspondent touches, and which we shall consider in our next issue.

ONE of the most difficult tasks which committees of charitable societies, as well as ministers of religion, are often called upon to perform is to find employment for foreign clerks who arrive in this country with an imperfect knowledge, or no knowledge at all, of the English language. It is a well-known fact that clerks for office work are always in abundance. Let a firm advertise for one, and there will be a score or more of applications from young men thoroughly competent to do the work expected of them. In fact, there are always more clerks out of situation than are wanted. What chance then has a poor foreigner, who does not understand English, to find employment in an office? If he be a young man, who has hitherto observed his Sabbaths and festivals as well as the dietary laws, his chances in this country are still more remote, as the Jewish firms which close on Sabbaths and Jewish holidays are, we are sorry to say, in the minority, while *Kosher* hotels are unknown and *Kosher* boarding-houses few and far between. What

then becomes of the foreign clerk? He finds it incumbent upon himself to take to hawking—an occupation which is certainly below his educational status, and which Jews in this country, except in extreme cases, do not wish to encourage. It would be far more advisable for foreign clerks to remain in their native country, where they are more likely to find suitable employment than in these colonies. It is different with artisans. If they understand their trade, they will before long find remunerative work. If they do not know English they will soon learn as much as they require. For commercial clerks, even under the most favourable circumstances, the demand is at no time very great.

THE following remarks by the London *Jewish Standard* are very opportune and embody the opinion which we have so often expressed on the question of making the Synagogue service "attractive" by artificial means. Our contemporary says:—"If Jews or any other people are inspired by religion they will be attracted by their service and eager to worship. If religious fervour does not exist, we fear that, with few exceptions, the so-called making the service attractive will do little to inspire it. It is by teaching youth, by both precept and example, that a love of our holy religion can be fostered. When indifference exists the cure must be sought by touching the soul, not by tickling either the ear or the eye. The Berkeley-street Synagogue, where all that music and elocution can do has been done to draw worshippers, is a standing proof that religion is an affair 'within,' and cannot be pumped up except possibly spasmodically and uselessly by external agencies."

A SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC PROBLEM.

(TO THE EDITOR OF THE "JEWISH HERALD.")

SIR,—When we look around and discover the stubborn fact that hundreds of our young women in these colonies are, from lack of reasonable opportunity, debarred from entering the marriage state for reasons clearly suggestive to most parents, the thought mechanically strikes us, "What are we to do with our girls?" Is it the duty of parents to ally their daughters to unsuitable partners—unsuitable in social status, in means, in education, and in culture, or are they to keep them pining in single blessedness (?) until when the long-looked-for opportunity is supposed to arrive they are found disqualified by old maidenhood? Are we to keep our daughters in the colonies until this almost hopeless opportunity arrives, or deport them elsewhere, there to find a chance of fulfilling the mission God and nature have allotted to them? This is a question which thrusts itself upon us with irresistible force; the more so now, since the religious barrier between Jew and non-Jew is daily burying itself deeper and deeper into the ground on which it was originally set up. In all the colonies the difficulty

of finding suitable husbands—or husbands in almost any shape—for our daughters is daily growing more formidable. Each of these colonies has its hundreds of marriageable young women, whose chances of entering into the matrimonial state are of the saddest kind, unless they stoop from their social status; while in the said places the few Jewish young men who may be considered fairly eligible make straight headway into alliances with Christian young women, if they are not prevented from want of legitimate means, through defective training and other causes, to support a wife. In the face of this plexus of heterogeneous conditions, what is to be done? Can there be found no way out of this labyrinth of cross purposes? Are our young women to follow the example of our young men and ally themselves to the stranger, or are they to doom themselves to a life-long old maidenhood? This matter is of too serious a nature to be lightly regarded; it involves no less a question than the entire stability of our racial and religious existence. Some solution, tangible and practical, must be given to it. It is as yet, as far as we colonists are concerned, by far the most vital question which has presented itself for Jewish consideration; far more vital than the questions of philanthropic societies, almshouses and soup kitchens. The person who is successful enough to solve it will deserve well of colonial Judaism and colonial Jews.

I appeal to those interested fathers and mothers, widows and widowers, who have daughters far advanced into womanhood. Are we acting justly to our daughters, by permitting this undue pressure upon them, as cruel as it is unnatural? I ask you: What are you to do with your daughters under the present condition of affairs? Will the love of race and religion, and even of kin; will they, though combined, under all circumstances stifle the emotions of nature? Is it just, is it expedient, is it parental, is it reasonable that we should attempt the experiment, that this temptation should be thrust in their way to test their racial and religious endurance and steadfastness? Surely, the life of a Jewess is a continual sacrifice from the cradle to the grave, every of her motions is circumscribed. Is it expedient that her life should be still heavier weighted with sacrifices against which our common nature and common sense cry out? Ye parents who have in the interests of your race and religion developed all the natural qualities of your daughters, in order to fit them to enter into fair competitions with those among whom their lot is cast, to what purpose is all the care, education, accomplishments and culture you have bestowed on your daughters; is it to yoke them to partners who not only have not the ability to appreciate these, but who, in a large number of cases, are unable to provide for them what is due to their status and culture, and all this for the questionable satisfaction that you have enabled them to fulfil their natural obligations under the most adverse circumstances, and because those of their own race and religion to whom they have a right to be allied fly into the embraces of non-Jewesses,

What is written is neither for the vulgar, the ignorant, the bigot or the thoughtless; but for those parents to whom deliberate judgment presents in their true colours the probable issues of the present state of our domestic affairs. The Jewish man licenses himself to roam and range uncircumscribed—he selects what society he wills, marries whom he likes without compunction, and for a pecuniary consideration can ride over the scruples of Boards of Synagogue management and the *Beth-din*. But is it so with our chaste and retiring daughters? On what reason or logic are these placed on a different level? If we are to preserve the purity of our race, then let the barrier which protects it shut out for ever those who are daring enough to scale its heights.

Are Jewish young men moved by the spirit of gallantry and racial predilection? If so, on them rests a large share of the weight and responsibility of this question; if otherwise, then, indeed, it is a set-off against the disability of our girls, who are so far fortunate to escape alliances with them; or do our Jewish young men, through lack of possibility, make a virtue of necessity, seeing they are not able to support a cultured Jewish wife, select an article requiring less cost, care and attention. Our Jewish young men may elect either of these positions under this subject, and if the spirit of manhood is not yet totally extinguished in them they have good reason to blush. Is it expected that respectable parents will accept as the future maintainers and supporters of their carefully nurtured and well-provided daughters men of a much lower social stratum, when in all probability the onus of the maintenance of their partners in life, and of the offspring likely to result from such unions, is likely to recoil on the devoted parents, to say nothing of the misery attending such condition of affairs? This is not a domestic question by any means; it is a communal one, and one which must receive a solution.—Yours, etc.,

FATHER.

DEATH OF MR. PHILIP FALK.

WE regret (says the *Jewish World* of 7th February) to announce the death of Mr. Philip Falk. Originally in business with his uncle, Mr. David Falk, at Manchester, the deceased proceeded to Australia, where he founded the firm of Messrs. P. and S. Falk, shippers and general colonial merchants, Melbourne. Returning to England, he was replaced in the colony by his brother, Mr. Salis Falk, and again took up his residence in Manchester. Here he devoted himself assiduously to the affairs of the community, and mainly through his exertions, and assisted by the late Rev. S. Landeshut, the late Dr. Franklin and Mr. Henry Samson, J.P., the Jewish Board of Guardians was established in 1867. He was its first President, and continued in that capacity until his removal to London 11 years later. He was also one of the founders of the Congregation of British Jews, a member of the Philanthropic Society, and for several years treasurer of the Jews' School. Since his residence in London, he represented the Manchester Old Congregation at the Board of Deputies, and he was also an active member of the Council of the Anglo-Jewish Association. On Wednesday last at the monthly meeting of the Manchester Board of Guardians, Mr. E. M. Henriques, J.P., proposed that a letter of condolence be forwarded to the widow and family of the late Mr. Philip Falk, who was the first President of the Board, and who worked so energetically in the cause of that institution.

SIR MOSES MONTEFIORE JEWISH HOME,
SYDNEY, N.S.W.

WANTED a HOUSEKEEPER of the Jewish persuasion, as Matron for the above institution. Apply by letter, with copies of testimonials, to Mr. Henry Solomon, President (of Myers and Solomon), George street, Sydney, N.S.W.

VACANCY for Two Jewish Young Men (Kosher House). Moderate. 10 Bell street, Fitzroy.

The Jewish Herald.

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 25th APRIL, 1890.

IT is neither our duty nor our desire to defend the East Melbourne Congregation from the indictment that has been brought against them by their late minister, the Rev. I. MYERS, B.A. The Board of Management, if they so desire, can themselves do that. But we may be permitted to point out one or two things, by careful attention to

which unpleasantness such as occurred between the reverend gentleman and his late flock may in future be avoided, and that in the interest of all parties. When a congregation engage a minister it is all important that he should come to them accredited by acknowledged authorities, and should stand under the spiritual jurisdiction of our Chief Rabbi. It inspires confidence. It is a guarantee against the possibility of any arbitrary or unlawful action on the part of the minister chosen. That this important proviso was set aside in the case of Mr. MYERS was certainly no fault of his. He tells us that the congregation pressed him to become their minister. They, therefore, were responsible for the consequences. By failing to obtain the sanction of the Chief Rabbi and to place the man of their choice under his jurisdiction they created in the minds of many members a source of doubt and distrust which was bound to produce, and did produce, mischief. It certainly disturbed the harmony of the congregation.

That in all purely religious matters the minister, and not the president of the committee, should guide, goes without saying. Fortunately very few laymen are bold enough to claim such a power which, they know, belongs to their minister. But then the minister must at all times make it clear to every one that he considers himself bound by our religious laws and regulations. If he be at variance with them, or if he have lost faith in any of them, he had better say so and resign his office. Every man has a perfect right to his opinion, but he cannot honestly hold a position in which he is supposed to uphold the authority of the law, and at the same time act contrary to that law. If, for instance, he should celebrate a marriage on a day on which we are not to celebrate marriages, or if he should hold that regular attendance at Divine worship is incumbent on all *except* the minister; that the dictum of the Talmud (*Berachoth*, 47b)—לעולם ישכים אדם לבית הכנסת כדי שזכה וימנה עכ—עשרה הראשונים, and which, by-the-by, has been incorporated in the *Shulchan Aruch*, applies to all *except* to himself; he must expect that sooner or later laymen will call upon him for an explanation. They are sure to ask themselves whither such deviations from the recognised standard will lead and where the line is to be

drawn. No Rabbi, no minister, no teacher in Israel, not even the Chief Rabbi himself, has any right to act contrary to our Law, and, after all, the Jews themselves are the appointed guardians of that Law. "The Law which Moses commanded us, *is an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.*" There is but one way for a Jewish minister to win the respect of *all* parties, and that is by unflinching compliance with our laws and regulations.

For the rest the community thankfully acknowledges that MR. MYERS during his term of office has done valuable work. He has founded several institutions more or less useful, which, under judicious management, should have a prosperous future, and which will at all times testify to his zeal and energy, to his organising talent, and especially to his deep sympathy with the poor and helpless. With the riper experience that more advanced age will bring him, and with the information that he is sure to gather during his proposed travels, there is no doubt that, under Divine Providence, a long and useful career will lie before him wherever he may choose to take up his residence. For our own part we tender him our best thanks for the assistance he has from time to time given us by his literary contributions to this journal, and nothing will please us better than to hear periodically of his welfare in distant lands.

A SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC PROBLEM.

(TO THE EDITOR OF "THE JEWISH HERALD.")

SIR,—“A Father” complains of the difficulty experienced in getting our daughters married, but resents the idea of their starting in married life with less prosperous surroundings than the parent has attained after perhaps the labour of half a lifetime. I agree with you that to this notion of parents is largely attributable the condition of things which “A Father” deplors. Under such teaching our sons will not, cannot, marry until they have secured a position, *i.e.*, considerable wealth; by which time, in the majority of instances, they have long passed their youth, become deeply grooved in bachelor habits, and, in fact, outlived the desire for matrimony. Under the same blighting influence our daughters wither. They may meet young men whose manners, morals, intelligence, are all that could be desired, whom they could loyally love, whose faithful wives they would gladly become, but—men with a present income of perhaps only £4 or £5 per week—Papa shakes

his head, mamma looks cold. Besides, what would Miss A, B, C and D say of such a match? A match which might entail on the wife a great part of the domestic work of her small house. So the would-be suitor is discouraged and dismissed till he can double or triple his income, and the girl is deprived of her fair share of earthly happiness. To bring about a more healthy condition there must be somewhat of a return to the simpler habits of a preceding generation. Let parents avoid vulgar ostentation and show that they desire respectable sons-in-law, able to earn a decent livelihood, and that such a man of good character and intelligence would be preferred to a biped who had nothing but wealth to recommend him. Let our daughters receive a liberal education, be well-trained in domestic matters, and taught from an early age that riches are but of secondary importance when compared with honourable conduct or refinement of mind. Let this truth be carefully instilled:—"That the happy home, and the pure, intellectual life may live and flourish without affluence," and finally, let their dress, as their manners, be graceful and simple. Our boys should be taught, our young men admonished by their parents, that marriage is an honourable and beneficial institution. Instead of being urged "to look out for money," or to wait till a position had been made, the son should be encouraged to marry as soon as able to offer a comfortable home, even if this consisted of but a four-roomed cottage. Under this *régime* sensible and industrious young men and women would get married; and society, by judiciously using the cold shoulder, might teach the timid or selfish bachelor that, if he disregarded the duties, he would be deprived of the privileges and amenities of social life. I am painfully aware that this letter can at best do but little good. The craving for vain, worldly display, the desire for "gentility" is too deeply implanted in this civilised, this "advanced," age, King Mammon too firmly enthroned, and his worshippers too abjectly prostrate to free themselves, although the slavery includes the denial of the highest domestic pleasures to their daughters, of a pure and happy life to their sons. But it may be that some few parents will seriously entertain the question and profit by the matter herein set forth.—Yours, &c.,

4th June, 1890.

ANOTHER FATHER.

MISS DIANA BLOUSTEIN, Certificated Teacher of Drawing and Painting,
is prepared to Receive Pupils and Execute Commissions in all sorts of Drawing
and Painting at her residence, 1 George Terrace, Moore Street, Fitzroy.

Prospectus on application.

A SOCIAL AND DOMESTIC PROBLEM.

(TO THE EDITOR OF "THE JEWISH HERALD.")

SIR,—In your leading article of your issue of the 9th May, having for its theme my letter to you *re* the above heading, you remark that the difficulties I alluded to are "more apparent than real," that my "views are neither sound nor calculated to solve the problem, but rather to add to the difficulties." By what process of reasoning you arrive at this result, to me is a *curiosum*. That the difficulties are ominously obtrusive, nineteen out of twenty parents will readily concede. The prime object of my letter was not to attempt *the* solution, but to arouse the minds of the respectable, modest and considerate of the community to a ventilation of this great question, in the hope that among the *many* a solution more or less remedial or definite might be forthcoming. I maintain, Sir, that it is not only highly inexpedient, but positively unjust, to marry a young woman to a man inferior to her. It would be nothing short of a cruelty of the most barbarous character; and that practical parents consider it such, by their opposition to such ill-assorted marriages, and wisely so, too, on the grounds of their being destructive to the happiness of the marital state, is a proof only too positive. The pretty theory you have indulged in has driven you to paint gratuitously a highly-coloured picture of the class of young women *I did not* refer to particularly, and then in the whirl of your theory as gratuitously labelled the picture "unhappy unions." But your picture is not a correct copy of my specimen. Nevertheless, it is quite patent that the chances in favour of two well-matched *refined* persons living happily are far greater than if that agreement of taste, culture, education and refinement did not exist between them, consequently such unions *do invariably* turn out happily. You assume as a warranty for your deductions on this point that "it is tolerably certain she has not learned to understand a woman's duties." Now, Sir, I reiterate that the refined Jewish young woman *does* understand her womanly duties; that the educated young Jewish lady graces the drawingroom of a mansion with the same ease and effect as she does the kitchen attached thereto. Jewish mothers, as a rule, make this desirable training a vital point in their daughters' education, and the Jewish young woman is not the compound of fashion, fancy and romance which you have depicted; hence her greater value and her right to enjoy all the prestige, comfort and position when married as she enjoyed in the home of her parents, all theorising notwithstanding. I cannot make out what you mean by "*otherwise suitable*." What does this *otherwise* drive at? Let me state a case. If *A*, a hawker, can manage to ingratiate himself into the favour of romantic young lady *B*, and romantic young lady *B* accepts *A*, the hawker, as her partner for life, would this be a case of *otherwise suitable*? Again, suppose under the present difficulties *B* had no other chance to enter into the marital state except by descending from her position and hooking

A, would this also be a case of *otherwise suitable*? I cannot agree with your theory that young people should not as a necessity start married life at that point where their parents finished. I think it is just *that* point they should start from in these years of progress and grace. I cannot see that starting at the bottom rung of the ladder is an indispensability to marital happiness. Why should a carefully-nurtured and well-provided daughter in her father's home be compelled to go through any unnecessary disagreeable discipline because those of her own people prefer strangers, or are financially or otherwise incapable of providing for a wife what is due to her? It is a harsh thing to say; but it appears Jewish young men generally are in a most chronic state of impecuniosity. A young man, realising his social duties, ought to be gallant enough to go through this drudgery by himself. You feel satisfied *that many girls in these colonies would be quite willing to contract marriage upon these terms.*" But, Sir, you certainly have not contemplated the position. How do you account for the large number of desirable young Jewish women fast falling into old maidenhood around you, and in every one of the colonies? That it is unwise for young men to lead a bachelor's life is one of the points I raised; but how cruelly does the argument apply to our Jewish young women, who make model wives? I reiterate, our young men may choose either position—either they are woefully oblivious of their social duties, or that they lack the mental qualifications for carrying them out.—Yours, &c.,

FATHER.

[This letter reached us too late to receive attention in this issue. We shall consider it in our next.—ED. J. H.]

We are requested to draw attention to the announcement in our advertising columns of Messrs. Carter and Kinsella, wholesale manufacturers of fancy leather goods, 17 Catanach Buildings.

The Jewish Herald.

MELBOURNE, FRIDAY, 20th JUNE, 1890.

TO those who have watched the proceedings of the Melbourne Jewish Literary Society it will not come as a surprise that both the President and the Secretary have resigned. Nothing could be more natural than that. For the seeds that were so sedulously sown under the former régime are now beginning to spring up. Over and over again did we call attention to the fact that the Society

was slowly but surely drifting into a Jewish Freethought Society, but our warning was disregarded. So far from nipping the evil in the bud, the presidential chair in times gone by rather favoured the ventilation of anti-Jewish opinions, or, at any rate, winked at them. Thus we had a travesty of the Jewish Prayer Book, an attempt to prove Moses guilty of plagiarism, a misrepresentation of the aim and purpose of Judaism under the high-sounding title, "Religious ideals and religious idols," and so forth. Once settled in this groove, the exponents of this school of thought, and of whom MR. JACOB GOLDSTEIN must be considered the leader, had fully made up their minds to go on under the new presidency as they had done under the old. But they reckoned without their host. The climax was reached at the last meeting when a motion by MR. W. D. BENJAMIN, which, to say the least of it, was by no means unreasonable or unworthy of consideration, resulted in a perfect uproar, during which those who expressed orthodox views were hissed and hooted. The resignation of the President of the Society followed as a natural consequence.

The propriety of this action on the part of the REV. DR. ABRAHAMS is unquestionable. Above all things he is, and has always been, a consistent man. As the minister of an orthodox congregation he cannot allow MR. GOLDSTEIN and his friends to systematically and persistently assail the fundamental principles of a religion which he is pledged to teach and defend on all possible occasions. He is not the man who would pocket the emoluments of an office without being in sympathy with its duties. Hence his resignation was imperative. It remains now to be seen how the members of the society take the situation; whether they will allow MR. GOLDSTEIN and his followers free play, or whether they will intimate to them in unmistakable terms that they had better express their views on religion generally, and on the Jewish religion in particular, at the meetings presided over by MR. JOSEPH SYMES, or at some kindred institution. A society, for whatever purpose established, must justify its name. It must not sail under false colours. It must not call itself "Jewish," and at the same time countenance the dissemination of anti-Jewish views. It is a great pity that the Melbourne Jewish Literary Society has never had a printed laws, wherein its

objects would be clearly defined. Should the society be extricated from its present deplorable position, and we hope it will be, the drawing up of such a code of laws should be the first consideration.

One word more to set ourselves right with MR. GOLDSTEIN. He denies having made use of the words which were attributed to him in our report of the meeting held on the 26th of April, viz., that the Talmud had taught the Jews to lie and to cheat." All we can say is that these words were taken down in phonetic shorthand, and almost as quickly as they were spoken. It would be strange indeed if our representative had been mistaken, and it is stranger still that other gentlemen should be in the same predicament; for there are several, the Chairman among the rest, who distinctly affirm that they heard MR. GOLDSTEIN making use of these words. It is quite possible that MR. GOLDSTEIN has forgotten, or at the moment did not fully consider, what he was saying, and that only when he saw the words in print did he fully realise their gravity. But they were not the only objectionable part of his speech. To say that the laws of the Bible are not binding upon the consciences of a different civilisation is equally bad. And the accuracy of that portion of our report MR. GOLDSTEIN does *not* call in question.

LOCAL AND GENERAL ITEMS.

THE question of the supply of *Kosher* meat on a more satisfactory basis is to be taken into consideration at an early date.

THE annual general meeting of the members of the Jewish Mutual Aid Society will be held at the London Tavern, Elizabeth-street, on Sunday morning, the 29th June, at eleven o'clock.

THE annual meeting of the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society will be held in the Town Hall, Melbourne, on Wednesday, the 25th June, at three o'clock. Subscribers and friends are invited to attend.

THE President of the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society acknowledges with many thanks two valuable parcels of clothing, the one from Mrs. E. Blaubaum's Sewing Society, the other from the Queen's Sewing Society.

MR. JACOB A. CANTOR, J.P., treasurer of the Maintenance Fund for the orphans of the late Mr. Jacob S. Hart, desires to acknowledge the receipt of the following additional subscriptions, viz.:—Messrs. Lemme and Co., £1 1s.; Mr. L. Myer, £1 1s.; Mr. Mendel Cohen, £1 1s.

THE *Metahar* house at the Melbourne General Cemetery has been thoroughly repaired and renovated, and presents now a very creditable appearance. The cost has been defrayed in the proportion of two-thirds by the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, and one-third by the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation.

SOCIAL ENTERTAINMENTS.

(TO THE EDITOR OF "THE JEWISH HERALD.")

DEAR SIR,—Allow me to direct the attention of your readers to a social evil growing among our co-religionists, which not only has a demoralising influence on ourselves, but serves as a bad example for our young and coming generation, namely, the "little card-tables" in our social reunions.

Without doubt every one of your readers is often invited to some social assembly like *Bar Mitzvah*, wedding, birthday festival, and let him imagine himself not an actor on the social stage, but an outside spectator, and view the amusements impartially. Mr. and Mrs. X. receive an invitation to a *Bar Mitzvah* from Mr. and Mrs. O. The first thing Mr. and Mrs. X. think of, before starting on their errand to do honour to their friends' son on his attaining the age of responsibility to his Creator for the good and evil he is committing, is to provide themselves with plenty of change, necessary implements to our Jewish social gatherings. Some impatient reader might think there is going to be some charitable collection; wait and see, dear friends. Mr. and Mrs. X. arrive at their destination, and are met by the hostess, all smiles and smiles; exchange of greetings; where is Mr. O? — He is upstairs, "playing cards." Poor Mrs. O! you would like to be upstairs yourself, behind the delightful "little tables," and pocket the delicious little silver pieces which your guests happily are well provided with; but your lord and master condemned you to the odious duty of saluting your arriving guests, which, with admirable woman's hypocrisy, you perform well. But to return to our friends, Mr. and Mrs. X., who are people not usually fond of the card table. After divesting themselves of their cloaks and hats they go into the parlour, where young people are supposed to amuse themselves with music, dancing, &c., but here Mr. and Mrs. X. are disappointed. A crowd of young ladies sit around a beautifully decorated and lit-up room staring at each other and occasionally whispering some remarks about the others' toilettes. Three or four young men try honestly their best to amuse the young ladies, ten times their number, by proposing dances, singing, &c. In reply to Mr. and Mrs. X. where all the other young hopefuls are!—upstairs round the charming "little tables," imitating their sires. After a fruitless attempt on the part of Mr. and Mrs. X. to raise the spirit of the young company, Mr. and Mrs. X. pay a visit to the next room, and are gratified to meet a few matrons (old friends), talking commonplace things, and trying their best to stifle yawns, which involuntarily escape them. With a heavy heart Mr. and Mrs. X. mount the stairs, and behold! there is a large lit-up room filled with a lot of "little tables," four or five chairs round each; grave old men, middle-aged men, young men, mothers of families, spinsters, are all absorbed, with intensity and anxiety on their faces, in their trumps; round each party stand a few young striplings, who unfortunately have spent their pocket-money in sweetmeats; their faces glow with enthusiasm as they watch the turn of the wheel of fortune (according to their little minds), wishing themselves men to be able to take part in the instructing and highly profitable game. Our friends, after trying in vain to exchange greeting with some in-play-absorbed friends, who reply to some friendly remark with an irritated voice the monosyllable "Yes" or "No," resolve to make the best of their situation, consoling themselves with the proverb, "When you are in Rome you must do what Rome does," and settle themselves to a "little table," and soon get absorbed in play till the time to go home comes. The only impression they take away with them from the delightful night is that they lost so much, or won so much.

Dear Sir,—The above sketch is taken from observation of the lower and better strata of our society. This is the

feature of our *Mitzvah* and ordinary gatherings, a gathering which in other Jewish communities serves for an instructing and refining element for young and old; a gathering which tends to each individual communicating to his fellowmen his knowledge and experience religiously, morally and intellectually; a gathering where the ties of friendship are strengthened by friendly intercourse, conversation, toasts, and good wishes; a gathering where games and innocent amusements are devised for the amusement of young and old, and each individual strives to entertain his fellowmen, and is in his turn entertained by them. Surely some of our clear-headed men will recognise the above sketch and strive when they give any entertainments not to defile their pure homes by converting their rooms into gambling rooms, to the ruin of their young children, who grow up gamblers by the bad example and influence, and will try to make our parties a moral, social and pleasant gathering by introducing games, toasts, speeches, music, dancing, intellectual conversations, political discussions, &c., and the gentleman who regards a party as a good chance for winning money can go and try his luck at some gambling saloon, if there is any in Melbourne.— Hoping some abler pen will take the matter up, I remain, yours, &c.,

OBSERVER.

27th June, 1890.

F. LUOM, Wholesale and Retail Fruiterer and Confectioner, 330 Lygon-street, Carlton.

THE EAST MELBOURNE HEBREW CONGREGATION.

(TO THE EDITOR OF "THE JEWISH HERALD.")

DEAR SIR,—The signs of the times are not encouraging. I do not refer to the social crisis which recently threatened to overturn society (for even social crises come to an end, however lingering). Nor am I thinking of atmospheric disturbances which recently did so much harm. But to an ever-recurring danger, which is always with us, and which threatens to do more harm in retarding the progress of Judaism than many of the foul-mouthed attacks of purblind anti Semites. Need I say that it is the last disgraceful exhibition at the meeting of the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation which has aroused my apprehensions and caused me to tremble for the welfare of that faith which we are all bound dearly to cherish? There appears to be a kind of untoward destiny which compels a certain section of that congregation to indulge in these frantic outbursts—for I can call them by no other name. And this last outbreak seems to me to be more indefensible and more inexcusable than usual. Surely a body of men, who claim to act rationally, must see the damage such conduct is bound to bring on the cause of Judaism. In my judgment, sir, a minute section of the members has put a most unwarrantable insult upon the president of their institution, and, through him, upon the senior minister of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation, and upon his congregation also. In resigning his seat, Mr. M. Cohen took the only manly and straightforward course open to him, and it should have been the duty of the members to have supported him. It is to be hoped that at the next meeting the members of the congregation will express their disgust at the action taken by the last meeting, when thirteen members ousted the president from that office to which he was unanimously elected but two months previously. If that is not done, then, sir, many others will continue to feel as I do in regard to the conduct of that small section—and that is,

HEARTILY DISGUSTED.

(TO THE EDITOR OF "THE JEWISH HERALD.")

SIR,—Would you allow me through your medium to repudiate my signature to a requisition to Mr. Mendel Cohen, asking that gentleman to withdraw his resignation as president of the East Melbourne Congregation.

J. E. STONE.

138 Lonedale-street east, 18th November, 1890.

(TO THE EDITOR OF THE "JEWISH HERALD.")

SIR,—A report having gained currency amongst the members of our community to the effect that I expressed my intention to decline to officiate in connection with the Hospital Sunday service recently held at the East Melbourne Synagogue in the event of the Rev. Dr. Abrahams being invited to assist in the same, I beg leave through you, Sir, to give such report a most emphatic and absolute denial.

The Rev. Dr. Abrahams and myself are, I am proud to say, on the most friendly terms, and *that gentleman's name was never mentioned by me or to me in connection with the before-mentioned service, nor was my consent or opinion in any way solicited on the point.*

If such a course had been adopted I should have rejoiced to welcome the Rev. Dr. Abrahams to the synagogue in which I have the honour to be engaged.

All the other statements concerning me in connection with the above service which have been reported in an issue of one of our evening journals are equally untrue.

I regret sincerely having to appeal to the columns of the Press for liberty to assert my innocence of the calumnious charges imputed to me, but alas! "occasion has given birth to necessity."

I am, Sir, yours, &c.

JACOB LENZER.

AMATEUR THEATRICAL PERFORMANCE.

THE Montefiore Amateur Dramatic Club made its second public appearance on 6th November at the Hibernian Hall, Swanston-street. The piece chosen for presentation was Byron's "Blow for Blow," and the proceeds, which will probably amount to £100, are to be devoted towards the funds of the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society. The performance was successful, the various parts receiving due attention from the ladies and gentlemen to whom they were allotted. Mr. E. R. Isaacs made a capable Charles Spraggs, infusing a large amount of humour into the droll situations in which he finds himself. Mr. Isaacs was especially diverting in the scene in which the flute business was introduced. Miss Rose Blashki in a *dual role* maintained the position of favour which she won on her first appearance. This young lady's acting is marked by much intelligence and delicacy of feeling, whilst her elocution is the result of careful teaching. Miss Blashki was the recipient of many floral tributes. As Dr. Grace, Mr. Isidore Kozminsky had not a very strong part, but his rendering of the character was vigorous and true. Mr. Alf. Marks, as Lieut. Linden, both looked and acted the part, whilst Mr. N. Israel's villain was very successful, and won the cordial reprobation of the audience. Messrs. D. Blashki, J. H. Cohen, I. Solomons and L. E. Isaacs in their respective characters received their due meed of approbation. Misses Adele Abrahams and L. Hollander, who appeared for the first time, are valuable acquisitions to the acting strength of the club, the first-

named lady acting with much spirit and vivacity, and the latter making a pretty part of Lady Linden. Nor should mention be omitted of Miss Alice Cohen, whose portrayal of the pessimistic, but kind-hearted, lodging-house keeper was very well received. The Curlew Orchestra rendered several selections with great power, and their efforts towards making the entertainment a success are deserving of recognition. Favourable mention must also be made of the labours of Messrs. Ellis R. Levy and Bertie Israel, whose untiring efforts in the capacities of hon. sec. and stage manager respectively enabled the performance to be brought to a successful issue.

THE MELBOURNE MOTZO AND CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION LIMITED.

THE directors of this company have just issued a circular calling upon the members of the Jewish community to take up the remaining shares in order "to allow of matters being materially improved, and to assist in securing what to the community is a religious necessity." The association was formed, says the circular, for the purpose of manufacturing *Motzos* of the very best quality of flour, and in accordance with the requisite Jewish regulations, at as moderate a cost as possible. The capital of the company was to be 2000 shares of the value of £2 10s.; but during the past four years only 339 shares have been taken up, and the company was thus hampered in its operations for want of funds. Despite this disadvantage, a complete plant has been purchased, as also some freehold land, upon which a substantial and compact bakehouse has been erected. The liabilities of the company amount to £900 on mortgage, and sundry accounts £200. According to the last balance-sheet, published 30th September, 1890, there is an excess of £797 3s. 5d. of assets over liabilities. Of the 339 shares taken up the bulk are held by the poorer portion of the community, who are not in a position to increase their interest in the association, whilst sixty shares are held by non-Jews. The directors say that it is an extreme hardship that the entire burden of continuing the supply of *Motzos* for the Jewish community should be borne by the present shareholders, unassisted by their wealthier brethren. The members of the community are therefore asked to take up at least each one share (of £2 10s. fully paid up), and to use their influence with their friends to do the same. With the view of enabling new shareholders to have a voice in the current year's management it has been decided to postpone the election of directors until after the new issue of shares. Five paid-up shares qualify for the position of director. As the ensuing Passover takes place in April next the directors request early application for shares, so as to enable them to make the necessary arrangements for carrying on operations.

MELBOURNE JEWISH LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY.

THE fortnightly meeting of this society was held on Monday evening, 13th October, at the Australian Church Hall, Mr. P. D. Phillips, the president, being in the chair.

PROFESSOR MORRIS, of the Melbourne University, delivered a lecture on "Browning and the Jews," interspersed with copious readings from the poet's works. He touched on the question of Browning's parentage, and proved by extracts from various authors that, though the poet numbered a creole among his ancestors, the only evidence of a Jewish parentage was the poet's knowledge of the Jews. The realistic powers of the poet were then dilated on ;

two poems were read to show how well the poet could throw himself back into the Renaissance. "Holy Cross Day" pictured the Jews involuntarily listening to a Christian sermon and commenting thereon in whispers. The other poems show how an Italian could pester the Jews by exhibiting pictures of the Virgin in their graveyard. The Professor read also "Saul" and "David," which fully express the poet's Theism. Finally, he gave a full *résumé* of the greatest didactic poem of the age, "Rabbi Ben Ezra," the subject of which was a Spanish rabbi of the 12th century, who at the close of his life delivers a homily on Immortality, and claims that sadness is our portion in life.

MR. GOLDSTEIN then spoke of the excessive demands made on the professor for papers during his vacation. He (the speaker) dilated warmly on the merits of Browning, whom he styled the greatest English poet since Shakespeare.

MR. J. MENDELSON, B.A., noted the fitness of taking Ben Ezra, a man of liberal mind and great culture, who had wandered much and seen much, for the poet's "Spokesman." The sad tone which tinged the poem was essentially Jewish.

MR. M. MOSES, M.A. LL.B., thanked the lecturer for the excellent reading of the poems. He also stated that the professor's paper on "Heine" had called forth two further efforts by members.

MR. I. WAXMAN was pleased he had no need to second the vote of thanks, as all admired the lecture.

The CHAIRMAN, in speaking on the subject, began by calling on all members to be present at the next meeting, when Mr. M. Mendelsohn, who was leaving them, would be presented with an illuminated address as a mark of regret. Mr. Phillips criticised Browning and the lecturer's estimate of him, and stated that he had rather heard other poems of Browning read, but thanked the lecturer all the same.

F. LUCK, Wholesale and Retail Fruiterer and Confectioner,
330 Lygon-street, Carlton.

PASSOVER AT THE MELBOURNE SYNAGOGUES.

ONCE more the first two days of Passover have come and gone. The weather was for this time of the year very warm and sultry, and made the atmosphere inside the synagogues somewhat oppressive. This, however, did not affect the attendance at the various places of worship, which was quite up to the average on similar occasions, though it was noticed that the prevailing influenza kept many away who would otherwise have attended. The second day of the festival falling this year upon a Sunday was better observed than is usually the case, though in many instances by those who are inconsistent enough to keep that day which suits them best.

AT THE BOURKE-STREET SYNAGOGUE

there was a large attendance, notably on the first day of Passover. The service was performed as usual by the Revs. Dr. Abrahams and M. Saunders. The choir, under the direction of Mr. Mendoza, and reinforced by the addition of several gentlemen, sang the usual Passover tunes in a pleasing manner. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. Abrahams, who took his text from Jeremiah ii, 2, 3, "Thus saith the Lord, I remember thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, how though wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown." The preacher compared the Israelites' going forth from Egypt with the starting of the Pilgrim Fathers as represented by a picture in our National Gallery. The Israelites had no provisions, they were not in any way provided for a journey beset with so many difficulties and hardships as are generally experienced by travellers through the desert, but they had implicit faith in God and in their leader Moses, and that helped them over all difficulties. Though our circumstances in life may never call forth equally arduous trials with those overcome by the hardy Puritans or by the "Hosts of the Lord," yet in every sphere of activity, from the loftiest to the humblest, we urgently required the soothing balm afforded by Passover's lessons of implicit faith. If obstacles encountered us let us boldly meet them. If we are to be wounded let our scars show that we manfully and courageously faced our trial and did not flee from its presence in despicable cowardice. The human heart has proved the scene of more terrible struggles than have characterised many a world-renowned battlefield. Should peril of this nature ever cross our path, for which we find ourselves unprepared, could we look for a more potent support than our Passover lesson generously offers? Trust ye in God forever and over, for in the Everlasting Creator ye have the rock of Eternity.

Large attendances on both days of the festival characterised the services at

THE ALBERT-STREET SYNAGOGUE,

But to the deep regret of the congregants the Rev. J. Lonzer, owing to illness, was absent. Neither could the choir trained by him officiate without his personal guidance. The Rev. S. Greenbaum read the whole of the prayers on both days. The Rev.

I. Myers, B.A., whose term of engagement had expired on the 1st of April, but who was specially engaged for the holy days, preached effective sermons on both days. On the first he spoke of Israel's mission, based upon the text "When Israel came forth from Egypt." On the second day Mr. Myers spoke on the position woman held amongst Jews and in the Jewish religion, and the important functions assigned to her in the education and training of the children. The rev. gentleman will shortly leave on a visit to Europe. We believe it is not the intention of the Board of Management of the congregation to appoint a lecturer, as the congregation is not considered financially in a position to do so.

THE ST. KILDA SYNAGOGUE.

At this place of worship on the first day of Passover the attendance was large, but not so large as we have seen it on some occasions. Owing to absence from town and to indisposition many of the familiar faces were missed. The service was conducted by the Rev. E. Blaubaum and Mr. J. Fredman, and the choir, under the direction of the latter gentleman, sang the traditional Passover tunes in a very pleasing manner. The text of the sermon preached by the minister was from the Scripture lesson of the day, "And ye shall observe this matter," &c., &c. We have been requested to publish the sermon in full, but cannot find space for it in this issue.

NOTICE.

This space is reserved for announcements relating to the well-known and popular Company of George and George Limited.

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THE NEW FEDERAL EMPORIUM.
COLLINS STREET EAST.

SANDHURST.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

PENTECOST, or the Feast of Weeks, was celebrated by our community in a befitting manner, the services at the synagogue being conducted by Mr. Goldstein in an able manner. The synagogue was beautifully decorated with floral displays, festoons and evergreens, and presented a very pleasing appearance, for which credit is due to Mr. Goldstein and the Masters Barnett.

Advantage was taken of this auspicious occasion to make a presentation to a worthy and popular member of the congregation—Mr. S. Herman—who was the recipient of a magnificent illuminated address. Mr. M. Barnett, president of the Sandhurst synagogue, made the presentation, and alluded to the many services Mr. Herman had rendered the congregation, more especially at times when assistance was urgently required. Mr. Barnett expressed the hope that Mr. Herman would live for many years to assist them, and concluded his remarks after reading the address, which is as follows:—

“TO SOLOMON HERMAN, Esq.—‘The Lord bless and preserve thee, the Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.’—Dear sir,—On behalf of the Sandhurst Hebrew Congregation we, the undersigned members, desire to express our appreciation of the valuable services rendered by you for a period extending over many years. At a time when, owing to unforeseen circumstances, we were without the services of a *Mohel* you willingly offered, and have continued to fill that position at much inconvenience to yourself and to our entire satisfaction. We desire to place on record the high estimation in which you are held by us, and we trust that you may long be spared to enjoy health and happiness in the midst of your family.—(Signed) M. BARNETT, JACOB COHN, MAGNUS COHN, S. WHITE, S. LAZARUS, D. B. LAZARUS, CHARLES COHEN, JOSEPH STERNBERG. Sandhurst, April, 1890. *Nissan*, 5650.”

Mr. J. Sternberg, Mr. M. Cohn and Mr. D. B. Lazarus also spoke.

Mr. Herman stated that his feelings were too great to properly express his gratitude for the very handsome present and the enthusiastic generosity of his fellow-members of the Sandhurst Hebrew Congregation. He would remember the present occasion to the latest moment of his existence, and would hand the address down as an heirloom to his family. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to be able to assist his fellow-man, and the fact that he held a place in their esteem and confidence was to him sufficient recompense for what little services he may have rendered. Again thanking Mr. Barnett and the ladies and gentlemen Mr. Herman resumed his seat, and the festival service was concluded in the orthodox manner.

The address is beautifully painted and written. Hebrew symbols and characters are prominent features, and the work reflects great credit upon the taste and skill of the artist, Mr. Fearn. An unrolled painting of a *Sifar* adorns the top with the Hebrew lettering inscribed thereon, the translation of which heads the address. Immediately underneath the ark is represented, and then follows the address, the whole encompassed by an artistic display of painted flowers, ferns and scroll work, and mounted in a massive gold and red plush frame.

The congregation afterwards adjourned to Mr. Herman's residence, where the healths of Mr. and Mrs. Herman and family were proposed in flattering terms by Mr. H. M. Marks, and heartily received. Mr. Steinberg in complimentary terms proposed the health of the President, Mr. M. Barnett, and referred to the zeal he has displayed during his term of office. Messrs. Barnett and Herman responded, and after spending a pleasant half hour the company dispersed.

MELBOURNE JEWISH LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY.

THE fortnightly meeting of this society was held on Monday evening, the 26th of April, at the Lecture Hall of the Australian Church. There was a fair attendance of members, and there were also a good number of visitors. Amongst the latter the members of the Juvenile Literary Society mustered strongly and some of them, we are sorry to add, did not seem to have come to gather information, but rather to talk and otherwise behave in an ungentlemanly manner, much to the annoyance of the general audience. We trust that this hint will be sufficient to convince the young people concerned of the impropriety of their conduct and to prevent a similar disturbance on future occasions.

The REV. DR. ABRAHAM, who occupied the chair, in opening the proceedings informed the audience that the society would for the future meet on alternate Monday evenings, as Wednesday evenings had been found inconvenient to many members. He trusted that there would always be a good attendance to encourage both those who had gone to the trouble of preparing papers and the committee of the society.

The REV. E. BLAUBAUM read a paper on "The History and Literature of the Karaites." He said by way of preface that when a man in this country made up his mind to write a paper of that kind, or what was the same thing, to study a subject of that kind, he laboured under many disadvantages. Manuscripts there were none at all. There was no documentary evidence to verify the statements of fact found in books on the subject. But there were also very few books on Jewish subjects. Our Public Library contained very little or anything of that kind of literature. The student was thus thrown upon his own resources. He may have a good stock of books, but books, like everything else, get old, and

older works were superseded by newer ones. Thus when studying this subject he was obliged to send to Germany for a book which he had found indispensable. Fortunately communication with the old world was now much easier than it was formerly, and thus after seventy-two days from the time that he wrote home the book was in his possession. The historical facts contained in his paper were gathered from Pinsker's *Lekuti Kalmonious*, Neubauer's *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Karäerthums*, Graetz's *Geschichte der Juden*, and Weiss' *Zur Geschichte der Jüdischen Tradition*. The inferences drawn from these facts were his own. Whether they were in all cases legitimate was not for him to say, but for the audience. There were still a great many questions in connection with the Karaites that were not yet finally settled. Up to within the last few years Pinsker's work was looked upon as the chief authority. Graetz himself acknowledged his indebtedness to it. But Weiss in the last volume of his important work disputed many of Pinsker's statements. In preparing this paper he (the lecturer) had made it a rule to adopt the opinion of the majority, and to state that of a dissenting writer in a footnote. He then related the rise of the Karaite sect and dwelt at some length upon the causes that favoured its progress. He reviewed the principles and laws laid down by Anan, the founder, and by his successors, showing the inherent weakness of the system, and how so far from lessening it rather increased the people's religious obligations. In connection with the missionaries the Karaites sent out to make converts to their creed, the story of Elhad "the Danite," as stated in Jellinek's *Beth Hamidrash* (vol. ii, iii and v.), was given in full and the principal writers of the sect, such as Nissi Ben Noah, Benjamin Nahawendi, Sahal Ben Mazliach, Judah Hadassi and Isaac S. Troki, as well as their works, were brought under review. The Karaites deserved great credit for cultivating the study of the Bible and Hebrew Grammar, at a time when the great Hebrew commentators and grammarians had not yet been born. Whether the Karaites were the inventors of the Hebrew vowel signs, as had for a long time been believed, was at present a matter of controversy, but it was certain that they did a great deal to induce others to study the Bible. The controversies between Karaites and Rabbanites were then glanced at, and this led to a brief *resume* of the life and labours of the celebrated *Gaon Saadyah*, one of their chief opponents. In conclusion the lecturer gave some statistics of the past and present number, position and domicile of the Karaites. With regard to their moral character he quoted the testimony of the well known novelist, Sacher Masoch, who, in a recent number of the *German Review*, spoke of them in very complimentary terms. A brief story by the same author in support of this opinion concluded the paper.

A *BETH-HAMIDRASH* FOR MELBOURNE.

AS there had been some talk of a *Beth-Hamidrash*, or "House of Learning," having been established in Melbourne, we took some little trouble to satisfy ourselves as to what it was like. On a Sunday afternoon about a fortnight ago we wended our way to the Albert-street Synagogue, the schoolroom of which had been pointed out to us as having been permitted by the authorities to be used as a *Beth-Hamidrash*. The time seemed to us very opportune, as Sunday afternoon is a leisure time with all classes, and the weather was so unusually fine for this season that no one had any reason to be afraid of leaving his home to spend an hour or two in useful study or reading. Strange to say, as we approached the schoolroom we could perceive no sounds of that sing-song with which the study of the Talmud is as a rule carried on. So much the better, we thought; each of the readers is deeply absorbed in his own study. But judge of our surprise when, on entering the schoolroom, not a soul was to be seen. There were desks, and forms, and other school utensils, a cupboard containing a set of *Gemarahs*, another cupboard with a set of *Tenach* (*Mikraoth Gedoloth*, a bad edition, by-the-bye) and a *Kizzur Shulchan Aruch*, all ready for reading; but there were no readers. Perhaps, we thought, the ardent lovers of the Talmud and kindred works, for whom this *Beth-Hamidrash* has been established ("to meet an urgent want," it is said), have withdrawn to the adjoining synagogue, or to some other apartment in the building. Not so. The synagogue was empty, and so were the other rooms. No one was in attendance; the whole place was open, no one was in charge of it. Any evil-disposed person might have entered and stolen or destroyed property. We waited fully half-an-hour to see if any person connected with the *Beth-Hamidrash* would turn up. At last a middle-aged, dark-faced, stout gentleman did turn up; but he was not one of the learners. He noticed that the place was open, and so he strolled in to see what was going on—perhaps a general meeting of the congregation, or something else affording a bit of fun. He certainly had a very vague idea of the existence of the *Beth Hamidrash*, and in this respect, we must confess, our first visit has left us in no better position.

But to be just, it is necessary for us to add that connected with this imaginary *Beth-Hamidrash* is an institution of concurrent growth which commands our hearty approval. It bears the somewhat long-winded title, "Jewish Social and Intellectual Improvement Society," and its object is to teach foreigners arriving in this country the rudiments of the English language, such as correct pronunciation, reading and spelling, and thus enabling them to make themselves better understood in their social and business intercourse with Englishmen. The class of students, numbering about fifteen, meets on five evenings in the week, at the before-mentioned place, and Mr. Harris, late head-master of the East Melbourne Hebrew School, is the teacher.

When we called there a few evenings ago there were ten pupils sitting round a long table neatly covered with a green baize cloth, besides three others who did not seem to belong to the class, but were only listeners. Most of them were men advanced in years, one who had even entered upon the sere and yellow leaf period of life. Only two were, to judge from appearance, under thirty years of age. They were studying a reading lesson in the first part of the "Royal Readers," called "Morning and Night." It is a difficult task that Mr. Harris has undertaken. Most of his pupils have no knowledge of grammar whatsoever, and to initiate them, at their time of life, into the intricacies of English spelling and pronunciation is a task from which many a teacher would shrink in despair. But Mr. Harris has plenty of patience and his method of teaching is excellent. At every step he has to correct some faulty pronunciation, and the memory of the learners is not as fresh as it used to be many years ago.

"Do you hear sem sing?"

"Say 'Them.'"

"Sem."

"No—'Them.'"

"Tem."

"No—'Them,' lisp the 'th.'"

Impossible. Anyhow, "tem" is preferable to "sem."

"What does 'Them' stand for?"

"Birds."

"What part of speech is 'Birds'?"

"A noun."

"What is a word called that stands for a noun?"

"Them."

"You have forgotten it. Does the next gentleman know it?"

"A pronoun."

"The next sentence."

"The bees are at walk."

"Say work."

"Walk."

"No, work, like *werk* (a German word)."

"Wark."

At last something approaching (though at a respectful distance) the correct pronunciation is given, and the teacher has to be satisfied.

"Now, we will have a spelling lesson."

"Spell 'bright.'"

First pupil—"B r h t."

Second do.—"B r i h t."

Third do.—"B r i t h."

Fourth do.—"B r i g h t."

Repeated by the pupils till they are able to spell the word correctly.

"Give a sentence in which the word 'bright' occurs."

"When I went out this morning it was bright."

"What was bright?"

"The sun."

"Why don't you say so?"

"When I went out this morning the sun was bright."

"Spell fear."

"F e a r."

"Surprisingly correct."

"Give a sentence in which that word occurs."

"I don't fear for God."

"You mean to say, 'I don't fear God.' But you do. Don't you fear God?"

"No."

"Oh, I know what you mean. You are not afraid of God. The word fear does not mean that. Everybody ought to fear God—that is, to show reverence to Him, to feel that he is always present, sees and hears what we are doing or saying."

Here is another difficulty that Mr. Harris has to contend with—the idiomatic use of the language. The material upon which he has to work is, indeed, very crude, and it is not likely that he will ever bring "Paradise Lost" within the mental grasp of these pupils; but nevertheless a great deal of good is bound to result. All credit is due to those people for showing a desire to improve themselves. At any rate, they spend their evenings profitably and that is more than can be said of many other men of their rank and position in society. As we walk down Bourke-street, near the intersection of Swanston-street, we come upon a surging crowd of people who are evidently discussing some exciting topic. Boys anxious to sell "Books for the Races" cry out "Australian Cup! The great double event! Book, sir?" Those in the crowd are not the people who desire to improve their intellectual *status*. It is better and more creditable for our friends in East Melbourne that they should endeavour to tackle the whims and fancies of the English tongue. Yet another spectacle! On the dummy of the South Yarra tram there sits a drunken fellow. The passengers complain of him. He dirties the seat and is unfit to be amongst respectable people. The conductor orders the tram to stop and with the assistance of a few passengers carries the fellow to the side of the road, where he leaves him in the dark and chilly night to recover his senses and, *if possible*, also his sense of propriety. Look at this picture and at that in East Melbourne.

In conclusion, a word of praise is due to the Rev. I. Myers, B.A., for having called into existence this society, which numbers, we believe, many members who contribute a small sum annually to defray the necessary expenses, and also to give immigrants arriving in this colony some little assistance.

Two important promotions have been made in the artillery branch of the French army, Lieut.-Colonel Aron, Director of Artillery at Belfort, has been raised one step, and M. Naquet, who is attached to the Minister of War, has become a lieutenant-colonel.

MELBOURNE JEWISH AID SOCIETY.

THE monthly meeting of the Council of the above society was held on Wednesday, 5th March, there being present Mr. P. Blashki, J.P., in the chair, and Messrs. R. Moss, A. Loel, A. Smith, W. Davis, M. A. Rapken, E. L. Zox, M.P., A. Kozminsky, B. Marks, J. Waxman and A. Davis (hon. sec.). Seven applications for loans, amounting to £120, were dealt with, and six, amounting to £95, were granted.

A letter was received from Mr. D. Benjamin, of Melbourne, offering to donate on behalf of Mr. D. Benjamin, 86 Westbourne Terrace, Hyde Park, London, £300 conditionally on a fund being created to be called "The Esther Benjamin Loan Fund." The letter gave great satisfaction to the meeting, as showing that the beneficent work done by the society has made itself known. It was resolved that the proffered donation be accepted, and that the hon. solicitor, Mr. N. Levinson, be requested to draft such law or laws as may be necessary to carry out the expressed wishes of the donor.

The Hon. Sec. reported that summonses had been served upon two defaulting borrowers, and the cases were to be tried at this month's sitting of the court. Other routine matters were dealt with, and the meeting terminated with a vote of thanks to the chair.

At the County Court on Monday, 10th March, the case of Kozminsky v Elelman was heard. Mr. Kozminsky, as treasurer, of the Melbourne Jewish Aid Society, sued for a sum of £9 17s. 6d., being balance due by the defendant on a promissory-note given to secure payment of a loan obtained by him from the society. The society was represented by Mr. A. C. Jones, LL.B., instructed by Mr. N. Levinson.

MR. JONES stated the circumstances of the case, and explained the working of the society. The defendant had paid part of a loan granted to him, and had then left the colony. His sureties were called upon, and had paid further instalments. The defendant having been brought back to the colony by someone else, the society now sued for balance of loan and costs.

The defendant (who was not represented by counsel) entered the box and admitted the claim, but stated his inability to pay the amount at once, and offered to pay by small instalments weekly.

MR. JONES submitted that the society could not accept any arrangement, as by doing so it relieved the sureties of any further liability.

HIS HONOUR (Judge Worthington) concurred, and entered a verdict for plaintiff with costs.
