

They wrap their cloth *tallaisim*[†] around their shoulders and listen with bowed heads to the poignant words of *Kol Nidre*. The cantor, clad in the red shirt and high boots of the digger, solemnly and tunefully chants the ancient and melancholy dirge.

He learnt his *Chazonas*[‡] in far off Lemberg !

"*Oshamnu* !"§ His rich voice fails, and the minds of those twenty young exiles float back to homes on the other side of the world. Lumps rise in throats ! Tears form in eyes ! With bowed heads they listen to the prayer, and beat their breasts as they had been taught to do in their distant synagogues.

The revellers in the bar pause with their glasses in their hands when they hear that strange, mournful wail, and wonder what it can mean. They do not guess that it comes from a remnant of Israel, remembering that it is *Kol Nidre* night. They do not know that these young exiles are uniting with millions of their own blood in all parts of the world to show their recognition of the mercy and justice of the Most High.

And that was the beginning of the Ballarat Hebrew congregation.

Brisbane Jewry, 1865—1886.

By DAVID BOLOT, A.F.C.A., A.F.I.A.

It was not till its separation from New South Wales and the foundation of Queensland as a separate colony in 1859 that there were sufficient Jews in Brisbane to form a community. The existing records show that Brisbane in 1865 contained but 15 members of the Jewish faith, and these few met on the 5th day of March, 1865, with the object of procuring premises which they might convert

[†]Praying shawls.—Ed.

[‡]Tunes or cantillations.—Ed.

[§]"We have transgressed."—Ed.

into a temporary synagogue. As a result of the meeting, a room was hired in Bullock's Building in Queen Street, and here the first public services were held. This room was used for a short time only, and Mr. A. E. Alexander, who was in business as an auctioneer, placed a room on the second floor of his premises in Edward Street at the service of the community as a more permanent place. This was properly fitted up, and services continued to be held there regularly. In April, 1866, Mr. Joseph E. Myers, a gentleman whose voluntary and valuable services as reader were much appreciated, arrived in Brisbane from New Zealand, and he was subsequently appointed the first minister of the congregation.

A movement was made at this stage to build a permanent synagogue. The community then numbered about 20 persons, and Messrs. E. A. Alexander, B. Benjamin and S. Davis were deputed to select a site. Land at the corner of Tank and George Streets was selected, and negotiations were opened with the Hon. A. C. Gregory with a view to having this piece of land put up for auction, and plans were prepared, the building to cost £1430.

Shortly afterwards, owing to a serious financial crisis in the colony and the number of congregants who left for other colonies, the scheme fell through. Communal affairs came then to a standstill until September, 1868, when Mr. Jonah M. Myers, a cousin of Mr. Joseph E. Myers, called the congregation together, and a site in Adelaide Street was acquired.

Communal matters proceeded with varied fortune for some time, during which another removal was necessary. A hall in George Street was rented and fitted up and services were held there, but the increase of the community rendered this not too successful an expedient, and another move became necessary, and eventually the lower portion of the Masonic Hall was hired, fitted up, and was used as a temporary synagogue for nine years. In the meantime the land in Adelaide Street was leased.

After much work and organisation, the building operations started, and on Tuesday, July 8th, 1885, the laying of the foundation stone took place, the ceremony being performed by the Rev. A. P. Phillips.

The climax was reached at 3 p.m. on July 18th, 1886, when the synagogue was opened for the great purpose for which it was built. The designation of the synagogue, which was named "Shaari Amoono" (The Gates of Faith), which it still holds to-day, is an everlasting monument to the pioneers who kept burning the torch of the faith in the early days of the colony.

A Hebrew Travel Book.

Being a translation from the Hebrew of Rabbi Jacob Saphir's book, "Eben Saphir," giving an account of his visit to Australia and New Zealand.

By RABBI LEIB A. FALK, C.F.

(Continued from last issue.)

In this colony of Victoria are still to be found the wild primitive natives (Aboriginals) who lived here before the British took possession. I saw some who came to the city, and also those in the country. In the country, they go about naked without any covering like the beasts of the field. The colour of their faces and bodies is reddish black or a deep dark brown, and with a shiny tinge. The lines of their skins are thick and hard. They are of middle stature, and heavily built. The hair is long and thick, and in appearance they are repulsive. The head is large, with a small forehead. The eyes are broad and deeply sunk and with long eyebrows. The nose is broad and flat with large nostrils. They have large and wide mouths with thick lips. There is little hair on the cheek. Their faces express bewilderment and horror.

They have no common ruler or chief. They live in groups and tribes scattered over the face of the country. Writing is unknown to them. Their language is a combination of chirrupy sounds and gesticulations.

Their food consists of what they find ready to hand, viz., all kinds of herbs, fruits and living things. They