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### The Early Jewish Settlers in Victoria and Their Problems

by

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#### PART 2 — AFTER SEPARATION, 1851-1865

##### CHAPTER 1

##### THE GOLD RUSH

Events in the year 1851 changed Victoria from a small pastoral State into a Colony with a stupendous industrial future. Officially, Victoria became a separate Colony on 1st July, 1851.<sup>339</sup> The event, however, passed by hardly noticed, for Victoria was in the grip of the first phases of the mania for the search for gold. Three Jews were intimately connected with it from three different angles. Michael Cashmore from a business point of view, Henri J. Hart from a professional angle, and A. H. Hart from humanitarian motives. As far back as January, 1849, gold fever struck many of the Melbourne settlers, when the amazing reports flowed in that California had uncovered its astounding riches. A meeting assembled at the Commercial Hotel, where two sailors and Michael Cashmore were the principal speakers, the latter most sanguine as to the results. "No doubt," wrote one reporter, "SOME people will benefit, the party with stores for sale. It is a second edition of the Valparaiso humbug."<sup>340</sup> When Californian gold did trickle back to Victoria, the largest nugget ever imported then in Australia was displayed at the shop of Henri J. Hart, the jeweller.<sup>341</sup> He was later co-opted on to the Gold Committee, which offered a reward of 200 guineas to anyone who found a profitably worked gold mine near Melbourne. He also became the Committee's Secretary, made assays of the first gold specimens and made an

amateurish expedition for gold with the Crown Land Commissioner to the Anderson's Creek diggings on the Yarra.<sup>342</sup>

The gold rush to Bathurst in New South Wales drew many people from Victoria, and prices rose, especially the price for bread. A. H. Hart, in order to allay the mounting disquietude, wrote a requisition to the Mayor signed by many leading citizens, requesting a public meeting in order to take into consideration the propriety of offering a suitable reward to any person who should discover a gold mine within 200 miles of Melbourne. A. H. Hart, from the platform, said he had written the requisition and had it signed for no other reason but to prevent people from emigrating to other colonies in the depths of winter when they would suffer many hardships. But though he had done this, he believed that gold was one of the greatest curses with which they could be afflicted.<sup>343</sup> He felt assured that there was plenty of gold within reach, but he would be the last one to bring the subject forward, for he thought it would not and could not do them any good, but his thoughts were with the poor and suffering. Nevertheless, Hart was appointed to the Gold Committee and was very active on it in its initial stages.<sup>344</sup> Later, both he and Henri J. Hart, who became the Treasurer of the Gold Committee, had to inform the claimants for the reward that they had no funds on hand. Indignant goldminers had to seek elsewhere for rewards for their discoveries.<sup>345</sup>

## IMMIGRATION

The news of the gold discoveries in Victoria flew round the globe and emphasised the richness of the diggings, and created the impression that inexhaustible wealth lay scattered over the Australian gold fields waiting to be picked up. The stories which the newspapers in all languages had to tell were no exaggeration. From Poland to the United States, from England to China, ran the golden tidings and, as though drawn by a magnet, seekers poured into the gold fields. Ballarat and Sandhurst housed the most mixed assembly on earth. In the first years there were more foreigners than people of British blood amongst the procession of immigrants who thronged the roads from the wharves where the ships dropped them to the diggings, where they all hoped to become immensely rich within an extremely short time.<sup>346</sup> Among the throng came Jews from Poland and Russia, a sprinkling from the Californian

coast, a goodly number from England, a large quota from Germany and an isolated few from other parts of the world. Those Jews who came from England came for the same reasons as their co-religionists before them, poverty, but now the incentive was greater. Those who came from the Californian coast were of the progressive and adventurous type who had tasted the excitement of life on the gold fields, but those who came from Germany and Poland were not only attracted by the lure of gold but also came because of the disabilities under which they suffered in these respective countries. It is suggested that one of the main factors which made them leave their homeland was to avoid military service. Besides grim anti-semitism, it was almost impossible for a conforming Jew to adhere to his religious practices whilst serving in the German and Polish forces. Jews at the time mostly conformed to their faith, and since military service was compulsory they escaped their heavy burden by flight to a land where they had heard freedom reigned and where riches were easy to gain.

#### TYPES OF MIGRANT

The Jews who came from eastern Europe would have necessarily been young and ready for any hardship because they were accustomed to manual labour and to struggle in their own home towns. Those who came from California would have been energetic and prepared to take risks, because of their experiences on the American gold fields. Many of those, however, who came from England, belonged to the unskilled class. The Jewish shopkeepers of the East End of London and the seaport towns would not apprentice their children to trades because they would have to work on the Sabbath day. A large section of the Jewish youth, therefore, had to live, like their elders, by their wits, and as nearly all were also brought up religiously and would not resort to earn their livelihood by questionable means, it was this class of Jew who suffered most when employment in his type of business was hard to find.<sup>349</sup> Numbers of them arrived in Melbourne without any means of support, and they made serious inroads into the accumulated resources of the Philanthropic Society,<sup>350</sup> which sent a message to the Jewish Emigration Society in London pointing out the evil of sending poor persons to Australia.<sup>351</sup> In London, the poor, overcrowded conditions of the Jews with their many unemployed prompted the crea-

tion of the Jewish Emigration Society, which helped anyone, with or without a trade, to migrate to other countries. The Melbourne community, whilst appreciating the motives of the Society, again had to inform it that it considered emigration should not be entered upon by individuals who were not suited to the rude occupation of toil and manual labour which was so much in request in a young community. They wrote:

Only such persons should be selected as Emigrants as have the knowledge of some useful trade and are possessors of a fair amount of physical strength and aptitude for manual labour. But such persons, as are merely general dealers or "husters" are of no service to this Colony, and Emigration in their case is but to remove them from a state of poverty in England to the like condition in Australia. Instances of this nature have unfortunately but too frequently come under the notice of the Authorities of the Congregation, and the Committee regret to have to state that many of the Emigrants from England being of the objectionable class mentioned have endured much privation and been burdensome to this Congregation.<sup>351</sup>

### PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

The Melbourne community not only complained about the unskilled being sent out to Australia, but also displayed prejudice against Jews born outside England. In their letter to the London Emigration Society, they "respectfully remark that in any case the assisted Emigrants should be British-born Jews only."<sup>351</sup> Besides some possessing unwarranted feelings against foreigners, their prejudice may also have been motivated by the thought that foreigners would not be able to settle down quickly in a new country because of language and custom difficulties. The President of the Melbourne Congregation at the time, Edward Cohen, with some of his colleagues on the Committee, may also have lingeringly perpetuated the distinction between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews. The Jews who came to England after Oliver Cromwell allowed them to return were from Holland and of Spanish and Portuguese descent. Before the nineteenth century, the Spanish Jews—Sephardim—looked down upon the eastern European Jews—Ashkenazim—and their families would not even intermarry. When in the middle of the nineteenth century the Ashkenazim began to outnumber the Sephardim, and some of them, like the Rothschilds, became very wealthy, the richer Spanish Jews descended from their lofty station and intermingled freely with the lesser aristocrats of Jewry.<sup>352</sup> Prejudices are hard to defeat, and where wealth

did not level the two sections, the Sephardim still thought themselves as superior, although less in numbers and probably economically less affluent. Edward Cohen and his fellow Sephardim in the Melbourne community preferred their own aristocratic sect of Jews for migrants if it could be managed, or at least Ashkenazi Jews who had been born in England and who would thus have nearly reached their standard and level. Quite a number of sons of the "genteel poor" Sephardi families, well known in London, came to Victoria, and on the membership lists of the congregations are to be found the names of Fonsaker, Van Millingen, Pirani, Belisha, Barnard, Dyte, Mendes, Joshua, Farjeon, Moody, Henriques and Belifante—all names of Sephardi families—besides the names of Cohen, Levi and Joseph, which are names common to both Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews.<sup>353</sup>

### THE LADIES

The scarcity of Jewish women in Victoria and their abundance in the poorer districts of London urged the Jewish Emigration Society and the great woman reformer, Mrs. Chisholm, to help level the balance. One newspaper refers to Mrs. Chisholm's effort in this quaint way:—<sup>354</sup>

Maidens:—We are pleased to learn that Mrs. Chisholm is about to take in her own ship the *Caroline Chisholm* no less than 20 young maiden Jewesses, resolved to migrate to Australia for the most noblest and most human of purposes.

These damsels—should matrimony be their fate—have every hope that they should be enabled to win their gold-digging husbands from an unceasing pursuit of the root of all evil, teaching them that there is nothing like virtuous love and contented poverty.

The experiment of bringing Jewish women to Australia did not succeed at all. Melbourne Jewry regarded the experiment under any circumstances as hazardous and one which they urged the Jewish Emigration Society to avoid. They thought it was not sufficient that the girls should have friends ready to receive them on arrival in Australia, but that they also required efficient protection on shipboard, without which the well intended charity extended to them might in many cases lead to their ruin and the misery of the recipients. By the way the Melbourne Congregation thickly underlined the words "efficient protection" when writing to the Jewish Emigration Society on the matter, it appears the Committee was shocked about several circumstances of an unfortunate nature which occurred to single Jewesses on their way to

the Colony because of the want of protection. The Committee was most anxious that the Society should not encourage the emigration of single women unless they were accompanied by their parents or some other "efficient protection."<sup>355</sup>

### EMIGRATION

The Jews who came from eastern Europe, no matter their economic circumstances, had no desire to return to their native countries. They would not change the freedom they enjoyed in Australia for the political disabilities and anti-Semitism they had to endure in Germany and in Poland. Some, when they became affluent, did go back to see their kinsmen, but very few remained there. The intention of the early Victorian settlers from England, however, was to return to the Mother Country if they became rich, and three of the leading pioneers of the Melbourne Jewish Community did go back to London soon after they had become wealthy through gold buying in the first phase of the gold rush. In January, 1853, the Jewish community gave Solomon Benjamin a farewell dinner,<sup>356</sup> and early in 1854 his brother, David, was honoured by a farewell complimentary dinner by the Mayor of Melbourne and numerous friends.<sup>357</sup> The spiritual founder of Victorian Jewry, A. H. Hart, also decided to leave the Colony at the end of the same year.<sup>358</sup> Three main reasons urged these pioneers to return to London besides the wish to live amongst their own kith and kin, firstly, the absence of a virile, religious and spiritual life; secondly, the lack of amenities and, thirdly, sickness and epidemics which shortened their expectation of life.<sup>359</sup> When the Old Cemetery closed in July, 1854, nearly 70 persons lay buried there, and an indication of the hardness of the life in the early pioneering days is hinted at by the fact that none who were buried in the Jewish portion reached the age of seventy years though Jews have a reputation for longevity.<sup>360</sup>

### DISPERSION AND AN ERROR IN THE CENSUS

In the March census of 1851, before the gold rush, only 364 souls registered as Jews in Victoria, of which 230 lived in Melbourne and its environs, 33 in the Geelong district, 67 at Horsham, 13 at Colac, 11 at Grange, three at Belfast, one at Portland and two each at Mt. Macedon, Flooding Creek and Benalla.<sup>361</sup> The figure for Horsham is

not correct. There were no Jews in Horsham.<sup>362</sup> It is likely that members of a sect active at the time and which called itself "Israelites" were working in the district and the census officer, not knowing the difference between "Israelites" and Jews, classified all as members of the Hebrew faith. By 1854 there were nearly as many residents in Victoria alone as there were in all Australia previous to the gold discoveries,<sup>364</sup> and Jews numbered 1,547.<sup>365</sup>

The Jews spread all over Victoria, and in the census taken on 29th March, 1857, they numbered 2,208, males 1,540 and females 668. Of this number, 1,320 lived in Melbourne, 99 in Geelong, 290 in Ballarat and on its surrounding gold fields, 280 at Sandhurst, 85 at Castlemaine and 100 each at Avoca and Beechworth.<sup>366</sup>

In the census taken in April, 1861, the total Jewish population in Victoria amounted to 2,903, males 1,857, and 1,046 females, or .54% of the population. In and around Melbourne, 238 lived in Fitzroy, 147 at St. Kilda, 72 in the City of Melbourne, 67 in Prahran, 47 in Richmond, 43 at Collingwood, 36 at Emerald Hills, 13 at Hotham, seven at Sandridge, seven at Brighton and one at Williamstown. In the larger cities, 214 lived in Ballarat East, 25 in Ballarat West and 287 in the various mining camps in the district. At Sandhurst, 208 lived within the municipality and 20 in the mining area. There were 145 Jews in Geelong and Newtown, about 50 lived in Ararat and about the same number in Castlemaine. Inglewood, Beechworth and Rutherglen had about 40 Jews each, Mountain Creek in the Wimmera had 25 Jews and Yackanandah 15. Small numbers also lived in Amherst, Avoca, Belfast, Dunnolly, Kilmore, Smythesdale, Warnambool, Sale in Gippsland and Blackwood, whilst a large floating population kept migrating from one mining town or camp to another according to their prosperity.<sup>367</sup> From the above figures it appears that, although a large number of Jews lived in and around Melbourne, a greater number were to be found in the various mining settlements established throughout Victoria. It indicated that the Jews who came out to the Colony were enterprising, industrious and prepared to undergo all the hazards of mining life, with its hardships, difficulties and uncertainties. The census figures also reveal that an increasing number of Jewish women were coming out to Australia, and that they went with their menfolk to the mining districts.

## CHAPTER 2

## EMPLOYMENT, BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONS

The increasing number of migrants entering Victoria brought with it a greater variety of trades by which the Jews earned their living, and though they still had a preference for the drapery and clothing trades, they also entered business as general storekeepers and opened shops selling other types of goods. The expansion of business by the discovery of gold attracted from overseas a few men with capital, and some of those who had acquired wealth in Victoria also entered business in mining, in the heavier industries and in commercial ventures. As the majority of newcomers who came to Victoria were attracted by gold and were aware they would have to go to the gold fields if they wished to succeed, it may be assumed that, generally, they were young, vigorous, ambitious, progressive and ready for any kind of work by which they would reach their goal. Amongst the migrants came quite a number of Jewish young men who, besides eagerness and resolution, were also enterprising, men of character and personality which, together with their asset of good education, succeeded eventually in bringing them to prominent positions in public life. Professional men were also attracted to Victoria. Some of them had even served as ministers of religion in England and the Continent, and hoped, by emigrating, to forsake their precarious livelihood received from religious duties and to find a more lucrative and a more satisfying way of earning a living by entering business.

## GOLD MINING

Few of the Jews dug for gold. A fortunate exception was B. Lazarus, of the Lazarus No. 1 New Chum Mine at Sandhurst. A pioneer of quartz mining in the district, he struck it lucky. In one fortnight his dividend from the mine drew £3,882, and he refused £100,000 for his interest in it.<sup>308</sup> Originally from Germany, he displayed a most determined character. It has been suggested that Jews did not dig for gold because it would have interfered with their keeping of the Sabbath. This contention cannot be accepted, for if they wished to observe the Sabbath, all they had to do was to rest. They were their own masters. The cause rather lay in the fact that the Jews were unaccustomed to digging and they, therefore, turned to



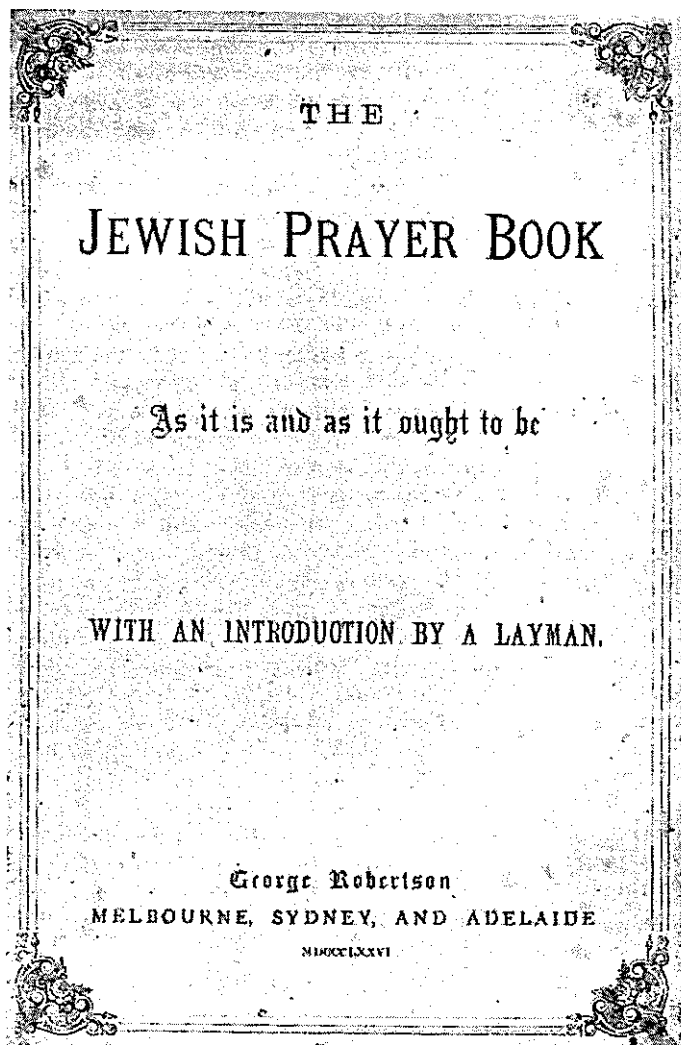
trades about which they had some knowledge and which were a necessity for the gold fields. They supplied the miners with their needs. This was no easy task. Trade was equally as hazardous and speculative as mining. Whenever a lead ran out or rumours were heard of richer fields, the traders, too, had to follow the mob and pitch their tents anew. In September, 1855, at least 50 Jewish adults resided at Mount Blackwood.<sup>369</sup> A year or two later, they had all removed elsewhere.<sup>370</sup>

The carriage of goods and merchandise could involve the trader in considerable loss because of the unmade roads and tracks which almost became unpassable in rainy weather. Joseph Solomon, of Saltwater River, once sent a bullock team to the gold fields with goods carried at £100 per ton. When the team had gone a fortnight, he went after it and overtook the waggon in a short day's ride.<sup>371</sup> Fears of attack, inclement weather, sickness and shortage of food and water were perils which the Jewish traders had to risk with their fellow fortune-hunters.<sup>372</sup>

Jews with capital played a decided part in the industrial development of Victoria's gold mining industry, and they often took great risks in these mining enterprises. Not all paid dividends. On the contrary, some were complete failures. E. F. Sichel, E. J. Cohen, E. A. Cohen, Edward Cohen, M. A. Moses and Dr. S. Iffla were connected with the Maryborough Mining & Quartz Crushing Co.,<sup>373</sup> which had many stormy meetings.<sup>374</sup> Mathew Mitchell acted as Chairman to the Melvor Caledonian Quartz Mining Corporation,<sup>375</sup> as a Director of the El Dorado Quartz Mining Co.,<sup>376</sup> and a shareholder of the Steiglitz Mining Co.,<sup>377</sup> in which H. C. Pirani, E. Sichel and Nathaniel Levi were also interested. Levi and E. Benjamin were requested to look after the interests of the shareholders in the Bendigo Valley and White Hills Gold Mining Co.,<sup>378</sup> E. L. Cohen, the Secretary, and A. L. Henriques had to wind up the Maryborough Mining Association.<sup>379</sup>

### STOREKEEPERS AND PEDLARS

The itinerant and temporary nature of the diggings induced some of the Jews to adopt peddling as a means of earning a livelihood, but a far greater number preferred to undertake business as shopkeepers, in tents on gold fields not firmly established and in shops in more permanent places. Like their co-religionists in Melbourne, the Jews



TITLE PAGE OF A VICTORIAN JEWISH PAMPHLET, 1876

in the country towns and at the diggings were to be found mostly dealing in drapery, clothing and general merchandise, and wherever Jews lived in numbers, it was almost certain some would be general storekeepers or drapers. In Geelong, with less than 150 souls, the following were drapers: M. & H. Fink, E. Ackman, J. Abrahams, G. Alexander, H. S. Ansell, D. Cashmore, H. Jacobs and S. Leon, whilst Ben Cantor, Jacobs Bros., and H. & J. Hart were general dealers.<sup>380</sup> Ballarat also had a large number of drapers and storekeepers, and included Jacob Gerson, Moses Phillips, J. A. Wolfe, M. Jacobs, C. Coleman, A. & S. Alexander, A. Lazarus & Co., Solomon Bros., A. Simmons and Wittkowski Bros.<sup>381</sup> The same preference by Jews for drapers', clothing and general stores applied to Sandhurst<sup>382</sup> and all the smaller country towns. The Jews chose these trades not because they desired to avoid hard work. Long hours and labour difficulties made their work as hard as any other. They preferred these trades because many had followed the same trades overseas or their parents had done so, and because it allowed them to lead a life whereby they could earn a decent living and at the same time be considered as respectable, upstanding family men, assets to the community, types which gained honour and esteem amongst Jews of the period.

Many of these shopkeepers supplemented their income by buying gold dust from the miners, and quite a few Melbourne drapers made fortunes from the bullion they sent to England and which enabled them to return to the Mother Country. D. & S. Benjamin became one of the biggest firms to export gold from Victoria, and in January, 1852, on the "Brilliant," out of gold bullion valued at £42,000, the Benjamin brothers exported £8,000, an amount which exceeded by far any sum sent on behalf of any other firm. By the same shipment, E. & I. Hart sent £900 worth of gold, and Montefiore & Co. £850.<sup>382</sup> In spite of A. H. Hart pronouncing that he thought gold was one of the greatest curses, he promised to give miners the highest price in Melbourne for their gold dust,<sup>383</sup> and his co-religionists, Hyman Joseph,<sup>384</sup> S. H. Harris & Co. and C. Bretani, also advertised their willingness to buy the precious metal.<sup>385</sup> Leslie J. Montefiore "received gold dust for sale at a commission of 1% on sales upon which he made cash advances if desired."<sup>386</sup> Jacob Montefiore, a brother to Joseph Barrow Montefiore, established his office when he came to Melbourne in 1852. But he was no draper.

Besides buying gold in Melbourne and Geelong, he acted as a shipping agent and as a representative of his famous wealthy relative, Nathan Mayer Rothschild.<sup>387</sup> The Montefiores did not confine their commercial interests to gold and dealt in many other commodities, specialising in the purchase of wool and tallow.<sup>388</sup>

### WATCHMAKERS, JEWELLERS AND PAWNBROKERS

There were quite a number of Jews who still favoured hotel keeping and auctioneering as a means of earning their livelihood, but an increasing number who were skilled watchmakers also combined it with selling jewellery and gold buying. Wittkowski Bros., of Ballarat and Geelong, showed enterprise by adopting a popular practice amongst some of the miners by raffling gold nuggets and taking a share of the profits as organisers.<sup>389</sup>

The small gold buyer, however, did not remain long in the market. The rumour spread, which was later confirmed, that the banks were about to enter the gold buying trade, and an advertisement of protest, which included the names of the Benjamin brothers and A. H. Hart, called upon the Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce to call a meeting of protest against the banks for entering a business which was not legitimately theirs.<sup>390</sup> In spite of the protest meeting, the banks persisted in their rights, and it did not take long before the small gold buyers were unable to continue in their trade through lack of custom. This situation forced the watchmakers, jewellers and storekeepers to look for other means of supplementing their income. The miners who had gold one day and nothing the next had to seek temporary accommodation for food and necessities, which led them often to the money-lender and pawnbroker, two types of business not looked upon with favour by Jews. The temptation to earn money in difficult times, however, led a few Jews to succumb to the bait, and in later years the pawnbroking business became prevalent amongst the Jews of Melbourne and Ballarat.<sup>391</sup>

### BIG BUSINESS AND INDUSTRIAL PIONEERS

Although Jews individually entered all kinds of trades and businesses, a sign of their increasing prosperity as well as their progressiveness and intrepidity revealed itself when they began to enter big business, and opened new

fields in Victorian industry. Besides their interest in mining companies and the Montefiores' connection with shipping, tallow and wool, Edward Cohen, Henry Harris and F. Solomon were connected with railway companies,<sup>392</sup> and quite a number took an interest in the Water Supply Co., and Gas Company.<sup>394</sup> Solomon Benjamin was active on the Victorian Building Society,<sup>395</sup> whilst banking occupied the attention of quite a few.<sup>396</sup> David Henriques and Jacob Q. Henriques were intimately connected with the founding of the Bank of Australasia,<sup>397</sup> the Colonial Bank and the London Chartered Bank of Australia; David Benjamin was a director of the Melbourne branch of the Bank of New South Wales and of the Joint Stock Bank<sup>398</sup>; Rubiero Furtado was the first manager of the Commercial Bank of Australia in Melbourne,<sup>399</sup> whilst M. Cashmore, Moritz Michaelis and Mathew Mitchell just failed to secure election as directors of the National Bank.<sup>399</sup>

Industry progressed when Michaelis Hallenstein opened one of the first tanneries at Footscray,<sup>400</sup> whilst Jacob and Moritz Cohn started a brewery at Sandhurst and later were the first to introduce lager beer into Victoria and the manufacture of ice.<sup>401</sup> Nathaniel Levi became deeply interested in commerce, and later was one of the first to introduce coal mining in Victoria at Cape Patterson and the growing of beet for manufacturing sugar.<sup>402</sup>

Learned and skilled Jewish professional men in medicine and dentistry, like Dr. S. Iffla,<sup>403</sup> Dr. James Silverman<sup>404</sup> and Mr. Eskell,<sup>405</sup> came to settle in Victoria, whilst a number of men who had served as ministers of congregations and as lay ministers were able, if necessity demanded, to conduct divine services when called upon. They had come to Victoria to start life anew in other professions because of their dissatisfaction with their own lot as ministers of religion. Isaac Pulver had been minister to the Jewish Congregation at Cheltenham, England, and the Chief Rabbi appointed him to the position of minister of the Cape Town Congregation in South Africa.<sup>406</sup> After two years' service he found the ideas of his congregants difficult to comprehend, and he made his way to Australia with the intention of forsaking the ministry and seeking his livelihood by other means. Solomon Phillips took up a position as Assistant Minister with the then newly-formed Bridge Street Synagogue, Sydney,<sup>407</sup> but later left Sydney in order to come to Melbourne, where he entered business

importing furniture, pianos and ironmongery. That these gentlemen ventured to a new land without any knowledge of business is evidence, apart from their intrepidity, of the reputation abroad that Victoria was a land of opportunity.

### ENTERPRISE, TENACITY AND RESOLUTION

A remarkable number of the Jewish young men who migrated from England displayed extraordinary enterprise in their determination to succeed, and a few attained fame and renown, whilst others, though more moderately successful, acquired position in the community above the average. They were by no means exceptions to the rule. They belonged to a type. Venturesome and fearless, possessing a keen sense of justice, they also combined ability with forthrightness, which won them popularity in whatever circles they ventured. It was the early upbringing and training that these young men received which fitted them to become leaders amongst rough and ready types in pioneering surroundings. Nearly all of these Jewish young men would have had some kind of education and would have been able to read and write. Even the poorest of Jewish parents in England sent their sons to school where, besides the ordinary subjects taught, the pupils would also acquire a knowledge of the Bible and its commentaries, an elementary knowledge of the Hebrew language and Jewish history, and even a page or two of the Talmud. The aim of Jewish education in England in the first half of the nineteenth century was to combine adherence to the spirit of the Jewish faith together with an acquisition of the virtues possessed by the English gentleman. It emphasised good manners, courtesy, fair-play, truth, courage and tenacity. Home training also tended towards a religious background. At the same time, the hardships in earning a livelihood in the poverty-stricken quarters where the Jews lived in London and in the shipping towns, made them industrious, hard-working, keen-witted, resilient to hard knocks and gave them the ability to mix with all types of men. On arrival in Australia, they possessed advantages over many of the rest of the population, many of whom were illiterate and many of whom were foreigners. Some of these young men would have made use of their linguistic ability. Usually they spoke more than one language. Ashkenazi Jews from eastern Europe could speak

Yiddish and would have been able to converse or make themselves understood to the large number of Germans who migrated to Australia during the gold rush. The Sephardi Jews, originally from Holland, still spoke Dutch and Ladino—a kind of Spanish Yiddish—and they, too, would have been able to make themselves understood to Germans and those who came from countries where the Romance languages were spoken.

These young English Jews made their small contribution towards the development of Victoria and its character, and as examples, three of them, Daniel Tallerman, Julius Vogel and Benjamin Farjeon, can be quoted as typifying the class from which these Jews emanated, although Tallerman, Vogel and Farjeon may have been more successful than others of their co-religionists.

Daniel Tallerman<sup>408</sup> arrived in Melbourne in 1853 as a purser aboard a sailing vessel. Going to Barker's Creek he set up his tent, where he sold stores, and hoisted his flag, which was then customary amongst storekeepers. His flag was a blue guernsey surmounted by a cap. The appearance of this sign was considered so novel that Tallerman's flag soon became famous among the miners. Early in December, 1853, it became bruited about on the creek that a party of miners were working quietly in the bush. Tallerman and some of his friends consulted together and resulted in the discovery of a party at work on some claims at the foot of Mount Tarrengower. The consequences were that an enormous rush set in and Tarrengower became one of the most noted and extensive fields of the day. He erected the first store in the place. The miners coming in by their thousands had no time to erect ovens, with the result that there was no bread, but Tallerman met this difficulty by arranging with all of the bakers of Castlemaine to bake as fast as they could and he drove waggons down in the night—a work of great difficulty—in order that the miners' wants might be supplied in the morning. Tallerman's efforts were recognised by the miners and resulted in his business becoming one of a most extensive character. As the field extended, lead after lead was opened up, so did his establishments increase, until he had five large auction marts and stores at one time. He then built a place called Maldon Hall, which was so vast that it was not exceeded in extent in any of the colonies for many years. He opened the Hall for a series of balls, which became known as "Jumper Balls" because of the

dress the gentlemen wore at the time, which was similar to the Garibaldian shirt. The Government having surveyed the land in the district, Tallerman purchased a large section which he sub-divided into allotments upon which many of the miners built their homes, becoming free-holders and attached to the place.<sup>408</sup>

In June, 1854, "Simpsons" was discovered, and the whole town of Tarrengower migrated, including Tallerman himself. In anticipation of a continued run of luck, he built a large hotel and amphitheatre, and he became the great purveyor of every kind of amusement. He became popular in the settlement and occupied a leading position in the town. As the gold fields extended, so Tallerman erected branches of his establishment, and Waterloo Flat, the Alma and Adelaide leads found him with large hotels upon each. The main lead of the gold fields after a time began to give out, and the miners started prospecting for new leads in other districts. This caused them to move their tents so that they could be closer to their work, a migration which greatly affected the businesses of the old districts. The great Avoca rush also began about this time and drew away all the inhabitants, leaving Tallerman with a large number of establishments with no business. This ruined Tallerman and, after a somewhat dazzling career, he was compelled to beat a retreat with only 17/6 in his pocket.<sup>408</sup>

The rush at Fiery Creek was then also taking place and, having retained his auctioneer's licence, Tallerman decided to follow the occupation of a knight of the hammer. He was warmly supported by his old friends, and by the time the rush had subsided he found himself with considerable means once again.

No new fields being then open, Tallerman proceeded to Ballarat, where he decided to start a brick field, bricks then being very scarce and profitable in their production. Having purchased his plant and made every preparation for commencing, the rainy season set in, which continued for three months, swamping the field. This put a severe damper on his new speculation, which proved a total loss.<sup>408</sup>

About this time Tallerman was subjected to an attack of rheumatic fever, and for two months he hovered between life and death, but having a sound constitution, strengthened by temperate habits, he overcame his illness. After his recovery he settled in Ararat, where, entering into mercantile pursuits, he became a man of importance and a



leading spirit in the "Ararat Improvement Committee," and soon afterwards Ararat became a well-directed and orderly township. Tallerman stood for Parliament but lost the election. However, he once again became a prosperous man and then went to live with his brother in Melbourne, for whom he worked as a traveller.

He must have liked to travel, for not long after he took a troupe of dancers to New Zealand, where he conducted a most successful tour. Perceiving the vast amount of rubber goods which were imported into the country, he conceived the idea of manufacturing such goods in Melbourne. He carried his ideas into effect and he soon spread a trade with Singapore, Calcutta, England and South America for the supply of caoutchouc. Later, the great difficulty in obtaining skilled labour and raw material at a moderate price, rendered his business unremunerative and he was forced to abandon it.<sup>408</sup>

Tallerman's greatest achievement, however, was his establishment of the Australian meat export trade. Various schemes for preserving meats and shipping them to England were propounded at the time, and Tallerman, a jump ahead of others, went to England to prospect for markets. He returned to Australia and, whilst others were discussing the subject, he quietly prepared a trial shipment for England. This consisted of 560 sheep and five tons of beef, which were prepared in various ways and which were brought over to England by Tallerman himself. Undaunted by obstacles, Tallerman made it publicly known that he was in a position to supply Australian beef and mutton of the finest quality and without bone at from 5d. to 6d. per pound. He popularised the meat by inviting housewives and the press to cook it themselves at a demonstration. It was immediately successful. He established the Australian Meat Agency, and a part of the business was to provide penny and twopenny dinners at his dining rooms in Norton Folgate, which became known as Tallerman's Hall and where over 1,000 people used to dine daily. The fame of his preserved meats reached Napoleon III, which led the way for the general introduction of the commodity into France. Queen Victoria came to hear of his penny dinners and congratulated him on his praiseworthy efforts in so good a cause. He often participated in exhibitions where on his own account he displayed Australian products. The young man who had made and lost a fortune on the gold

fields had found another gold mine and riches for himself and the Australian people.<sup>408</sup>

Like Tallerman, another young London Jewish lad of under 20 years of age came to seek a fortune in Victoria. His name was Julius Vogel.<sup>409</sup> He started business in Flinders Lane, but when he lost heavily in flour speculation, he decided to go to the diggings, where he failed to make the fortune he sought. He next went to Maryborough, where he opened a drug store. Having insufficient matters to occupy his virile mind, he began to write for the *Maryborough and Dunnolly Advertiser* and became an active citizen in the township. When the Inglewood rush began, he opened another store there and finally established the *Inglewood Advertiser*. Vogel later became editor of the *Talbot Leader*, and he made it progress and successful. Speculation and lavish spending led him into difficulties, and he went on to Avoca, where he stood as a candidate for Parliament. He failed in his attempt and his defeat urged him to leave for the diggings at Otago, New Zealand, where, with Benjamin L. Farjeon as manager, he established the first New Zealand daily paper, *The Otago Daily Times*. His decision to go to New Zealand was a stupendous step, for he eventually twice became Prime Minister of the country, and Queen Victoria bestowed a knighthood upon him. It is believed that either he or Farjeon made the attempt to publish the first Victorian Jewish newspaper, *The Australian Jewish Chronicle*.

Benjamin L. Farjeon was another London Jewish lad who, from Melbourne, made his way to Sandhurst, where he worked on the *Advertiser*.<sup>410</sup> He helped to found the "Bendigo Histrionic Club" in July, 1858, and wrote the prologue for their initial performance at the Haymarket, run as a charity gesture in aid of the local Benevolent Asylum. Farjeon also helped to found the Sandhurst Garrick Club and appeared in the cast of its first performance. He, too, went to Otago and joined Julius Vogel in the formation of the *Otago Daily Times*. He was exceptionally talented and subsequently became friendly with Charles Dickens, whom he met in London in 1870. Farjeon was the author of many books, a vocation which other members of his family later also followed.

Tallerman, Vogel and Farjeon were eminently successful and yet they only represented a type of Jewish young man who came to Victoria from England at the time of the gold rush. There were many others like them who possessed

the same background, the same determination and tenacity and the same enterprise. They, too, were successful in a smaller way and contributed to the welfare of their towns and cities where they resided, and to the progress and prosperity of Victoria, the new land of their adoption.

### INDIGENCE

Whilst a large number of young, able men migrated to Victoria, it is also true that many older persons came to the Colony without substantial means and without any qualifications or profession. The Jewish charitable authorities in England, in order to diminish their heavy responsibilities, did not thoroughly investigate their clients' capabilities, and the poor, with hope in their hearts and believing gold could be found easily, were anxious to grab at any straw which would ease their oppressive conditions. The thousands who came to Melbourne overcrowded all the available accommodation, and many of the poor migrants found themselves homeless and almost abandoned. The Jewish community, in order to overcome the problem, followed the lead of the Mayor, who opened a subscription list for "Homeless Immigrants," to which Jews contributed liberally.<sup>411</sup> They themselves opened a Jewish Immigrants' Home, for which a sub-committee collected more than the required sum of £1,000. It was managed by a permanent staff of honorary officers.<sup>412</sup> With the expansion of the gold fields, it seems there was no more need for the Home, because the migrants who intended to search for gold or trade on the gold fields moved on immediately on their arrival in Melbourne for their destination.

In the first phase of the gold rush those who remained in the cities would have had no difficulty in finding some sort of work because of the shortage of labour, but when the initial excitement subsided and thousands poured into the Colony, poverty became rife. So much so, that the Secretary of the Melbourne General Cemetery wrote to the Melbourne Congregation informing it that, out of 204 burials in one month of all denominations, 60 had been pauper funerals.<sup>413</sup> The Secretary thought that imposition must have been another reason for such an extraordinarily high percentage of pauper burials. The increase of poverty in the Jewish community was also noticeable from two resolutions which the Melbourne Congregation passed

regarding the requisition for Matzah for the Passover Festival for the poor. In 1852 it resolved "that this Congregation do send to Sydney for 100 lbs. weight of Passover cakes."<sup>414</sup> The following year it added an addendum: "... the Congregation be empowered to provide Matzoth for the poor in such quantities as they may deem necessary."

In spite of the fact that poverty was prevalent in the Jewish community, it did not reach such proportions as seriously to tax the resources of its members. During the height of the period of prosperity, the community reformed the Melbourne Jewish Philanthropic Society in January, 1853, for no other purpose than to prepare for the lean years which it expected would come with the inrush of immigrants. One of its resolutions read as follows:—"That this meeting considers the future operations of the Society vastly different from former years in consequence of the great number of Jews arriving daily in the Colony, which necessarily must call the charity of the Society more frequently into requisition; and, therefore, recommends the gentlemen now in office to strive with their utmost efforts to make its income equal to the call that thus may be expected, and have every confidence that the Jewish residents of Melbourne will, in this respect, readily assist them in maintaining its position." In its report, the Society also added a note: "... although the present state of the Society's funds exhibits a very handsome amount in hand, they, however, trust it will not cause a remissness, since a great many of our faith are arriving, and among the great numbers cases have and continue to occur where the charity of the Society is promptly called forth."<sup>415</sup>

Many, though not heavy, calls were made upon the funds, and it appeared that the Society partly took the form of an interest-free loan organisation, for a proposal was accepted to lend sums of up to £20, which the borrower had to repay in weekly instalments, as well as to find a security, who would be obliged to repay the loan if the borrower failed in but one of his weekly instalments.<sup>416</sup> The Philanthropic Society's main service was to help the sick and ailing. Two non-Jewish doctors, Dr. Arthur O'Mullane and Dr. A. G. Brownlees, acted in an honorary capacity as medical officers,<sup>417</sup> but with the increase of sickness in the Colony, the Society had to employ staff and it appointed Dr. S. Iffla as medical adviser and Asher

Barnard as collector.<sup>418</sup> It also appointed an Honorary Sick Visiting Committee of three men. At times epidemics must have played havoc with the welfare of the Jewish community for once A. H. Hart suggested that special prayers be recited for those who were ill, "for sickness has struck every home."<sup>419</sup> Rintel opposed the suggestion, for he said he had consulted a medical man, who considered that special prayers on this occasion were not merited. Nevertheless, two of Hart's children and a brother died in that epidemic.<sup>420</sup>

The policy of the Philanthropic Society only to give small sums in dire, necessitous cases and to lend money on security but without interest whenever it could, allowed the Society to accumulate a small fund of £150 over the years which it desired to lend at 15% to no other institution than the Melbourne Synagogue, which was very short of money at the time. The ephemeral nature of the security offered, namely, "the resolution agreed to at the Synagogue meeting to accept the loan," and the realisation of the anomaly of lending money to a Synagogue on interest led to the cancellation of the negotiations.<sup>421</sup> However, by November, 1858, the President reported that the funds of the Society were exhausted. Poverty had increased to such an extent that it constituted a serious problem to the community. The Philanthropic Society had spent all its accumulated funds and it could not even remove a Jewish inmate from the Benevolent Home, as the Society had no means to support him. This constituted a reflection upon the community. From time immemorial, Jewish communities regarded it as their bounden duty to support their own poor, sick and feeble, so that they could enjoy life in their hour of need in surroundings to which they were accustomed. The Society attempted all sorts of schemes to augment its income. It tried to raise money by charity concerts, by collections at circumcisions, but anniversary dinners proved to be the best source of raising money. Frequently, prominent non-Jewish personalities were invited to attend so as to attract guests to the functions.<sup>422</sup> Although these anniversary dinners were successful, the amounts raised were insufficient in themselves to extricate the community from its difficulties, and only when the Government agreed to grant the Philanthropic Society a sum of £250, did the Society temporarily extricate itself from financial embarrassment.<sup>423</sup> The fact that the Society

could not help the Jewish inmate in the Benevolent Home must have been deeply felt by the Society's executive, for as soon as the Society acquired a little credit on its balance sheet, it applied to the Government for a grant of land upon which to build almshouses. Later, the Government granted the Society the land upon St. Kilda Road, where the Montefiore Old Aged Home now stands.<sup>424</sup>

When the Philanthropic Society was in financial difficulties and sought measures of relief, it believed the women in the community could alleviate some of the distress, and



Rev. MOSES RINTEL

for this purpose Rintel, as guide and a Trustee, formed the Hebrew Ladies' Benevolent Society in 1857. At first this Society restricted itself to giving medical and financial aid to women in confinement, but later it extended its assistance to the entire field of philanthropy for Jewish women.<sup>425</sup>

## FRIENDLY SOCIETIES

Many of the immigrants, poor but proud, had no desire to approach the Philanthropic Society for charity and preferred to make their own arrangements for medical care in case of sickness. About thirty persons formed themselves into the United Friendly Jewish Benefit Society,<sup>426</sup> which provided for their medical attention and the additional benefit of paying wages to any mourner who had lost a close relative. According to Jewish custom, it is the duty of the mourner to refrain from work for one week. For no other than personal reasons, some members of the community, in June, 1863, founded a second mutual benefit organisation, the Jewish Mutual Aid Society, which gave free medical aid and medicine to members, up to fourteen weeks' sick pay, free funerals and a Shivah allowance of £10. Weekly fees varied according to age.<sup>427</sup> Some of the Jewish community joined friendly societies not connected with their co-religionists. The Jews had a lot to do with the re-establishment of the "Ancient Order of Druids" in Victoria, especially Asher Barnard, the collector of the Melbourne Synagogue, who took the chair when the order re-opened, and Dr. S. Iffla, who also took a keen interest in the movement.<sup>428</sup>

## THE PERILS OF HAWKING

Lack of capital and credit and the lack of a skilled trade, together with the instinctive dislike of Jews to seek charity, forced many to seek a livelihood by hawking and peddling, and they penetrated nearly every town and hamlet in Victoria. Danger lurked in the unfrequented, unguarded back-roads of the countryside. Attacks against them occurred from time to time, and it is quite possible that some lonely hawker, hardly known to anyone in Victoria, may have disappeared mysteriously through lack of food or because of murderous attack. Only through chance were the bodies of Raphael H. Caro and his assistant, Solomon Levy, found near Clarke's Station, seventy miles from Avoca. It was at first thought they had been attacked by wild dogs, and then that they had died of thirst, but the vigilant editor of the Maryborough newspaper, probably Julius Vogel, demanded a police enquiry and it was discovered that they had both been murdered for the jewellery they had been hawking.<sup>429</sup> The Govern-

ment offered a reward of £20<sup>430</sup> for the discovery of the person or persons who had committed the crime, an amount which, under pressure, it later increased to £100, but no one claimed the reward offered.

At Carr's Plains near Glenorchy, William Selby, in 1863, was found cruelly murdered under similar circumstances to Caro and Levy. He had no relatives in Victoria, and ten years later the community at Stawell, where he was buried, erected a tombstone in his memory. Owing to the lapse of time, the community had difficulty in locating his grave.<sup>431</sup>

Isaac Himmelhauch, a travelling jeweller, allowed a man to sleep in the same cart as himself near Lindsey's Station, Spring Creek, and during the night the man attacked Himmelhauch, stabbed him in the arm, hit him over his head with an axe and robbed him of his jewellery. The culprit was eventually caught and received his just deserts.<sup>432</sup>

Leopold Barnett, another hawker, had 250 ozs. of gold on him belonging to Marcus Kuttner, of Black Creek. He was waylaid by highway robbers, who took all his possessions. In consequence of the robbery, Kuttner went insolvent.<sup>433</sup>

In spite of these perils on the country roads, hawking remained a frequent occupation amongst Jews and is still followed by them in the State of Victoria.

### THE EARLY CLOSING ASSOCIATION

In Melbourne the Jewish shopkeepers suffered because of the long hours they had to serve in their establishments, and once again they encouraged the shop assistants, through the Early Closing Association, to enforce the termination of business at 7 o'clock in the evening except Saturdays. Among the signatories in favour of the resolution are to be found the names of A. E. & R. Alexander, Nathan Nathan and S. H. Harris & Co. Because of past experiences, Michael Cashmore and E. & I. Hart added a note to their signatures signifying that they only agreed to close at 7 o'clock if the movement became general.<sup>434</sup>



## CHAPTER 3

## COMMUNAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE PROVINCES

When the Jews spread to the many towns and hamlets in Victoria, their communal organisation followed a pattern. About the month of August, before the High Festivals, they would seek out their brethren in the vicinity, and if sufficient numbers warranted it, they would form a small body to arrange services for the New Year and the

Day of Atonement. If their number was not sufficient for a Minyan, they would resort, if possible, to the nearest place where a public service was held. There were many among the immigrants who were capable of conducting a service in Hebrew and in the particular traditional melodies of the High Holy Days. If it could be arranged the organisers would come to terms with one of the Synagogues in Melbourne to lend them a Shofar—a ram's horn blown during the service on the New Year, and at the conclusion of the service on the Day of Atonement—and for the loan of a Sefer Torah—a Scroll of the Law—which enabled the assembly to conduct the holy day services in a complete fashion. For the loan of these religious appurtenances the synagogue in Melbourne would expect to receive any donations made by those who had been honoured to be called to stand near the Sefer Torah whilst it was being read during the service. It also expected to receive a deposit on the Sefer Torah in case of damage as well as an assurance that it would be properly cared for. In settlements which became large and permanent, the Jews would try to establish a weekly service on the Sabbath Day, and if that became regular the community would contemplate building a permanent place of worship.

As Geelong had increased in size and importance because the majority of prospective gold miners passed through the "Pivot," the number of Jews who permanently resided there had also increased, and by June, 1854, they were able to erect a wooden edifice on the land previously granted<sup>135</sup> to the community by the Government. From the laws of this Congregation, patterned on the laws of its sister Congregation in Melbourne, it may be deduced that some of the members must have been a rough and ready type, for it passed a law:—"Should any member in the course of debate use insulting or ungentlemanly language or otherwise misbehave, he shall be fined a sum not exceed-

ing 21s., and the Chairman shall have the sole power of levying the same."<sup>436</sup> The following may also be gathered from other laws of the Congregation:—"That when a girl was born the father was expected to give her a name in the Synagogue; that when a member or a member's relative died, a roster of six other members was summoned to attend the funeral and if any refused, they were fined; that a bridegroom and his close relatives and the close relatives of the bride were expected to attend the Synagogue on the Sabbath before and on the Sabbath after the marriage or be prepared to suffer a fine of 10/6.<sup>437</sup> By 1860 the Congregation had advanced sufficiently for it to dismantle its wooden edifice and to lay the foundation stone of a permanent brick building, which was completed in the following year.<sup>438</sup>

At Ballarat, the Jews met in assembly for the first time for the High Holy Days of 1853 at the Clarendon Hotel in Lydiard Street, owned by Henry Harris, one of their number, who encouraged his co-religionists to make plans for the erection of a synagogue.<sup>439</sup> The consecration of the Ballarat Synagogue took place in November, 1855. It consisted of a large unpretentious building made of wood and stood on Mount Zion<sup>440</sup> in Barkly Street, opposite the present Ballarat Fire Brigade Station. It was capable of holding a congregation of upwards of 200. One newspaper "looked upon the Children of Israel making such an investment in Ballarat as by no means the least significant 'sign of the times' upon the great western gold field." The Board of Management of the Ballarat Congregation was determined to forestall any division in the community or any competition, for it passed a law: "Any person attending any other place of worship in Ballarat could be fined as the President thought fit."<sup>441</sup> The Ballarat Synagogue did not remain long in its original position. The Ballarat East Council desired the land in order to build its municipal chambers. A determined dispute broke out between the Council and the Congregation, the latter most adamant it could not move because the land upon which the Synagogue was built had been dedicated. Finally the Congregation was informed by the Minister of Lands that "the public weal must prevail over all private rights,"<sup>442</sup> and with the Government granting the Congregation another piece of land at the corner of Princes and Barkly Streets and the Council awarding £250 compensation to the Con-

gregation for its wooden edifice, the community decided to move its Synagogue and build anew.<sup>443</sup> However, the Congregation became embroiled in far more serious trouble. Two brothers, Benjamin and Frederick Lloyd, refused to quit the new land given by the Government. They had pitched canvas tents upon it and would not go unless they received compensation. The Trustees of the Congregation had to resort to the local police court and the trespassers were fined 10/- or one month's imprisonment. The brothers preferred to go to prison. They insisted upon their rights and the court again fined the brothers £5 or 14 days gaol. This time they paid the fine but they still continued to trespass, and again they received the same penalty.<sup>444</sup> Local residents took sides, protests appeared in the press and the matter almost became a *cause célèbre*. The brothers claimed they had lived on the land for 18 months, had paid rates and taxes on it and held a letter from the Lands Department to the effect that the grant to the Synagogue was conditional upon the Lloyd brothers receiving compensation.<sup>445</sup> The Synagogue finally paid them three sums of £20, £7 and £5,<sup>446</sup> but apparently they did not consider it sufficient, for they sold their rights to Joseph Pope, whom the Trustees also had to sue for trespass. The court fined Pope a small sum. Not until 1874 did the Synagogue receive a clear title.

The court cases over, the Congregation proceeded with the erection of the building, and in January, 1861, Charles Dyte laid the foundation of the Synagogue, which was completed two months later.<sup>447</sup>

In the early days of Ballarat, the needy were cared for by passing round the hat, but Simon Hamburger, dissatisfied with such a procedure, asked for signatures of all willing to subscribe regularly to a society to give assistance to the poor. About 40 men signed, and early in 1857 the Ballarat Jewish Philanthropic Society was formed. Soon the Society had 58 members paying 6d. a week, and funds accumulated to such an extent that it lent the Congregation £40 on a Promissory Note backed by the signatures of the Synagogue Committee. The Society had great difficulty in having the money returned.<sup>448</sup>

By the end of 1854, Sandhurst showed signs of permanence, and the Jews living there held services for the High Holy Days at the "Cape of Good Hope Stores," kept by Mr. Helbrun near the present site of the *Bendigo*

*Advertiser*.<sup>449</sup> They also desired to build a house of worship, and for that purpose sent a Memorial to Sir Charles Hotham for a grant of land.<sup>450</sup> In December, 1855, the Congregation accepted a tender for a semi-permanent weatherboard building, and in May, 1856, it consecrated its Synagogue in Dowling Street.<sup>451</sup>

In August, 1855, at the diggings at Golden Point, Mount Blackwood, in the Ballarat district, the Jewish residents held a meeting at the shop of Cohen & Levinson, Main Street, "having for its object the formation of a temporary Shool for the coming Yom Tovim." A motion was carried that each member at the meeting subscribe a sum for the purpose of obtaining the loan of a Sefer Torah for the High Holy Days.<sup>452</sup> About 30 men subscribed, which enabled the group to offer the Melbourne Congregation £30 towards the completion of its Synagogue, with the regret "that more could not be donated because of other incidental expenses attached to the undertaking." The Congregation accepted the offer and lent the Sefer Torah, with the stipulation, which two of the Mount Blackwood representatives had to sign, that if the Sefer was not returned in good condition within one month they would be liable to a fine of £50.<sup>453</sup> The lead at Mount Blackwood soon petered out and most of the Jews in the township moved on to Ballarat.<sup>454</sup>

In July, 1857, Joel Hart wrote from Beechworth to the Melbourne congregations informing them that the Jewish residents in the surrounding countryside had formed a committee of which he was Hon. Secretary, in order to arrange services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. The Congregation numbered over 60 and had need of a Sefer Torah and Shofar. It received acceptances from the two Melbourne synagogues, so it sent the proceeds from the Aliyoth to the congregation which sent the religious requisites, and as a compensatory gesture sent the other a sum of £5.<sup>455</sup> By April, 1861, only two Jews lived in Beechworth.<sup>456</sup>

Not many Jews lived in Maryborough, but they, too, held services for the High Festivals in 1857 without any of the usual religious equipment, but they did make a collection for the new synagogue which had shortly before opened in Melbourne, the Mikveh Yisrael Synagogue, which became better known as the East Melbourne Congregation.<sup>457</sup>

At Pleasant Creek, services were held for the High Holy Days in 1858, probably at the draper's store of S. Isaacson, from which the East Melbourne Congregation benefited by the sum of £12/15/-, and services at Ararat brought them in the sum of £10.<sup>458</sup>

In exchange for the loan of a Sefer Torah and Shofar, B. Marks, on behalf of the Jews at Back Creek, agreed to give security for their safe return, to pay the expenses of transit and to hand over all the offerings to the Melbourne Congregation.<sup>459</sup> M. D. Cohen, of Castlemaine, also asked for the loan of a Sefer Torah for Holy Day services, and received it on the same terms as Marks, of Back Creek.<sup>460</sup> The offerings at Castlemaine reached £10.<sup>461</sup>

### CONGREGATIONAL EXPANSION IN THE METROPOLIS

At the Quarterly General Meeting of the Melbourne Congregation in March, 1852, a prominent member said: "As our Congregation is increasing daily, it is rendered necessary that an additional room be procured for an additional place of worship on the next New Year and Day of Atonement, as our Synagogue will not contain the quantity of people who will doubtless be in Melbourne at that period."<sup>462</sup> Accordingly, an "Overflow Service" was held in the Hall of the Synagogue for the High Holy Days, the worshippers being enrolled as members and granted all privileges except seats in the main building.<sup>463</sup> Both places of worship were so obviously over-crowded that immediately after the Holy Days, a number of meetings were held so as "to procure plans and specifications and tenders and other preliminaries for the purpose of enlarging the Synagogue as required."<sup>464</sup> Owing to the very high cost of labour and materials, the lowest tender amounted to £8,000, but the Congregation, after strenuous efforts, could only collect £5,000. Nevertheless, it decided to enlarge the Synagogue by providing the skeleton of a building to be finished at a future time.<sup>465</sup> As it was not convenient to commence rebuilding until after the Holy Days of 1853, services were held at the store of the Benjamin brothers besides the two services held on the Synagogue premises.<sup>466</sup> By the following year the new Synagogue was in a sufficient state of completion as to allow for the services temporarily to be held there,<sup>467</sup> but lack of finance began to worry the Con-

gregation, and special loans had to be negotiated to pay current accounts.<sup>468</sup> From that time onward the Synagogue never seemed to unravel itself from financial embarrassment, which often harassed its progress and affected the welfare of its officers. The Committee attempted to relieve its immediate straits by writing to the Government for permission to lease the rear part of the Synagogue grounds which faced Little Bourke Street,<sup>469</sup> and hope never left the breasts of the Jewish community that the Government would relent in its attitude in refusing to grant State Aid to the Jews. Although the Congregation consecrated its new Synagogue in April, 1855, it was far from complete.<sup>470</sup> Lack of finance even delayed the installation of gas in the Synagogue, which the Committee decided "to lay on as soon as there is sufficient funds to defray the expenditure." Not until late in 1858 was the Synagogue building finally completed through the munificence of one of its members.<sup>471</sup>

### THE SEPHARDIM

The small number of Spanish and Portuguese Jews who lived in Melbourne expressed a wish to conduct their own services for the High Holy Days.<sup>472</sup> Whilst their form of liturgy differs but little from that of the eastern European Jews on week-days and Sabbaths, yet, for the High Holy Days their ancient traditional melodies are quite distinct and the poetical parts of the service are also different. Some of their customs also vary. In London, the Sephardi and Ashkenazi authorities co-operated with each other, and when the influx of the Ashkenazim swamped the Sephardim the former did not expect the latter to amalgamate in regard to their ritual and customs. On the contrary, the Ashkenazim encouraged the Spanish and Portuguese Jews to retain as many of their traditional ways as possible.<sup>473</sup> This was the attitude of the Melbourne Congregation when it received an application from the Sephardim to conduct special services of their own for the High Holy Days of 1854, an application which was gladly granted. These Sephardic services were held for a number of years in the schoolroom. Some of the poorer Jews who could not afford to pay pew rent or who did not want to pay took advantage of the situation by attending these services instead of going elsewhere, which would have involved

them in some cost. The Committee of the Congregation then found it necessary to warn H. C. Pirani, who was in charge, "that he should take every precaution in his power to restrict the said Minyan to gentlemen of the Sephardi Minhag."<sup>474</sup> Apparently, in spite of all precautions, worshippers entered without paying any pew rent, for in the following year the Committee decided to conduct services in the "Great Synagogue" only.<sup>475</sup> The Sephardim that year held Day of Atonement services in a private home only, in Stephen Street.<sup>476</sup> This may have been an attempt by the Sephardim to form their own synagogue, for Daniel and John de Pass, Solomon Belifante and E. S. Henriques—all names well known in London Jewry—and others applied to Bevis Marks, London, for help to establish a Sephardi community.<sup>477</sup> This did not materialise, for the number of Sephardim who really wanted to make a distinction between Ashkenazi and Sephardi ritual slowly diminished until eventually the Spanish Jews could not muster a Minyan and had to rely upon spectators from the main Synagogue to make up the necessary quorum for the Holy Day services.<sup>478</sup> After this experience the Sephardim sought no further official division from the Ashkenazim.

#### A DIVISION IN THE COMMUNITY

Generally, the members of the community were united and had no desire or intention to deflect from the authority assumed by the elected Committee of the Melbourne Congregation. However, a division did occur, unexpectedly and through a small incident which magnified into a major issue. Nathaniel Levi complained that Rintel did not attend a Monday morning service when his wife went to recite prayers after her confinement.<sup>479</sup> Rintel stated that he considered the laws under which he was engaged as Minister did not impose upon him the duty of attending Divine Service at the Synagogue on any days but Sabbaths and Festivals. The Committee then resolved "that having heard the charge made by Mr. N. Levi and Rev. Rintel's defence thereto: Consider that the Minister committed a dereliction of his duty in being absent from Divine Service on the occasion referred to,<sup>480</sup> and the Committee regrets that the Rev. Gentleman should have laid himself open to animadversion in this respect. And they cannot pass over the circumstance without expression of their entire dis-

approbation of the view taken by the Minister in respect to the duties appertaining to his office."

The Committee's resolution caused an uproar in the Congregation, and members called a special requisition meeting to erase the resolution against Rintel from the Minute Book. After a stormy debate the motion for erasure was put and lost by 31 votes to 35.<sup>481</sup> Rintel resigned as Minister of the Melbourne Congregation, which took effect from the 1st April, 1857.<sup>482</sup>

Rintel was young and forceful, and did not allow the grass to grow under his feet. With speedy energy he established another congregation with the assistance of his brother-in-law, Henri J. Hart, and attracted to it about 30 members of the old Synagogue<sup>483</sup> and the foreign element who always looked with suspicion upon their reserved English brethren. It also drew any who could not obtain privileged membership at the Melbourne Synagogue and those who observed the Sabbath and who did not care to walk the long distance to the old Synagogue in Bourke Street West. Rintel wisely established his Synagogue close to the Jewish residential district in East Melbourne, and conducted his services in Spring Street in premises formerly used by the Melbourne Grammar School.<sup>484</sup> He called the Congregation, "Mikveh Yisrael Melbourne Synagogue," but later it became generally known as the East Melbourne Hebrew Congregation.

Because of Rintel's popularity with the foreign element and a goodly portion of the English Jews, because of his untiring energy, the support he received from his influential brother-in-law, and the wisdom of establishing the Synagogue within the Jewish residential area, he succeeded beyond his own hopes, and his Congregation grew so that he had to remove from Spring Street to Latrobe Street and later from Latrobe Street to Lonsdale Street.<sup>485</sup> The relationship between Rintel and his old Congregation was not a happy one, and to add to the chagrin of the latter, Rintel applied to the Government for a grant of land for a Hebrew school, which the Governor-in-Council approved. Later, the Government presented to the Trustees of the Mikveh Yisrael Synagogue for the Jews in Victoria, a Crown Grant of land at the corner of Stephen Street and Little Lonsdale Street.<sup>486</sup> Previously the Melbourne Congregation was successful in preventing the Mikveh Yisrael Synagogue from obtaining a grant for a house of



worship. Afraid that it would lose its leadership in Jewish affairs, as well as members, the Melbourne Synagogue sent a deputation to the Board of Lands and Works requesting a grant of land to build a second synagogue in East Melbourne.<sup>481</sup> Its request was not fulfilled, and the Committee passed a resolution, "that no person taking part in Minyan with Mr. Rintel except by permission of the President shall hold office with the Congregation whatsoever."<sup>482</sup>

When the Government approved the grant for a Hebrew school, it left the choice of Trustees to the Mikveh Yisrael Synagogue.<sup>483</sup> Highly displeased, the Melbourne Congregation sought interviews with the Lands Department and the Governor,<sup>484</sup> seeking the right to take part in the election of Trustees, basing their claim that the grant was given to all the Jews in Victoria and that their choice of Trustees was more representative of the community. All their influence did not prevail against the foresight and the wisdom of the Governor, who finally informed them, "that having as promised made enquiries into the circumstances connected with the appointment of Trustees for a site for a school granted to the Jews residing in the Eastern part of the City of Melbourne, His Excellency finds no grounds for interfering in this matter as this school will be open to all children of Jewish parents whilst there is nothing to prevent the Congregation in West Bourke Street from erecting another school on their land if they prefer so doing."<sup>485</sup>

On 28th December, 1859, Morris Nelson laid the cornerstone of the building, which included the inscription: "To commemorate the laying of the foundation stone of the Jewish School in connection with the Mikveh Yisrael, East Melbourne Synagogue." After a few months the Congregation moved from Lonsdale Street to Stephen Street and worshipped in the small building, far from completed, and where the children also partook of religious instruction.<sup>486</sup> There is no doubt that the executive of this Synagogue were more interested in the status of their Congregation than in education, for in 1863 it tried to have the terms of its grant altered. According to the grant its purpose was for the establishment of a school. It now desired to have the word school altered to "church"<sup>487</sup> (*sic.*). In spite of all Rintel's efforts, the request failed. Nevertheless, the building continued to be used as a Synagogue and education continued to be a secondary consideration.

TO  
HIS HIGHNESSE  
THE  
LORD PROTECTOR  
OF THE  
COMMONWEALTH OF  
England, Scotland, *and* Ireland.  
THE  
HUMBLE ADDRESSES  
OF  
MENASSEH Ben Israel, *a Divine, and*  
*Doctor of PHYSIC, in behalfe*  
*of the Jewish Nation.*

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1655.

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1868.

## SUBURBAN MINYANIM

No one opposed S. de Beer and I. Lennenberg when, before the High Holy Days in 1861, they approached the East Melbourne Synagogue for the loan of a Sefer Torah and Shofar to conduct services at St. Kilda. It readily agreed.<sup>494</sup> From the proceeds the Synagogue gained £12/15/6.<sup>495</sup> The following year the East Melbourne Synagogue provided the necessary requisites once again,<sup>496</sup> but even after being asked for the proceeds of the offerings, the St. Kilda Minyan kept the money.<sup>497</sup> From 1861 onwards, the St. Kilda Minyan held services every year on the High Holy Days, and though an attempt was made to form a branch Synagogue in St. Kilda as a part of the Melbourne Congregation, the proposition did not materialise.<sup>498</sup> A similar proposition to form as a branch of the East Melbourne Synagogue also brought a negative result.<sup>499</sup> It appears the St. Kilda Jews had an idea of forming a Congregation of their own without being dependent on anyone. They eventually did.

Some of the Jews from Eastern Europe preferred to pray in the homely atmosphere of a private home rather than in the impersonal atmosphere of a larger synagogue, and, therefore, Joseph Avinsky formed a private Minyan of his own.<sup>500</sup> He may also have formed his Minyan so as to conduct three services daily as required by Jewish law. The larger synagogues did not conduct all of the statutory services.

## CHAPTER 4

## THE MINISTER AND HIS CONGREGATION

At the time of the gold rush, Rintel was the only Jewish Minister in Victoria, and the immediate effect of the rising cost in living and commodities was that he almost found it impossible to make ends meet. Circumstances forced him to ask continually for a rise in salary, which sometimes met with success<sup>501</sup> and sometimes with a curt rebuff, but the unwritten and unspoken thought of his Board of Management and Boards of Management of other congregations, which were to be created later, was to keep the minister upon a salary which would just cover his bare necessities. In spite of the smallness of their remuneration, these ministers were all men devoted to their task, who

gave of their best and displayed goodwill towards their flocks. It was sometimes reciprocated. With the growing population, however, the intimacy and warmth towards the minister and the paid officers of the congregation disappeared and they were treated like employees instead of men holding sacred office. A number of incidents occurred which seriously spoiled the harmony of the community, and the salaried officers were far from pleased. When the funds of the Melbourne Congregation decreased, the initial step of the Committee was to retrench the salaries of the officers, and Rintel had to agree to a reduction of a quarter of his annual salary towards the liquidation of the congregational debts.<sup>502</sup> In addition, Rintel had to forego all his perquisites, his fees for marriages, funerals and Bris ceremonies, and his vigorous protest availed him nought.<sup>503</sup> In 1857 the Congregation altered its laws, and one affected its officers seriously, for it ruled that they were appointed yearly and had to apply each year for reinstatement.<sup>504</sup> When the Committee wrote to Rintel and complained of "the unseemly condition of the seats and floor of the Synagogue" and suggested that he take steps to have them cleaned,<sup>505</sup> Rintel could contain himself no longer, and in unmistakable terms he expressed his thoughts to the Committee, which passed a unanimous resolution "that the letter from Rev. Mr. Rintel respecting the cleaning of the Synagogue not being couched in appropriate terms, the same be returned to him with a copy of this resolution."<sup>506</sup> Rintel almost had to beg for a refund for coach hire which he had expended in performing a funeral service on a child for whom no coach had been provided to convey the corpse to the cemetery "in consequence of the parents being unable to bear such expense." Before receiving payment from the charity box, Rintel had to explain "that the rain was coming down heavily at the time, with every appearance of its continuing so for some time, and he, therefore, took it upon himself to procure a black coach, as he considered carrying a corpse through the rain is equally against decency as against the Din."<sup>507</sup> If the Committee had taken a less autocratic and rigid attitude towards its Minister there would have been no need for a division in the community. Thus they were informed by the Chief Rabbi, who was distressed by the occurrence and who pointed out that trained, efficient ministers were difficult to obtain and suggested Rintel should be re-engaged.<sup>508</sup>

When the Chief Rabbi's letter arrived the division had widened to such an extent that reconciliation then became impracticable.

Although Rintel may have been somewhat apprehensive when he created a new congregation, it was not long before he had good reason to be satisfied with his position. Highly respected amongst the non-Jewish community as well as his own, he prospered, as did his Congregation. He did not prosper from his salary, because he did not receive any. He went into business and was moderately successful, receiving sterling support from his brother-in-law, Henri J. Hart.<sup>509</sup> Nominally the Synagogue was managed by a Committee. Virtually it was "Rintel's Shool" and known as such amongst the community. When the Congregation prospered it gave Rintel a salary,<sup>510</sup> in addition to special votes on special occasions, such as when the Synagogue was consecrated.<sup>511</sup> To maintain control of his Congregation, Rintel acted as a Trustee, as Hon. Secretary and as a member of the Board of Management. Even then, many of the Committee were not accustomed to treat the Minister as an equal and proposed that paid officers should not attend Committee meetings, but Rintel informed them that the motion was contrary to the laws of the Congregation and the President ruled the motion out of order.<sup>512</sup> Rintel remained master of his Congregation for many long years, but at the end the element which considered that the flock must be master of the minister succeeded, and at the time of Rintel's death his Synagogue was not a happy place.

When Rintel resigned from the Melbourne Congregation there was no lack of candidates in the city from which to choose another Minister, and after an exhaustive trial, Emanuel M. Myers was selected. He was not given the satisfaction of a permanent appointment and received the temporary post on condition that he was willing to obey the laws of the Congregation, the President and the Committee.<sup>513</sup> He did not fare better than his predecessor. His sacrifice and sincerity were never appreciated. The Congregation kept him in continual suspense as a temporary officer and upon a miserable salary. In order to retain his non-permanent position he later also had to accept the secretarial duties of the Congregation. At one time the Committee would not permit him to communicate directly with the Chief Rabbi, but later relented and allowed him to correspond on religious matters only. Yet,

when the Chief Rabbi sent Myers an open letter in the same package as the Synagogue correspondence, the Committee disputed as to whether or not it should open the letter and read it. Some were of the opinion that the letter was open and should be read, others thought that as Myers had permission to write to the Chief Rabbi it should be handed over to him, but he should send them a copy. They decided to read the letter.<sup>514</sup> Myers had to endure many humiliations in addition to a low salary and continual financial embarrassment. He informed the Committee that he owed £300 and requested them to help him, but after a discussion they told him they could not do so.<sup>515</sup> Myers then filed his schedule in the bankruptcy court.<sup>516</sup> The Committee then suspended him from duty until a special General Meeting, where he spoke in his defence and said he had no alternative but to do as he did. At a creditors' meeting, debts were proven for the amount of £110, and for such a comparatively small sum the Congregation allowed its name to be dragged through the Insolvency Court and its Minister ruined. Perhaps pangs of conscience made the Committee offer Myers a sum of money, which he considered insufficient. He acquiesced to the next offer and sent in his resignation.<sup>517</sup> It also gave him a testimonial, but only the Secretary was instructed to sign it,<sup>518</sup> and so ended seven hard years of trial with the Melbourne Congregation for Emanuel M. Myers. Sadly he left Melbourne and Australia, and entered a new life in Canada,<sup>519</sup> whilst the Congregation sought a new Minister from England.

In the larger country centres of Geelong, Sandhurst and Ballarat, the Jewish community, after they had built their synagogues also appointed ministers to serve them from men who had already migrated to Victoria. These country ministers also had to act as the Shochet, Mohel, Cantor and Teacher of their respective communities. Geelong appointed Jacob Levy,<sup>520</sup> who had served in Launceston, whilst Sandhurst selected Isaac Friedman,<sup>521</sup> a pious man who had previously been in business in Hobart. David Isaacs, the minister appointed by the Ballarat Jews, as an Englishman and as a bachelor, did not measure up to the standards of learning and piety required by the eastern European migrants. According to Jewish law, a minister should be a married man.<sup>522</sup> A bitter quarrel broke out in the community, which resulted in the resignation of Isaacs,

who sued the Congregation for a sum he alleged was owing to him. At the last moment the case was settled out of court, with Isaacs returning to New Zealand, where he had once acted as a minister to a congregation. The Ballarat community thought that it could not do better now than ask the Chief Rabbi to send out a fully trained, qualified man from England, but they were astounded when the Rev. Samuel Herman arrived. He was an aged man, close on 70 years of age,<sup>253</sup> unable to give an address in English.<sup>254</sup> However, he was far superior in Talmudical knowledge to any other minister in Victoria. He also had a pleasant voice. But generally the Congregation was not pleased with him because of his infirmity and old age.

### THE PROBLEMS OF SHECHITAH

Before the inrush of migrants to Victoria, Rintel slaughtered sufficient Kosher meat for the needs of the Melbourne community. Many of them, because of previous difficulties in obtaining supplies, did not adhere as strictly to the dietary laws as they would have done under ordinary circumstances. When the new migrants came out they were appalled at the negligence with which the dietary laws were kept and were indignant that the community did not have a Shochet who occupied himself only with the task of Shechitah. In Europe, every Jewish community of a size equal to Melbourne had such a functionary. The lay leaders of Melbourne Jewry apparently had also been lax in other respects as well, for 26 members signed a requisition for a meeting, "as they were anxious that the Congregation should be enabled to obtain Kosher meat, ritual baths, and attendants on the sick and dead."<sup>255</sup> The result of the meeting brought forth another resolution, "that a Committee of five gentlemen be appointed to enquire into the probability of procuring and supplying the Jews of Melbourne with Kosher meat at all times when necessary, and that a society for attending to the last rites of the dead be forthwith established and empowered by the sanction of the Synagogue to frame laws and do all necessary work connected with such institutions and that funds be provided by the Synagogue for that purpose."

The Committee of the Congregation had become so accustomed to laxity in these laws which the Jews from overseas regarded as vital, that they did not take the matter seriously enough. They intimated that the Syna-

gogue officials and voluntary workers could look after the dead and that Rintel killed enough Kosher meat to supply the community. Complaints must have been sent to the Chief Rabbi, for he severely reprimanded the Congregation and wrote in the following terms, which could not have explained the position more clearly:—<sup>526</sup>

... I hereby beg to inform you that several complaints have been made to me relative to the insufficient supply of lawful meat at Melbourne. I deeply regret that a Congregation which has given repeated proof of religious zeal by the costly enlargement of their Synagogue and by other similar accomplishments would neglect a matter which is of such vital importance to the preservation of our faith. The difficulty of obtaining Kosher meat tempts any young man to eat forbidden foods; having once commenced it is very difficult for them to cease, and a habit is thus formed which not only endures throughout life but even descends to further generations. Such a growing evil must be crushed at the root, and energetic measures should at once be taken to provide an ample supply of Kosher meat.

Now, I feel convinced that the Rev. Mr. Rintel having to discharge several duties cannot supply a sufficient quantity, but if you authorise me to find you another Shochet to assist Mr. Rintel, at the same time forwarding the means of covering the expenses of the journey, I will undertake to send you an efficient Shochet who will not demand a very high salary.

The additional expense which may be incurred by such a step can be defrayed by the contributions of your own members, and of English Jewish immigrants in your town, many of whom have assured me in their letters that they would be most happy to contribute towards such an undertaking providing application be made to them by parties duly appointed for that purpose by the Congregation. I trust that the above suggestion will be acted upon without delay. . . .

The Congregation's reply was a masterpiece of equivocation.<sup>527</sup> It claimed the Chief Rabbi had given credence to *ex parte* statements, and went on to state that a Special Committee for two years had tried to make arrangements for procuring a sufficient supply of lawful meat, but had to contend with insurmountable difficulties. They asserted they had to overcome the difficulty of obtaining a slaughter house, as well as a butcher, to ensure regular supplies. The funds were inadequate to support an additional Shochet, whilst the charges for labour and necessities were exorbitant and, in any case, labour could not be obtained at any price. There were also many other local difficulties. They forgot to include one more difficulty—a lack of sufficient zeal in regard to Shechitah matters.

The Chief Rabbi's letter roused the leaders of the community to their responsibilities and they formed a



Shechitah Board which authorised David Benjamin, then proceeding to London, to consult with the Chief Rabbi with the view of appointing a Shochet.<sup>528</sup> They at the same time advertised in the Australian press and received an application from H. L. Harris, of Hobart Town. He only possessed the Kabbalah—the certificate of fitness and ability—of his local Minister, Rabbi Herman Hoelzel, which the Board at first thought insufficient, for they required a man who held the Chief Rabbi's testimonial.<sup>529</sup> Isaac Pulver had once acted as a Minister and Shochet in England under the authority of the Chief Rabbi and, therefore, he was on the Shechitah Board. He was approached if he would like to act as the Melbourne Shochet.<sup>530</sup> Pulver accepted the post, and when A. S. de Young donated £200 towards his first year's salary, the financial difficulty was also solved, at least for a year.<sup>531</sup> The Shechitah Board also solved the problem of a purveyor, which post was accepted by Eaton & Bennet, of Stephen Street, who consented to supply meat every morning at market prices and to call for orders and send meat home.<sup>531</sup>

Obviously the Kosher meat trade did not pay Eaton & Bennet, for they relinquished their appointment,<sup>532</sup> and over the years one of the Congregation's main sources of worry was to find an acceptable butcher, and they changed from one to another in an almost unending chain. Many in the community preferred a Jewish purveyor, because when meat was sold by a non-Jew it necessitated the appointment of a Shomer—a supervisor—to be present when Kosher meat was sold so that it should not be mixed with any other. This task was in many cases carried out by the Shochet, which meant that Kosher meat could only be purchased during certain specified hours when the Shochet was available and not engaged on other duties.

When Rintel formed his own Congregation, the poorer members of the community joined it. They found the price of Kosher meat too expensive for their pockets and Rintel, on their behalf, applied to the Melbourne Synagogue for the abolition of the special tax of  $\frac{1}{2}$ d. a lb. on Kosher meat for non-members for the maintenance of the Shochet.<sup>533</sup>

The Melbourne Synagogue refused the application. Rintel then did a most unexpected thing. He trained I. M. Goldreich as a Shochet and gave him Kabbalah, and Goldreich also acted as Second Reader of Rintel's Congregation.<sup>534</sup> A feature of the Kabbalah issued by Rintel was a signed statement by Goldreich that he would not shave

his face with a razor, as prescribed by Biblical law, and that if ever Rintel forbade him to act, he promised not to slaughter animal or fowl even for his own consumption.<sup>535</sup> Learning that Rintel was about to issue a Kabbalah, the Melbourne Synagogue wrote to the Chief Rabi informing him of what Rintel had done, and asked for permission for Pulver to train Shochtim as well.<sup>536</sup>

Pulver needed assistance. He did not enjoy good health. Moreover, the members and Committee of his Congregation gave him no peace and continually complained about him. His Committee once told him that "his liberal salary and bonuses from the butcher should induce him to carry out his duties."<sup>537</sup> His liberal salary was such that it kept him in continual poverty,<sup>538</sup> and he had to augment his income by introducing the baking of unleavened bread to Melbourne.<sup>539</sup> Time and time again he threatened to resign if his salary was not increased, but they informed him he would also have to act as Second Reader of the Congregation if he wanted extra money.<sup>540</sup> He had to accept. He had no alternative. Increasing bad health, plus the increasing unjustifiable complaints, led him to resign finally from the Congregation which he had faithfully served as a Committeeman and as a paid officer.<sup>541</sup>

A Gilbertian situation then arose in the Melbourne Congregation. Two candidates, Louis Goldstein and Phillip Phillips, bitterly struggled for Pulver's vacant post. At an election, Phillips defeated Goldstein by a few votes. But they had both made serious allegations against each other's private life, and whilst the Congregation accepted Goldstein's excuse, it wrote to the Chief Rabbi for a decision concerning Phillips.<sup>542</sup> Meanwhile, Goldstein did the work. Consternation, however, broke out when the Chief Rabbi replied unfavourably both in the case of Goldstein<sup>543</sup> and in the case of Phillips, and the Committee had no alternative but to advertise anew for a Shochet, which brought one reply—from Goldreich, whose Kabbalah the Congregation would not recognise as it contained Rintel's stamp.<sup>544</sup> Further correspondence with the Chief Rabbi exonerated Goldstein, and he later reinstated Phillips as a Shochet, but the latter not having practised for some considerable time, it became necessary for him to undergo another examination in Melbourne. Pulver and others refused to examine Phillips,<sup>545</sup> and the Gilbertian situation remained of Phillips, the official Shochet, being unable to work, whilst his rival, Goldstein, the defeated candidate,

reaped the reward. Goldstein's nominal temporary position did not prevent his Congregation from employing him with strict discipline. Once when he employed a porger without permission, they fined him 30/-.

After a most satisfactory association with Rintel, Goldreich, in 1864, decided to accept a post elsewhere. Rintel had on one occasion reduced his own salary so as to increase Goldreich's stipend.<sup>546</sup> The East Melbourne Congregation appointed Pulver as its Shochet.<sup>547</sup> It had continual trouble as well with its purveyors, of which the following is but one example. One Friday, Pulver, when visiting a home of a member, noticed veal on the table marked Kosher. Pulver had not killed any veal that week. He went round to the members checking up and came to the conclusion that they had eaten Trefah. The revelation shocked the community, especially when a former workman revealed that the butcher's clerk, Charlie, marked meat as Kosher especially during Passover, when supply could not meet the demand. The Congregation decided to take legal advice, and though at a meeting with the butcher and his men explanations were given, the Congregation finally decided to change the purveyor.<sup>548</sup>

The proper supply of Kosher meat has ever remained an irritating problem to the community.

### MATZAH

For many years the community imported its Matzah from Sydney, but the new migrants saw no reason why the Matzah could not be baked in Melbourne. Just as in the case of meat, the Synagogues assumed the right to supervise its manufacture, and before any baker could commence operations he had to receive approval from the Committee of one of the respective Congregations which appointed supervisors to inspect the procedure of preparation and baking.<sup>549</sup> The first to receive permission from the Melbourne Congregation was Pulver, who in 1856 was the sole supplier of Matzah in Victoria,<sup>550</sup> but when the Melbourne community divided, the Congregations gave permission to any baker who adhered to Jewish law. Monopolies were not encouraged and competition, therefore, became keen and profits small. Further reductions in profits occurred when the Matzah bakers formed themselves into "The Melbourne Association for making Passover Cakes" and decided to supply the poor at cost price.<sup>551</sup> Melbourne did not lack Jews in need.

## BURIAL RITES

All established communities overseas included a Chevrah Kadisha. The members of this type of society carried out the last rites voluntarily, washing the body, shrouding it and then arranging for its burial. In most communities the members of the society would be restricted to the pious and those who strictly adhered to Jewish law. One of the complaints of the new migrants to the Chief Rabbi was that the Melbourne community had no organised Chevrah Kadisha.<sup>552</sup> The last rites were carried out by the appointed paid officers of the Melbourne Congregation and whosoever wanted to help, whether they were orthodox or not. The newcomers considered this not in accordance with Jewish practice. The Congregation was more concerned with carrying out the burials in accordance with Jewish law rather than with the choice selection of personnel to perform the last rites. The Melbourne Congregation also insisted in carrying out the last rites, as it then retained some of its power to control its own members and the community. If any recalcitrant member failed to obey its edicts, it could refuse burial. It once denied burial to the child of a member who had been fined and refused to pay. Only when the account was discharged in full did the Congregation bury the child.<sup>553</sup>

With the increase of population, the Government closed the old cemetery in West Melbourne and opened the Melbourne General Cemetery in Carlton, where the Jewish community were allowed one acre upon which it built a Metahar House.<sup>554</sup> When Rintel formed his own Congregation, the Melbourne Synagogue applied for a portion of the General Cemetery to be set aside for itself,<sup>555</sup> but the Trustees stated it could not be done.<sup>556</sup> This Congregation and some of the country communities sought to establish private cemeteries, but they were informed they had to abide by the general rule in Victoria of all denominations sharing a general cemetery, special portions being set aside for each religious faith.<sup>557</sup> Since the Melbourne Congregation had built the Metahar House, it took away the keys and would not allow Rintel the use of the House unless he applied first to the Secretary, who would ask the President, who would grant permission if he so desired.<sup>557</sup> Although it stated it had no desire to interfere with the formation of other congregations, the Melbourne Synagogue informed the Trustees of the General Cemetery that no need existed

in Melbourne for another synagogue, but it would be prepared to share the Metahar House with any other new congregation if it shared in the cost of the building and its maintenance.<sup>558</sup> It knew that Rintel's Synagogue had no funds. Though the Cemetery Trustees suggested that the keys of the Metahar House be handed back to the Sexton, and Rintel, later, again applied for the keys, the Melbourne Congregation remained adamant and stated that the keys belonged to them and they intended to retain them.<sup>559</sup>



Hon. J. F. LEVIEN

In 1857, the Committees of both of the Melbourne Synagogues each appointed a new type of honorary officer, a "Kabronim Gabbai," whose duties included arranging all details for funerals, and on many occasions this officer earned the heartfelt appreciation of mourners and the community for the sympathy and understanding displayed.<sup>560</sup>

In many of the country places the local authorities set aside a portion of land for Jewish burials and often appointed a Trustee of the Jewish faith to watch the interests of the local community.<sup>562</sup> In Ballarat, before the Jewish portion of the cemetery had been allotted, Christians had been buried there, and the Trustees sent a list of

such interments to the Congregation for the purpose of record.<sup>563</sup> It may not have been correct according to the strict letter of the Jewish law to accept such a piece of ground, but perhaps the Ballarat community did not look a gift horse in the mouth. Rintel, in seeking a better arrangement for his Synagogue in regard to burials, must have used some of his influence in the publication of an Order-in-Council which the Government issued in 1864, allowing burials in the Old West Melbourne Cemetery for those who possessed a plot of land there. It was a surprise decision, for the cemetery had been closed for ten years. Rintel was appointed a Trustee. However, three years later the Government decided to close the cemetery finally, and no more burials there were permitted.<sup>564</sup>

## CHAPTER 5

### THE PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION

Many of the migrants, whilst recognising the Melbourne Congregation as the leading Jewish body in Victoria, expressed dissatisfaction at its tardiness in providing sufficient Jewish education for the children, and at "an adjourned preliminary meeting of the provisional committee of the proposed Jews' Educational Establishment," held on 24th June, 1855, a resolution was passed to apply to the Congregational authorities for the use of the small Synagogue as a schoolroom.<sup>565</sup> The Congregation, jealous of its reputation, refused the request on the grounds that the small Synagogue was needed as "the" place of worship, and it even defeated an amendment "that the Committee will be most happy to co-operate with the provisional committee named in the prospectus."<sup>566</sup> Instead, it formed its own sub-committee "to report on the best means of establishing a proper scheme for educating the rising generation of this community."<sup>567</sup>

The report of the sub-committee<sup>568</sup> indicated it had delved thoroughly into the subject. Several plans had been submitted to the members of this sub-committee, which they refused to recommend although recognising the zeal and care with which they had been prepared. One body of men desired that the whole educational system should be left in their hands, a proposal which the Congregation could certainly not accept. They did not favour S. Ham-

burger's scheme because it was essentially a private speculation, nor did they accept Angel Ellis's idea of creating a Joint-Stock Proprietary Scheme. Rintel's verbal educational project was considered as totally insufficient to meet the desired end. They considered it inconsistent with the advanced state of society to compromise on so vital a matter as education by attempting to establish a system insufficient in itself and unequal to the requirements of the age. Though they recognised that the youth of the community should be taught the tenets and language of the religion of their forefathers, it did not necessarily follow that they should be imperfectly instructed in those branches of secular knowledge indispensable to the proper discharge of the various duties of life. They believed an enlightened general education was indispensable to the due appreciation of the duties and responsibilities of parents and citizens.

After very careful investigation, the members of the sub-committee recommended the adoption of the system known as the "National, Model and Training Schools." These schools, they stated, offered the maximum of education at a minimum of cost. The teachers were selected for their proficiency, moral character and aptitude to impart instruction, and there was a total absence of religious interference, every facility being given to each denomination to impart their own religious views by teachers of their own selection and by the provision of separate classrooms. The sub-committee was gratified to note the abundant opportunity at these schools for physical exercise and training, "without which no system of education can be considered complete." Finally the sub-committee recommended the appointment of a Hebrew teacher, the expense to be defrayed by the Congregation by a direct tax on the members. The Congregation adopted the report and proposed a 15% increase upon seat rentals.<sup>560</sup> At a general meeting the proposition passed by one vote, but because the majority was so narrow, the Committee decided not to implement the law<sup>570</sup> and instead ordered Rintel to attend the National, Model and Training School every Thursday from 10 a.m. to 12 noon to give religious instruction to the Jewish children.<sup>571</sup>

Apart from the Congregation, M. H. Solomon conducted a Jewish school and taught about 20 scholars, and a Mr. Myers from Hobart also started a school on his own

account early in 1856. Both Mr. Solomon and Mr. Myers were reputed to be very competent.<sup>572</sup>

When Rintel left the Melbourne Congregation, Rev. E. M. Myers taught at the National, Model and Training School, as well as on the Synagogue premises after school hours, whilst Rintel also taught after school hours on the premises where he conducted his Synagogue.

In 1859, the Government created the Denominational School Board, and the Jews enjoyed the same privileges as every other denomination. Education was not governed by the Church Act, which had prevented the giving of State Aid to the Jews. So as to watch the interests of the Jewish community, it requested to be represented on the Board, and Isaac Hart was duly elected to it.<sup>573</sup> The Melbourne Congregation then selected a permanent Local Board of Education, consisting of three members who had complete autonomy in the establishment and conduct of the new Jewish school, over its disbursements and the Government grant.<sup>574</sup> When the Melbourne Congregation questioned the authority of the Local Board to appoint Pulver as a Hebrew Master, it finally came to the conclusion it could not interfere with the decisions of the Local board.<sup>575</sup> However, the Congregation gave the school its patronage.<sup>576</sup> By May, 1860, the school began to function. Named the West Melbourne Grammar School, it was housed in the schoolrooms of the Synagogue in Bourke Street, for which the latter charged £100<sup>577</sup> per annum, which sum was repaid as a subsidy towards the payment of the Hebrew Master. The Denominational School Board subsidised the School to the amount of £310 a year: £100 for the English Master, £100 for the Hebrew Master, £40 towards an assistant and £50 towards the rent. The first English Master appointed was John Schutt, a non-Jew,<sup>578</sup> who employed the principles known as the Denominational School System, which included religious subjects on the syllabus as well as secular lessons.<sup>580</sup>

About July, 1862, the Government decided to alter the educational system and introduced a new Common School Act, directed by Commissioners who formed a "Board of Education." On his own account, the Premier, the Hon. John O'Shannassy, arranged for Jews to be put on the same footing as other denominations.<sup>581</sup> As a representative of the Jewish community the Government intended electing Isaac Hart as one of the Commissioners, but the East Melbourne Congregation protested. They desired all



congregations to be consulted with the view of choosing a man enjoying the full confidence of the entire community. They recommended Dr. S. Ifla.<sup>582</sup> Some of the Christian denominations also opposed Hart's appointment. The number of Commissioners had been reduced from 11 to five, and they desired their own representatives elected.<sup>583</sup> Hart, however, retained the post and the Governor confirmed his appointment in the *Gazette*. The East Melbourne Congregation then stated that it did not object to Isaac Hart, but felt the Chief Secretary should have consulted them as promised before the appointment was made final.<sup>584</sup>

Another clause in the Common School Act caused considerable anxiety to the Local Board and the community. According to the clause, no school with less than a daily attendance for six months of 60 scholars could benefit by the Government grant,<sup>585</sup> and once a school closed, if another school existed within a radius of two miles, then if the school previously closed re-opened, it would not receive the subsidy.<sup>586</sup> Only 40 pupils attended the West Melbourne Grammar School, and if it did not increase its numbers by the end of June, 1863, it stood to lose the Government grant. A public meeting of the community opposed Edward Cohen's suggestion of turning the school into an establishment under the National System, as the meeting stated it desired to make the Jewish religion a prominent feature of the school studies. The meeting appointed a committee to assist the Local Board, who pledged themselves to canvass Jewish parents in order to induce them to send their children to the Grammar School.<sup>587</sup> From the report of the meeting in the press, an impression must have been gained that the school prohibited Gentiles attending, an impression which Isaac Lyons, the chairman of the meeting, publicly refuted by stating the school had always been open to Christians, some of whom attended, and that the Headmaster himself was a member of the Christian faith.<sup>588</sup>

At the end of 1863, the required number of 60 pupils had not been reached. The school also was without funds to its credit.<sup>589</sup> The Synagogue Committee believed that if about £80 could be found it would tide things over, and an attempt would be made to introduce a bill in Parliament to lessen the compulsory average attendance.<sup>590</sup> It also resolved to call a public meeting of the whole community

to discuss the problem. The meeting heard a suggestion that if Rintel could be induced to amalgamate his school it would augment the number of pupils. On the expectation of some recompense,<sup>591</sup> Rintel agreed to transfer his scholars, and without expectation of recompense he offered to teach Hebrew gratuitously in order to reduce expenses. The meeting, highly pleased with the result, accorded Rintel a hearty vote of thanks and pledged itself to assist in the continuance of the school under the reigning arrangements.<sup>592</sup> All their efforts, however, failed to gain the required number of pupils—probably Rintel's pupils lived too far from the West Melbourne Grammar School. At another meeting held a month later, the Chairman reluctantly announced that the connection between the West Melbourne Grammar School and the Government Board of Education had ceased.<sup>593</sup>

Nothing daunted, the meeting appointed a committee of ten to solicit aid for the school, and, going out in pairs over the city, the committee collected over £90.<sup>594</sup> One of the committee had solicited aid from Christians, and his colleagues decided that it would not be desirable to solicit subscriptions other than from Jews.<sup>595</sup> At a subsequent meeting, a questioner enquired if the committee of ten superseded the Local Board. The Chairman told him the committee was only formed for the purpose of collecting subscriptions and could not interfere with the Local Board, which conducted the affairs of the school.<sup>596</sup> In spite of the money collected, the Local Board informed the collecting body that the Board had come to the decision "that it was impracticable to carry on" as no funds existed to pay the £60 debt and because of the paucity of pupils.<sup>597</sup> The collecting committee contended that the £90 would allow the school to continue for another six months, by which time further sums could be acquired.<sup>598</sup> It would also write to the Synagogues, asking them to contribute £100 between them for the payment of the Hebrew Master. In any case, the collecting committee did persuade the Local Board to continue, and the West Melbourne Grammar School, granted a reprieve, settled down to work once more. That the school did continue under such difficulties is proof that there were many in the community who understood that the future of the community depended upon its educational establishments.

## THE BETH DIN

Another important communal institution was established in this period—a Beth Din or Ecclesiastical Court. A Beth Din has to consist of a minimum of three members, experts in Jewish law, with one of them acting as Ab Beth Din or Chairman, who has to be a Jewish legal authority. When Rintel was with the Melbourne Congregation he attempted to establish a Beth Din, and the Committee told him to consult Pulver and to write to the Chief Rabbi.<sup>599</sup> The Chief Rabbi, however, insisted on his right to withhold permission to form a Beth Din. Probably, although he admired Rintel, he did not consider him a sufficient authority in Jewish law.

With the growth of the community, the need of a Beth Din became greater. The writing of a Jewish divorce can only be carried out under the supervision of a Beth Din, with an authority at its head. As early as 1830, the Chief Rabbi sent out a deputy as a special envoy from England for the sole purpose of arranging a divorce for a Jewish woman in Australia.<sup>600</sup> Moreover, the Chief Rabbi had now sanctioned a number of conversions which also could only be carried out by a Beth Din. When the Chief Rabbi sent out Rabbi Samuel Herman to Ballarat, at the age of nearly 70, he apparently did not think of him as serving only in Ballarat, but as a man who was to serve the whole of Victoria. Ballarat may not have been satisfied with Herman, but the Chief Rabbi must have been very satisfied that his flock in Victoria had an authority in its midst to decide questions of Jewish law and to arrange divorces and conversions if necessary. When Herman arrived, the Chief Rabbi permitted the formation of a Local Beth Din, the first authorised by him to serve outside London.<sup>601</sup> Herman's colleagues on this institution were Rintel and Pulver. The main purpose of the Ecclesiastical Court was to make proselytes whenever necessary, but the Chief Rabbi still insisted that his authority must first be given before any proselytes could be admitted into the pale of Judaism.<sup>602</sup> Herman may have been Ab Beth Din, but Rintel ruled. Herman could not write English properly and old age lay heavily upon him.

As Herman lived in Ballarat and the other two members of the Beth Din in Melbourne, the newly formed body did not function smoothly. Once Rintel and Pulver wrote jointly to the Ballarat Congregation expressing sur-

prise that the Synagogue had asked for £5/5/- before it would allow Herman to come to Melbourne to arrange a Get for a woman in Poland. The husband lived in Melbourne with a Gentile woman and would not support his wife, but was willing to give her a Get. "We have got him," wrote the Beth Din, "he is a great scamp. The woman can marry again if he signs the papers. Send Telegraph." The word telegraph was heavily underlined. It was an innovation in 1864. "If you insist on £5/5/- we shall make a collection and pay it." The Ballarat Congregation could not deny such a call, and Herman came to Melbourne and arranged the Get, and the terrible scamp left the Gentile woman, married a Jewish lady and became a highly respected honorary official of the Melbourne Congregation.<sup>603</sup>

### CONVERSIONS

With the formation of the Beth Din the whole position in regard to proselytes changed. Before, at the Melbourne Congregation, permission had to be gained, firstly, from the Chief Rabbi and then from the Board of Management, and it depended upon the attitude of the members of the Committee if an application for proselytisation succeeded or not. When a Victorian woman in 1853 went over to Hobart and was about to be made a proselyte by the newly-appointed Minister of the Hobart Congregation, Rabbi Herman Hoelzel, the Melbourne Congregation vigorously opposed his right to make conversions and informed him that it opposed conversions on principle.<sup>604</sup> It maintained this attitude for many years.

When Rintel left the Melbourne Congregation he began to proselytise Christian women. Nathaniel Levi earnestly urged the Committee to "make a move to discountenance the emboldened conduct" of the person whose actions would lead to serious consequences "as other faiths will believe we are seeking proselytes."<sup>605</sup> Levi made various allegations against "Rintel and his accomplices." For £25, he stated, they had proselytised a woman living with a Jewish man and by whom she had had issue; a depraved woman living with a Jewish man was about to be made a proselyte; another woman was soon "going through the performance" for which Rintel would receive £50; a lady of Ballarat married to a Jew in church "was about to be made for £100." The Melbourne Congregation

informed the Chief Rabbi that Rintel had formed a Beth Din with Joseph Avinsky and a Mr. Roate, and desired advice as to the measures to be taken "to suppress the exercise of this unauthorised office."<sup>606</sup> Although the Chief Rabbi had no legal authority over Rintel, he still had sufficient influence over him for Rintel to listen to his requests, and when the Chief Rabbi asked him to stop making conversions unless he had his express permission, Rintel obeyed temporarily.

When the East Melbourne Congregation started paying Rintel a salary, the Congregation considered immediately it now had the right to recommend proselytes, and before Rintel made a proselyte he now had to listen to the opinion of his Committee. About 1862, Rintel must have recommended making proselytes and must have been receiving money for it, because in that year a Rabbi Saphir, who had come to Victoria to collect money for the poor in Jerusalem, made a woman a proselyte when in Bendigo. He was assisted by the local minister and another pious gentleman. When Saphir came to Melbourne he informed Rintel that he had converted the woman. Rintel considered Saphir had interfered with his livelihood,<sup>607</sup> and he desired to inform all congregations about the type of man he thought Saphir to be. Saphir stated in a book he wrote about his experiences that Rintel "spread a rumour around the town that I had not obeyed Jewish law, and he sent an accusation concerning me to the Chief Rabbi in England. He (Rintel) should have known that he had no rabbinical diploma and was teaching without authority. The Chief Rabbi wrote to me to the effect that my conversions were void and that they could not be recognised as proselytes. I sent him my considered answer and gave him my opinion that the proselytes must be recognised."

The answer which Saphir sent to the Chief Rabbi stamped him as a learned scholar of outstanding ability. His arguments have strength and are substantiated by quotations and precedent. He answers with dignity and respect, and points out that though he is reluctant to argue with a decision of the Chief Rabbi, yet the Jewish law is open to all and it is each man's right to state his opinions and views.<sup>607</sup>

With the formation of the Beth Din, the congregational committees lost the right of recommending the admission of proselytes,<sup>608</sup> but the Melbourne Congregation

sent a strong letter to each of the three members of the Beth Din informing them of their strong opposition to the admission of proselytes.<sup>609</sup> Pulver suggested the formation of a synagogue sub-committee to assist the Beth Din to make recommendations to them.<sup>610</sup> The Synagogues did not accept the suggestion, for it would have meant that they really had no authority whatsoever but would have to shoulder the blame whenever a proselyte was accepted against the wishes of the general public. In any case, stated the Melbourne Congregation, "their opposition extended to the admission of all proselytes."<sup>611</sup> This statement brought a reply from Herman "that he would be guided in his acts by the other members of the Beth Din." This reply no doubt was inspired by Rintel.

Although the Victorian Jewish communities had great trouble over the conversion of Christians to Jews, it met with little worry over the conversion of Jews to Christians. When it did, it took quick steps to combat it. Myers heard that a Jewish inmate in the Benevolent Asylum was about to change his religion. He immediately informed his Committee, who took quick steps to prevent the conversion.<sup>612</sup>

### THE MIKVAH

The building of a Mikvah also concerned the minds of the new migrants. In Jewish family life the monthly immersion of Jewish married women in the ritual bath is considered an absolute necessity. Moreover, a Mikvah is needed for conversion ceremonies, because a conversion without immersion is invalid. When water was reticulated through the city, Rintel, when at the Melbourne Congregation, on behalf of a committee, urged the building of a Mikvah and requested the use of the Vestry of the Synagogue as a temporary Mikvah room,<sup>613</sup> but the Committee, whilst not objecting to the building of a Mikvah, would not accede to part with its Vestry.<sup>614</sup> Later, the East Melbourne Synagogue, where the more orthodox attended, built a Mikvah in conjunction with Mr. Meyel—a non-Jew—in Little Collins Street for the use of its members and for the purpose of conversions.<sup>615</sup>

Orthodox brides on their wedding day would also attend the Mikvah. A feature of marriages in Victoria was that all weddings, except those of widows and divorcees, took place on Sundays or Wednesdays.<sup>616</sup> This followed a very ancient Jewish practice introduced thousands of years

ago, when it was usual for Jewish courts of law to sit on Mondays and Thursdays. If a bridegroom had a complaint to make against the chastity of his bride, he would bring her before the court on the morning following the marriage.

### THE PROBLEM OF CHILDREN OF GENTILE MOTHERS

Another thorny problem which still confronted the Beth Din concerned the circumcision and the conversion of children of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers. When the problem arose at the East Melbourne Congregation on the demand of a member that his son should be circumcised, a motion was moved in Committee that if it was not against the Din, Rintel be permitted to do so. An amendment desired complete prohibition. Rintel voted for the motion, his view being that if no blessing or ceremony accompanied the circumcision, no Din existed to prohibit the operation; it did not constitute a religious ceremony. The opposition viewed the abuse which such a practice could create as dangerous to the welfare of the community. There were four votes for the motion and four for the amendment; the chairman gave his casting vote for the amendment and the prohibition of the ceremony.<sup>617</sup> For some strange reason, Rintel refused to circumcise the child of a non-Jewish father and a Jewish mother unless the Committee gave him permission to do so, which they later unhesitatingly granted.<sup>618</sup> Although there were a number of orthodox Jewish doctors in Melbourne, authorised Mohelim only conducted circumcision ceremonies.

Rintel adopted a different attitude altogether regarding the conversion of children of Jewish fathers and non-Jewish mothers. The Chief Rabbi authorised their conversion, except the issue of couples married by a Christian clergyman, and then the case, in his opinion, had to be judged on its merits. Rintel flatly refused to admit these children, probably on the grounds put by some of the commentators of Jewish law who strictly require persons to be of mature age before conversion. The Chief Rabbi threatened to depose Rintel from the Beth Din and appoint someone else if he persisted in his attitude, but Rintel remained adamant and stated that Jewish law prohibited such conversions and the Chief Rabbi could not override Jewish law. Rintel remained on the Beth Din.<sup>619</sup>

## CHAPTER 6

## ENGLISHMEN AND FOREIGNERS

When the immigrants from eastern Europe came to Melbourne they met the proud, autocratic and strong-minded leaders of the community, a type of Jew they had never encountered before. They were unaccustomed to the strictness and severity with which the committees governed their synagogues. They had never heard of members being fined for breaking the laws of their congregations. In their own countries, when a person refused a call to the Reading of the Law, it may have been considered impolite, but they were not prepared for the drastic steps which the Melbourne Congregation took in such a case when it cancelled all the rights of one of its members until he humbly apologised.<sup>620</sup> Communal leaders abroad would have replied in a softer tone than the Melbourne Synagogue Committee who, when a member asked for relief from his synagogal debts, replied they had no funds for charitable purposes and would send his letter to the Philanthropic Society.<sup>621</sup> No doubt the newcomers regarded the executive of the Melbourne Congregation with suspicion when they heard it had written to the Emigration Society in London that assisted migrants should be British-born Jews only.<sup>622</sup> Some of the migrants felt as if they were not welcome, because they could not obtain privileged membership in the Synagogue. A section of them formed themselves into a committee and demanded a conference with the Committee of the Congregation.<sup>623</sup> The communal leaders may have been proud and severe in carrying out the law, but they would have revolted at injustice or the thought that they were considered unjust. Not knowing this, the new migrants were rather surprised when, instead of a hostile, antagonistic reception, they were received most sympathetically and given to understand that older members had a natural prior right to seats in the new Synagogue and the honour with which privileged membership should be regarded. A probation period was required so that enquiries could be made as to the credentials of each applicant. To make it easier for newcomers to become privileged members, the entrance fee was reduced from £5/5/- to £2/2/-. However, with so many immigrants pouring in to Melbourne about whom nothing was known, the Committee decided not to accept written applications alone,



but to interview each applicant personally. Pleased with the reception of their meeting, the non-privileged members sent the residue of their fighting fund as a donation to the Philanthropic Society. An idea as to how some regarded them is hinted at in the entry of this donation in the Society's books. It read as having received £4/3/- from the Rebels' Fund, but a discreet scribe crossed out the words, Rebels' Fund, and substituted Non-Privileged Members.<sup>625</sup>

In Ballarat, the division at first between the Englishmen and eastern Europeans was more sharply divided. The few English Jews, who included the Minister, David Isaacs, did not always see eye to eye with the others. At one meeting a gentleman shouted with lofty scorn, "I am an Englishman whilst you are a mob of foreign refugees." The feud between the two factions partly led to the resignation of the Secretary and the Minister. "Because Isaacs is an Englishman," wrote Benjamin, "some of the foreign Jews think he can do nothing right." Eventually, the feeling aroused by the resignation of Isaacs subsided, and the relationship between the two parties seemed to improve.<sup>626</sup>

## TWO RIVAL CONGREGATIONS

Because the eastern European Jews were not altogether comfortable with the English Jews, they joined Rintel's Congregation, which was situated in the district where they lived and where fees were cheaper. Although Rintel was born in Scotland,<sup>627</sup> he understood the eastern Europeans. His own father had come from Poland, and he himself had received the type of education which the eastern Europeans were accustomed to receive. Initially, the dispute between Rintel and his old Congregation affected the relationship between the members of the two congregations. The Melbourne Congregation at first acted bitterly against Rintel. Besides its action in not allowing him to use the Metahar House on the Melbourne General Cemetery, and not allowing a reduction in the price of meat for the poorer members of Rintel's Synagogue, it informed the Registrar-General that Rintel no longer served as its Minister, thereby trying to deprive Rintel from holding ministerial office.<sup>628</sup> Rintel's making of proselytes did not help the situation, nor did the effort of the Melbourne Congregation in trying to prevent the East

Melbourne Synagogue receiving a grant of land from the Government.<sup>629</sup>

However, in May, 1859, S. de Young suggested that five gentlemen be appointed to create peace between the Congregations.<sup>630</sup> With the first steps taken to heal the breach, the enmity between the two Congregations lessened and often their relationship became amazingly cordial, whilst occasionally old prejudices, due to jealousy and over-long memories, caused tempers to flare up and turned near harmony to discord. Rintel, for his part, displayed good grace, and always showed willingness to co-operate. He even volunteered to abandon his own school for the improvement of the school attached to the Melbourne Congregation. He could afford to be gracious, for his Synagogue had become a power in the community, and a private source of income made him almost independent of any stipend offered him. Benign peace almost reigned when the sub-committees of the respective bodies met for the purpose of harmony, and the Melbourne Congregation presented East Melbourne Synagogue with tablets of the Royal Prayer,<sup>631</sup> and Rintel, with his beautiful Hebrew handwriting, inscribed certain prayers for the sister Congregation.<sup>632</sup> Rintel's suggestion for the formation of a combined sub-committee to present an address of congratulation to the Prince of Wales on his marriage met with warm approval,<sup>633</sup> and when the East Melbourne Congregation dedicated its completed Synagogue in Stephen Street in March, 1863, the President and Committee of the Melbourne Congregation attended.<sup>634</sup> Nevertheless, an element of rivalry always existed between the two Congregations, and the one in West Melbourne was known as the "English Shool," whilst the one in East Melbourne was called the "Foreign Shool."

#### THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MELBOURNE AND THE PROVINCES

Although the provincial communities retained their own autonomy, they looked to the Melbourne Congregation, as the largest Synagogue in Victoria, for occasional advice and on the whole for leadership as well. Whenever it became necessary for all the congregations to combine, the Melbourne Congregation took the lead, as it did when Victorian Jewry presented addresses of loyalty to Governors appointed to the Colony.<sup>635</sup> It never failed in this respect.

When it came to practical assistance, however, the Melbourne Congregation was not so ready with its help. When the Sandhurst community asked the Melbourne Congregation to present a Memorial to the Governor on its behalf for a grant of land for a Synagogue, the Melbourne Congregation replied it "could not interfere in the matter in its official capacity."<sup>636</sup> The Ballarat community requested a donation from the Melbourne Congregation when it built its Synagogue. It refused. It stated it had no funds.<sup>637</sup> Yet, the Melbourne Synagogues always expected good payment for any requisites sent to the country communities for the High Holy Days.<sup>638</sup>

### INTER-COLONIAL RELATIONSHIP

Although the Victorian communities were comparatively close to the other Australian colonies, they had little to do with them and preferred to deal on any communal or religious matter direct with England. Victorian Jewry would not tolerate any interference from any other community in Australia. When the Hobart Congregation appointed Rabbi Herman Hoelzel in 1853, he had hopes of establishing Hebrew schools throughout Australia and assumed the title of Presiding Rabbi for the Australian Colonies. The Melbourne Congregation strongly objected to Hoelzel's assumption of this office, and told him it was not aware that such a post existed.<sup>639</sup>

### VICTORIA AND THE MOTHER COUNTRY

Though many migrants came to Victoria from eastern Europe, the influence of England with the communities remained as strong as ever. The leadership of all the communities was in the hands of Englishmen, as they could speak the language and knew the customs better than the newcomers, and were thus enabled to overcome problems more easily than the non-English-speaking migrants. Even in the Congregation to which most of the eastern European migrants belonged, Rintel, the Minister, and Henri J. Hart,<sup>640</sup> the chief founder, were born in Britain. This, together with the ties of the general population with England, helped the Jewish communities to look to England for their ministers and Shoetim and to the recognition of the Chief Rabbi as their spiritual head, although he had no legal authority over them, Jewish or otherwise. So

strong was the bond with England that in the early months of the gold discoveries, the Jews in Victoria, with typical colonial generosity, decided to form a committee, with Angel Ellis as Secretary, "in order to obtain gold dust subscriptions towards a testimonial to be forwarded to the Chief Rabbi, to testify to the estimation in which he was held by the Jews in Melbourne and in appreciation of his zeal and perseverance in the Cause of Religion and Education."<sup>641</sup> Over 40 ounces of gold were sent to London to be made into a Kiddush cup, which was in due course presented to him by old Victorian residents. The Chief Rabbi was deeply moved by the gesture which motivated the presentation.<sup>642</sup>

His influence was certainly marked. The Local Beth Din in Melbourne was founded under his authorisation. Proselytes in Victoria had to receive his sanction. Congregations desired his certificate as to the fitness of officers. Whenever he called for an appeal,<sup>643</sup> Jewish or non-Jewish, the call was immediately answered in some way or another. When the Chief Rabbi appealed for the poor of Lancashire, an indignant member asked in the press why the President of the Melbourne Congregation was doing nothing about it.<sup>644</sup> The latter replied that he had called his committee together as soon as he had received the call, and the committee decided it was "undesirable to render ourselves as Jews conspicuous in the matter, and to claim an amount of ostentation your 'philanthropic' correspondent seems so anxious for; but as citizens and Britons we have joined with our fellow colonists in evincing our benevolence and would continue to do so for any other equally worthy object."<sup>645</sup>

The Melbourne Congregation desired to maintain other liaisons with England apart from the Chief Rabbi. Solomon Benjamin, David Benjamin and Asher Hymen Hart, all founders of the Victorian Jewish community, acted as a London Committee on its behalf.<sup>646</sup> It also wished to be represented on the London Board of Deputies and appointed A. H. Hart as its delegate,<sup>647</sup> and though this innovation would have been welcomed in England, it was found impossible to fulfil owing to the Constitution of the Board of Deputies precluding colonial<sup>648</sup> representation. The sub-committee appointed to report on the question stated, "that the Board had never failed to give its best attention to all matters affecting the Colonies."<sup>649</sup>

## SIR MOSES MONTEFIORE

Sir Moses Montefiore was another English Jew who had considerable influence over the Jews in Victoria. This man, who had captured the hearts and minds of Jews all over the world and of many non-Jews, especially in England, would also be hearkened to whenever he made a call on behalf of suffering Jews in different parts of the globe.<sup>650</sup> He had made a practice from time to time of having Scrolls of the Law written for him and sending them to different countries and communities in which he was interested or connected. He sent one to the Melbourne Congregation.<sup>651</sup> It came through his cousin, Jacob Montefiore, residing then in Melbourne, who was one of the Commissioners appointed by the British Government to introduce the Wakefield Scheme in South Australia. When Lady Montefiore died, the Jews in Victoria, as a token of esteem, collected a goodly sum towards the Lady Montefiore Memorial Fund.<sup>652</sup>

## VICTORIA AND ISRAEL

A remarkable link existed between the Jews of Victoria and the Holy Land. Half a century before the birth of political Zionism, Jews in Victoria were contributing towards the upkeep of Israel. More remarkable still is the fact that the Jews who supported it were chiefly the men who were born in England, where there was no religious persecution. It all stemmed from their devotion to their prayers, in which they hoped for the restoration of Zion. A contributor to the press challenged the supporters of Israel. He stated that though the Jews as a people clung to the return to the soil from which they sprang, they long ago abandoned the desire of its practical accomplishment.<sup>653</sup> He asked would Rothschild give up all his wealth in order to live in the unattractive city of Jerusalem. Since they are respected, he asked again, "What possible motive, beyond the hope of embodying a barren idea, could actuate them in the alleged wish to return to Jerusalem?" "I have spoken with many intelligent Jews on the subject," he continues, "and they declare that no greater calamity could come to them than to be obliged to repossess themselves of that very undesirable country known as the Holy Land." The replies to the correspondent are revealing, and reflect the ideas of a great many of the English Jews then in Victoria. One, in a lengthy reply, stated that, although

in humble circumstances, he wished to return to the land of his forefathers.<sup>654</sup> Angel Ellis, also born in England, and an important official of the Gas Company in Melbourne, doubted the statement of the correspondent that Jews said they did not desire to repossess the Holy Land.<sup>655</sup> From the tone of the letters in the press, the welcome given to emissaries from Israel and the monetary success of their missions, it is probable that if a political Zionist movement would have started in Victoria in that period it would have been successful.

The first call for the Holy Land in Melbourne in 1854 indicated the religious and benevolent character of the ties with Israel. Edward Cohen, the President of the Melbourne Congregation and who later became a Cabinet Minister in the Victorian Government, read in the *Times* of the distress of the Jews in Jerusalem. He called a public meeting on his own accord,<sup>656</sup> which resulted in a subscription of over £2,500, an amazing amount in that period for such a small community.<sup>657</sup>

When Edward Cohen forwarded the money to Sir Moses Montefiore he sent an accompanying letter. It is historic. In it Cohen expresses to Sir Moses the hope that the money raised would not only be devoted for temporary relief but for a scheme for some permanent alleviation of their needs.<sup>657</sup> He suggested that the poor be trained and directed towards agricultural pursuits. Sir Moses Montefiore has sometimes been acclaimed as the philanthropist who advocated agricultural settlement in the Holy Land, but from Edward Cohen's letter it is apparent that the scheme germinated in Victoria.

From about 1856, the first of an almost endless line of emissaries from Jerusalem and the Holy Land came out to Victoria to collect money for some cause or other in Israel. They never went away empty handed. Rabbi Hayim Zvee Sneersohn, who came at the end of 1861, held an extraordinary campaign.<sup>658</sup> It was backed by the *Argus*, which gave him a great deal of publicity.<sup>659</sup> The Dean of Melbourne held a meeting for him at St. Paul's, and helped him considerably,<sup>660</sup> as did other notables, such as the Chief Justice, Sir William Stawell,<sup>661</sup> and the Rev. Dr. Cairns and the Rev. Seddon.<sup>660</sup> In the middle of his campaign, another emissary, Rabbi J. L. Saphir, arrived. He was a most able and talented man and a brilliant linguist, speaking Arabic, Hebrew, French, Spanish, Italian, Rus-

sian, German and Yiddish, and could make himself understood in English.<sup>662</sup> He wrote a book in Hebrew, which included his Australian experiences and some very keen observations concerning the country and its people. A little rivalry<sup>660</sup> took place between the committees who were helping the two emissaries, but they were both exceedingly learned men who sought no quarrel with each other. The favourable feeling amongst Jews and Gentiles concerning the prophecies of the resettlement of the Jews in the Holy Land, together with the ties the Jews believed connected them personally to it, ensured the emissaries that their call would not go unanswered. Both Sneersohn and Saphir were very successful.

## CHAPTER 7

### PRO-SEMITES

The very favourable and friendly attitude of Victorians towards Jews and the negligible amount of anti-Semitism can stamp this period as one which can be called pro-Semitic. The active help of the Christian community and the press in Sneersohn's appeal for Zion is but one example.<sup>660</sup> The Dean of Melbourne frequently spoke of the Jews and their destiny according to the Scriptures in a praiseworthy manner.<sup>663</sup> Many of the notables of the city attended annual dinners of the congregations or of the philanthropic societies, and would speak of the happy relationship between Jews and Gentiles.<sup>664</sup> Whenever a synagogue was consecrated in town or in the country, the local dignitaries would be invited, and would attend. Indeed, the sincere brotherhood, friendliness and the desire for co-operation prevailed to an outstanding degree. An example of the prevailing sentiment can be estimated from a letter published by the *Star* (Ballarat). In one of its issues it stated that David Davis, a Jew, had been charged with stealing £5 from a Chinaman. A few days later it published the following letter:—<sup>665</sup>

Sir,

How can you reconcile it with your protestations of liberty and the high moral tone which characterises your journal, that you have, in reporting the case of a party named Davis, headed it "Davis, a Jew."

Why do you mention the creed of that individual where there is not another instance in your paper in reporting other trials, police reports, etc., all of them either cases of cheating, drunkenness and

cruelty, in which you have given a nominal creed ? You have therefore grossly libelled the Jews as a body in the same way as you would libel Christians had you spoken of the many cases of perjury as Christian perjurers, as neither religion offers incentive to crime. You foster a vile prejudice indiscriminately against those members of the Jewish faith who have no more sympathy with crime and criminals than you have.

A Jew.

To which the *Star* replied :—<sup>666</sup>

The expression entirely escaped our notice otherwise it would not have appeared. He very much mistakes us if he thinks we desire to cast a slight upon the creed of anyone Jew or Gentile. We may be allowed to add that if our correspondent had been a little more moderate in his remarks regarding that which he might have known was as likely to be an oversight as anything else, he would have secured a little more of our sympathy for the unintentional slight, than we feel now disposed to give him.

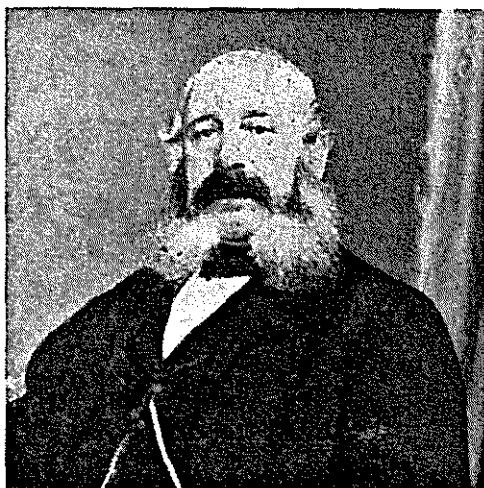
There were exceptions to this general goodwill between Jews and Gentiles shown by the general public and the press, as when the *Portland Guardian*, in one of its columns, wrote with pride about the "visit from a real 'Ebrew Jew' with a lot of jewellery, who disposed of his trinkets by raffle. A set of dice well balanced with lead was produced and the Israelite lost every throw."<sup>667</sup> Charles Dyte once penned a most vigorous protest when the Crown Prosecutor, John Foster McCreight, attacked German Jews in a case when a Jew was found guilty of obtaining money under false pretences and possessing wrong weights. Dyte did not mince his words, and pointed out the rarity of Jews offending the civil code.<sup>668</sup> Some of the London Jews may have been annoyed with the magistrate, who fined them for opening their shops on Sunday, but did not regard it as a prejudiced judgment. They thought they should be permitted to do in Melbourne that which was common practice in London, where orthodox Jews who closed on Saturday were allowed to open on Sunday.<sup>669</sup>

### CIVICS

The Jews reciprocated the goodwill shown towards them both publicly and privately. They excelled in the collections for funds, especially for relief purposes.<sup>670</sup> In the life of the various communities they generally desired to serve from a sense of duty and gratitude rather than for gain and honour. There were many who, because of their natural ability, background, upbringing and personality, won popularity and the highest honours which their cities and municipalities could give them. Edward Cohen served



the Melbourne City Council well, and was elected as Mayor for the year 1862-1863.<sup>671</sup> In Ballarat East, Charles Dyte also gained the highest civic honour.<sup>672</sup> Simeon Cohen lost the Mayoralty of Fitzroy by the toss of a coin. In his third term on the Fitzroy Council, he and A. Falkoner contended for the position as Mayor, and between them they decided it would save a great deal of trouble if they came to a decision by spinning a coin. Falkoner won.<sup>673</sup> In many of the country places, the Jews served on the borough and shire councils, and gave of their best for the public weal.



MOSES BENJAMIN

The leaders of the various Jewish communities gave an excellent lead to their co-religionists by their support of public institutions, especially hospitals. A general meeting in January, 1861, of the Melbourne Hospital appointed Edward Cohen as a Trustee and as Hon. Treasurer, a post which he retained for over sixteen years.<sup>674</sup> Lewis Joseph and Isaac Hart sat on the Committee, and H. J. Hart, Rev. E. M. Myers and E. F. Sichel often attended hospital meetings and participated in its discussions.<sup>675</sup> A. Dimant, an early settler in Ballarat, laboured earnestly to establish the Ballarat Benevolent and Visiting Association. In fact,

it can be stated that the freedom and goodwill enjoyed by the Jews in Victoria in this period helped in the upbuilding of the Colony and the character it was to take.

### THE EUREKA STOCKADE

The love of freedom of the Jewish people ensures that whenever a cause for liberty is at stake and a number of Jews are in the vicinity that some of them will be associated with the movement. It occurred at the incident of the Eureka Stockade. Amongst the thirty "rebels" who lost their lives was Teddy Thonen, the lemonade man. He was the only Jew who took part in the actual fighting. He stood in front of the flag, cheering and shouting in his native German, when a bullet entered his mouth. He made a grotesque attempt to spit it out—but he dropped dead. He was only twenty-four years old.

The Eureka Stockade incident came to be regarded as a "fight for freedom." The miners and sympathisers held a meeting on Bakery Hill on 6th December, 1854, and passed a number of resolutions, which W. Levy, Henry Harris and Charles Dyte helped to frame.<sup>678</sup>

### JEWISH PARLIAMENTARY FRANCHISE

The liberty which the Jews themselves gained in England by being enabled to sit and vote in Parliament was also an occasion of celebration in Victoria. A large meeting assembled in October, 1858, to express its gratitude to Lord Lyndhurst and Lord John Russell for their able championship of the cause of religious liberty. It also congratulated Baron Lionel de Rothschild on being the first Jew to take his seat in the British Parliament.<sup>679</sup>

If a Jew would have been elected to the Victorian Parliament before 1858 there can be no doubt that he would have taken his seat. Jews in the colonies enjoyed greater liberties than they did in England. In fact, Saul Samuel had been elected for Roxburgh and Wellington in New South Wales, and on 7th November, 1854, took his seat in the New South Wales Legislative Council after having been sworn.<sup>725</sup> The form of the oath of allegiance which he took is not given in the account of the proceedings, but it is most unlikely that he took an oath which was not in accordance with the Jewish faith, since the Constitution Act permitted the taking of an affirmation instead

of an oath by those authorised to do so.<sup>726</sup> It was the form of oath which prevented Jews entering the British Parliament. The British Government was more lenient in the colonies. In 1835 it allowed a Jew to sit in the Assembly in Jamaica, and by 1849 eight of the fifty-seven seats in the Jamaican Assembly were held by Jews.<sup>727</sup>

There can be no doubt that the event in England stimulated Jews living in Victoria to seek parliamentary honours. These candidates were men who believed in equality and were determined to show by their prowess, conduct and demeanour that they were worthy of the electors' vote and the name of Jew which they bore. They commended themselves to the voters because of their forthrightness, sincerity, strong personalities and natural ability. Because of their education, their struggle for a livelihood in their youth in the seaport cities of England, their knowledge of the Englishman's character and their sense of justice gained from their religious background, they won popularity, and even when they lost an election they were worthy opponents. Religion was not merely a facade to these men. Many of them, like Edward Cohen, Nathaniel Levi and Charles Dyte, were leaders of their own communities and synagogues, who kept the Sabbath strictly. It meant, amongst other things, that they would not ride in a vehicle on a Saturday. They were men of whom any people would have been proud, and they not only kept the customs of their faith but lived according to the spirit of Jewish law.

These men also possessed a fine sense of humour, which was invaluable to them as politicians. In Nathaniel Levi's second attempt in December, 1860, for one of the Maryborough seats, the crowd made fun of his hooked nose, and he showed his wise generalship as a parliamentarian by accepting the non-acrimonious humour of the crowd in good part.<sup>680</sup> He defeated Ireland, the Attorney-General, and was the first Jew to enter Parliament in Victoria. A commentator wrote of him: "He is a reformer of the first water. According to his programme, after giving everything to everybody there would still be a large surplus. He is in favour of roads and bridges wherever required. The tariff is to be revised by reductions to the Governor and Ministers. This, he said, will effect the abolition of duties on tea and sugar. He wants abolition of gold export duty, the construction of reservoirs, cheap postage, secular

education and law reform. In fact, there is not a question agitating the political world on which Mr. Levi is not prepared at once to legislate."<sup>681</sup>

Both in the first attempt in 1859<sup>682</sup> and in the second attempt for the Maryborough seat, fights and skirmishes broke out between the supporters of the candidates.<sup>683</sup> They were not of an anti-Semitic nature. Levi jealously guarded the honour of the Jewish name. When he was told that Mr. Sullivan made derogatory remarks about Jews during a parliamentary debate, he called on him from the floor of the house and requested to know if the statement was true or not. Mr. Sullivan denied the charge and stated he had said something about jewels which was mistaken for a remark about Jews.<sup>684</sup>

Daniel Tallerman was just the type of man who would stand for Parliament as soon as the Jewish position was perfectly clear. He stood for the Ararat seat in 1859, but was defeated. The local newspaper described him as "a young man generally reputed a thorough man of business, not destitute of resources and belonging to the Jewish persuasion."<sup>685</sup>

A sense of humour also revealed itself in John de Pass, who in 1861 stood for two seats, unsuccessfully, in the same election—Williamstown<sup>686</sup> and Maryborough.<sup>687</sup> At the Williamstown hustings a voter desired to know the reason for de Pass bringing out railway engines for the Government at a cost of £400 each whilst the railway company brought them out at £200 each. De Pass replied that the voter knew more about the matter than he did, but he surmised that the engines were twice as large.<sup>688</sup>

Charles Dyte nominated for Ballarat East in the same election, when he introduced a new feature in electioneering campaigns. A well-known individual, "Billy Lungs," stood on the footpath, soliciting names for a requisition for Dyte to stand for Parliament. "Novel but scarcely an improvement," said the press, "and surely this was not with Dyte's permission?"<sup>689</sup> The "Billy Lungs" referred to was none else than Charles Dyte's brother, Edward, a public crier and often referred to as Charles Dyte's shadow. Before the election, Charles Dyte retired from the contest.<sup>690</sup>

The defeat of Julius Vogel<sup>691</sup> at Avoca in the same election led him to the momentous decision to go to New Zealand, where he eventually became Prime Minister.<sup>692</sup>

A requisition of East Melbourne voters asked Edward Cohen to stand for Parliament, and at the hustings his advocacy for the gradual abolition of State Aid to religion nearly lost him pre-selection,<sup>693</sup> but at the election he won the seat very easily.<sup>694</sup> Cohen sat in the Ministerial cross benches, whilst Levi joined the opposition.<sup>695</sup>

The opposition forced another general election in 1864, and at the ensuing hustings H. Levi stood for Mornington, Nathaniel Levi for Maryborough, E. Cohen for East Melbourne, and Charles Dyte for Ballarat East.<sup>696</sup> By the time the final election came round, H. Levi dropped out and Nathaniel Levi claimed the second seat in the Maryborough constituency.<sup>697</sup> Dyte obtained the second seat in the Ballarat election,<sup>698</sup> and Cohen succeeded in defeating his opponent by four votes.<sup>699</sup> So in a Parliament of just over a hundred members there sat three Jews, prominent in civic affairs as well as being extremely active within their own congregations and communities.

### GOVERNMENT GRANTS

The election of Jews to Parliament gave them the courage to attempt to receive that which they considered their right as far as State Aid was concerned. They received Government grants of land for their cemeteries and synagogues, monetary grants for the Philanthropic Society, and for education through the Denominational Board. They saw no logical reason for the refusal of State Aid for religion in the same proportion as other denominations. If the Act needed alteration, then they were of the opinion it should be changed.

In March, 1852, the Melbourne Congregation passed a resolution to ask the Legislative Council to repeal Sir Richard Bourke's Church Act so as to allow it to receive £1,000 towards enlarging the Synagogue and Minister's dwelling, and for an annual stipend in support of the Minister. A similar resolution was passed in the following year.<sup>700</sup>

One Jew went so far as to write to the *Argus*, attempting to challenge the candidates of the first Victorian Legislative Assembly as to their attitude on the question. The *Argus* held that the Jews were entitled to State support, but went on to say it could not speak on behalf of candidates.<sup>701</sup>

The petition for State Aid in 1852 having failed,<sup>702</sup> Westgarth brought the matter before the Legislative Council in September, 1852, and the debate is full of interest because of the views expressed.<sup>703</sup> He, Miller, Fawkner and others put forward all the usual arguments in favour of the grant, but the Colonial Secretary opposed it, "although he felt the greatest interest in the Jews" because the motion opposed the existing law. To adopt it would answer no good purpose and would not confer any benefit upon the Jews. It would also form a most inconvenient precedent.

One member said if the grant was given to the Jews it might next be applied for by Hindus, Mohammedans and Socialists.

Mr. a'Beckett naively stated he thought its adoption could not be otherwise than distasteful to the people on whose behalf it was made. To come to that House for aid in reference to their religion would be regarded by the Jews as a slur, for the Jews considered that to receive such aid from the Gentiles would be, as it were, profanity.

The Chairman of Quarter Sessions believed that the question was purely one of principle, for he would not suppose that a body so respectful and wealthy as the Jews would be anxious to obtain a grant of £32. It had been said in a debate on the Jewish question at home, that Christianity was Judaism perfected, and that Judaism was Christianity commenced. He agreed with that sentiment, but till Judaism became Christianity he could not give assent to the principle involved in the motion. The law of the land initiated the principle that such grants were to be confined to Christian sects, and he was not prepared to extend that principle.

At the end of the debate, Dr. Westgarth wished to withdraw his motion, as it was pointed out that whether they passed the grant or not, it was against the law in the form it had been proposed in the motion. The Speaker pointed out that if the motion was withdrawn, it would be competent to bring the matter forward again during the Session, but if it was put to the vote and the motion lost, it would preclude the subject being introduced again for some time to come. The motion was put and lost by ten votes to eleven.

Early in 1854, the Legislative Council prepared the New Constitution Bill, and in supplying provision for

revenue for religious purposes excluded the Jews from participation. The share expected would have been far greater than £32, for the total sum set aside for religious purposes was increased ten times over the amount voted in 1852 and the Jews had also increased in proportion. The Jewish community was now most indignant, and it called a protest meeting which attracted a large crowd, including many Gentiles.<sup>704</sup> The speakers held forth heatedly in a high pitch of indignation, some suggesting an attempt had been made to revive a spirit of intolerance. Amongst other resolutions a motion was passed, "that it is dishonourable in public as in private life, to exclude one member from a participation with the rest, in the advantages to be derived from a general fund to which all contribute alike."

Another resolution stated:

That while we ask neither for toleration from those who are but on an equality with ourselves, nor favour from those who are bound to do us as much justice as every class (who do not teach subversion of good morals) we demand as our just right only, being good citizens and loyal subjects, that a share of the £50,000 voted for religious purposes be granted to us according to the proportion of our numbers, or that we be not compelled to bear an equal burden of the state with our Christian fellow colonists.

Pressure continued upon the members of the Legislative Council, and Mr. O'Shanassy a month later presented a petition from the Jews living in Geelong complaining of "their religious body being excluded from participation in the grant of £50,000 made in the New Constitution Bill in aid of religious worship and praying the removal of this grievance."<sup>705</sup>

The Government remained adamant in its contention that it had no power under the law to vote grants to religious bodies except to the four denominations mentioned in Sir Richard Bourke's Church Act, and the Jews hoped that their rights would be recognised as soon as responsible government would be introduced.

Whilst waiting, the Melbourne Congregation passed an important resolution, "that in consequence of the postponement by the British Parliament of the consideration of the New Constitution Bill, a petition be prepared and presented to the three states of the Empire, praying for the insertion of the words 'and Hebrew Persuasion' in the 63rd Clause."<sup>706</sup>

The reply to the last petition from Downing Street carried the matter a step forward towards success, for in it Lord John Russell stated:—

You will acquaint the petitioners that I have laid their petition before the Queen who was pleased to receive it very graciously, but that Her Majesty has not been advised to make any order thereupon. The wishes of the Colony, however, should they propose to admit the Jews to participate in the funds for Public Worship, will receive favourable attention.

This hopeful reply led to a deputation calling upon the Chief Secretary, who asked them to reduce their demands to writing, which they did.<sup>708</sup> He then suggested they wait until the new Legislature assembled, when they could very properly demand that their claims should be considered.<sup>709</sup> They did make application for a sum of £2,500 in December, 1856, but they were to be bitterly disappointed, for the application was refused.<sup>710</sup>

Many things which cannot be achieved by right are sometimes achieved by the soft word and by influence, and when in 1859 the Melbourne Congregation was in dire financial straits, a member suggested that a request should be made to the Government for permission to sell some of the Synagogue land facing Little Bourke Street, and if it refused, to insist upon a grant of money. He thought the time opportune.<sup>711</sup> His premise proved to be correct, for not long after the Chief Secretary wrote asking for an interview "to see the Jews of Melbourne"<sup>712</sup> regarding their petition to the Legislative Assembly, and on 8th February, 1859, Mr. Service moved in the Lower House that a sum of £2,000 be placed on the Estimates for the Jewish Synagogue in Melbourne.<sup>713</sup> Mr. Harker protested that other Synagogues existed in Victoria, and after a keen debate the special estimate received the approval of the House by 28 votes to 11.

The other congregations heard about the grant and insisted upon a share, and two days later, Mr. Service, amidst laughter, requested leave to substitute Victorian Jewish Community for the words, Jewish Synagogue in Melbourne, which passed without dissent.<sup>714</sup>

Alarm entered the congregational portals when the Treasury gave notification that it doubted if it could make the payment, as the sum had not been included in the Appropriation Act and the case had to be submitted to the law officers.<sup>715</sup> Their decision proclaimed, "that the amount which the Assembly in the Address to the Governor



requested may be placed on the Estimates in aid of the Jewish community but will not be available until voted by Parliament."<sup>716</sup>

After the necessary legislation had been passed, the Melbourne Congregation communicated with the other congregations requesting a membership list so as to estimate an equitable distribution of the grant.<sup>717</sup> The other congregations spurned the suggestion and preferred to deal



**BENJAMIN BENJAMIN.**

*Mayor of Melbourne, 1887-88 and 1888-89. He was knighted during his second term—the first Melbourne Mayor to get a knighthood.*

(From "The Bulletin," 23rd August, 1939.)

directly with the Government,<sup>718</sup> which gave £1,200 to the Melbourne Congregation, £300 to East Melbourne Congregation, £250 to the Geelong Congregation, £150 to the Ballarat Congregation and £100 to the Sandhurst Congregation.<sup>719</sup> A late objection to the Colonial Treasurer by the East Melbourne Synagogue gained it an extra £69<sup>720</sup> at the expense of the Melbourne Congregation.<sup>721</sup>

In the following year the Government made further large grants to the established Victorian synagogues,<sup>722</sup> but never did the Jews participate in the annual denominational distribution of £50,000 according to the Church Act, which only included sects of the Christian faith. All congregational grants to the Jews came through special votes. An attempt was made to remove this anomaly. In the Legislative Assembly a member asked the Chief Secretary if he intended Jews to participate proportionately in the £50,000 grant to religious bodies, to which he replied that the Government had introduced a bill to repeal the 53rd Section of the Constitutional Act so that the Jews could participate in the £50,000 grant, but the bill was thrown out in "another place." Since the Government recognised the rights of the Jews, it would, therefore, be their duty to place them on the Supplementary Lists.<sup>723</sup>

## CONCLUSION

With State Aid virtually granted, with Jews in Parliament and the communal institutions well established, the early pioneering days of the Jewish community can be said to have ended. It possessed or had ventured into practically every communal enterprise necessary for the conduct of a fairly large Jewish population. The community even boasted of a Beth Din, the only one in the British Empire outside London and which was authorised by the Chief Rabbi. He must have had great confidence in the ability of its members. It is a pity the local congregations did not respect their spiritual guides to the extent that the Chief Rabbi did. Perhaps the system inherited from the old country, where the minister was dependent financially upon the whims and fancies of committees, of which some members lacked culture and breeding, was a contributing factor to the sorry situation. The position was certainly aggravated by the lack of means. A few members of the community had made money during the pioneering days, but the vast majority were poor working men and women.

Yet, these men and women were capable of sacrifice. For the purpose of providing their children with the education that they thought proper and desirable, they built schools and engaged teachers at a cost which could have been nothing else but a financial burden. They

remembered their spiritual ties with the Holy Land and never failed to hearken to the cry of persecuted brethren overseas. Nevertheless, their bonds with Britain were as strong as any Victorian's. It was to England that they looked for spiritual guidance and leadership. Because they felt as Britons, they fought so stoutly for equality and for their rights as citizens. It almost became a creed of the Jews of Victoria to participate and contribute of their best towards the welfare and progress of their municipalities, their cities and their country. Their names are to be found associated with all noble causes. They were worthy sons and daughters of the Colony of Victoria.

FINIS

## REFERENCES

(For Reference Numbers see Part VII, pages 407-12)

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340	"	20	Jan.	49			2	6	
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343	112N	11	June	51			4	1	
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371	56C								
372	112N	3	Oct.	51			2	1	
373	111N	1	Dec.	60			4	6	
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379	112N	20	Aug.	63			5	3	
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382	112N	17	Jan.	52			2	1	
383	"	3	Feb.	52			1	1	
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390	112N	2	March	52			1	1	Supp'ment
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394	112N	5	Aug.	52			5	1	
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407	"				1	3	76		
408	113N	25	Aug.	71			2	1	
409	77E								Under Vogel
410	"								Under Farjeon
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413	106M	4	Dec.	59					
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415	112N	25	Jan.;	53			4	3	
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428	112N	9	May	62			2	6	
429	127N	14	Dec.	58					
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432	116N	4	Jan.	61					
433	134N	24	May	60			3	1	
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435	"	3	June	54			4	5	
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447	134N	18	March	61			4	2	
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450	83L	14	Feb.	55					
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473	78E				5		168	2	
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478	106M	19	Oct.	63					
479	87L	19	Jan.	57					
480	106M	12	Feb.	57					
481	"	8	March	57					
482	"	10	March	57					
483	83L	16	Nov.	57					
484	13B						44		
485	113N	19	June	74			346	1	
486	79J				1	5	148		
487	106M	14	Feb. ;	58					
488	"	6	June	58					
489	"	3	May	59					
490	83L	21	June	59					
491	87L	29	July	59					
492	13B						45		
493	95M	24	Aug.	63					
494	"	11	Aug.	61					
495	41C	7	Oct.	61					
496	95M	10	May	62					

Ref. No.	Cypher Ref.	Day	Month	Year 1800	Vol.	Part	Page	Col.	Remarks
497	"	21	Dec.	62					
498	106M	7	June	63					
499	95M	23	July	60					
500	106M	13	May	60					
501	"	4	June	54					And other refs.
502	"	21	Aug.	56					
503	"	11	July	55					
504	50C								
505	106M	2	March	56					
506	"	12	March	56					
507	87L	5	Dec.	56					
508	106M	3	July	57					
509	13B						44		
510	41C	1	Dec.	61					
511	95M	2	April	63					
512	"	27	Jan.	61					
513	106M	13	May	57					
514	"	24	Jan.	64					
515	"	16	Oct.	63					
516	111N	6	April	64			6	2	
517	106M	1	May	64					
518	"	10	July	64					
519	113N	27	Sept.	72			5	2	
520	72D			63			453		
521	3B						48		
522	2B						15		
523	121N	28	Feb.	79					
524	113N	6	Feb.	74					
525	106M	20	Feb.	53					
526	"	15	April	54					
527	83L	14	Sept.	53					
528	106M	12	March	54					
529	"	5	Aug.	54					
530	"	16	Oct.	54					
531	"	25	Oct.	54					
532	87L	13	July	55					
533	"	1	Aug.	58					
534	98M	10	July	64					
535	38C								
536	106M	11	April	68					
537	"	11	May	56					
538	"	3	Aug.	57					
539	112N	4	March	57			7	2	
540	106M	13	Nov.	59					
541	"	5	Aug.	60					
542	"	21	Oct.	60					
543	"	19	Feb.	61					
544	"	5	May	61					
545	"	9	Aug.	63					
546	95M	6	Oct.	61					
547	"	14	Feb.	64					
548	"	11	July	64					
549	106M	10	Jan.	58					
550	112N	4	March	57			7	2	

Ref. No.	Cypher Ref.	Day	Month	Year 1800	Vol.	Part	Page	Col.	Remarks
551	87L	2	March	59					
552	106M	20	Feb.	53					
553	"	10	July	55					
554	"	7	March	54					
555	83L	22	March	57					
556	87L	2	April	57					
557	83L	6	July	57					
558	"	16	Nov.	57					
559	106M	6	June	58					
560	"	8	Feb.	57					
561	83L	26	Aug.	57					
562	111N	13	March	61			7	3	
563	2B						4		
564	8B						696		
565	87L	22	July	55					
566	106M	7	Aug.	55					
567	"	15	July	55					
568	106M	13	Dec.	55					
569	"	30	Dec.	55					
570	"	17	Jan.	56					
571	"	2	March	56					
572	124N			56					
573	83L	27	June	59					
574	106M	9	Oct.	59					
575	"	28	July	61					
576	"	3	May	60					
577	36C	4	Aug.	98					
578	106M	27	Sept.	63					
579	125N	7	March	84			122	2	
580	97M	4	Oct.	63					
581	125N	7	March	84					
582	95M	10	Aug.	62					
583	125N	7	March	84					
584	95M	10	Aug.	62					
585	111N	1	Sept.	63			4	6	
586	106M	27	Sept.	63					
587	111N	1	Sept.	63			4	6	
588	"	2	Sept.	62			5	5	
589	106M	13	Sept.	63					
590	"	27	Sept.	63					
591	97M	4	Oct.	63					
592	"	11	Oct.	63					
593	"	15	Nov.	63					
594	94M	24	Nov.	63					
595	"	17	Nov.	63					
596	"	2	Dec.	63					
597	"	8	Jan.	64					
598	109M	28	Jan.	64					
599	106M	20	June	63					
600	79J				3	1	1		
601	76E						390		
602	106M	6	March	64					
603	2B						17		
604	106M	3	Dec.	54					



Ref. No.	Cypher Ref.	Day	Month	Year 1800	Vol.	Part	Page	Col.	Remarks
605	87L	14	Feb.	59					
606	83L	16	March	59					
607	40C	18	Mar.	1949			9	2	
608	106M	7	Feb.	64					
	95M	13	March	64					
609	106M	31	Jan.	64					
610	"	7	Feb.	64					
611	"	6	March	64					
612	"	28	Oct.	57					
613	89L	31	Oct.	56					
614	106M	5	Jan.	57					
615	95M	10	April	64					
616	38C								Various entries.
617	95M	8	Feb.	63					
618	"	13	Dec.	63					
619	2B						18		
620	106M	6	July	56					
621	"	19	Dec.	60					
622	83L	11	Sept.	57					
624	106M	18	March	55					
625	108M	11	Nov.	55					
626	2B						15		
623	83L	15	March	53					
627	76E						370		
628	106M	31	March	57					
629	113N	19	June	74					
630	106M	18	May	59					
631	95M	21	Aug.	61					
632	106M	18	Aug.	61					
633	"	17	May	63					
634	95M	8	Feb.	63					
635	111N	25	June	63			4	7	
636	83L	14	Feb.	55					
637	"	22	July	55					
638	106M	20	Sept.	55					
639	"	3	Dec.	54					
640	78E				6		243		
641	106M	1	July	52					Note at back of book.
642	79J								
643	83L	1			1	9	296		
644	112N	19	Oct.	51					
645	"	20	March	63			3	5	
646	106M	16	March	63					
647	"	3	Aug.	63					
648	87L	28	Nov.	55					
649	7B		Aug.	56					
650	83L	6					151		
651	79J		Tishri	54					
652	106M	7			1	2	42		
653	112N	4	Feb.	64					
654	"	8	Jan.	62			6	2	
655	"	9	Jan.	62			6	5	
656	"	21	Jan.	62			7	6	
657	83L	6	Aug.	54			5	2	

Ref. No.	Cypher Ref.	Day	Month	Year 1800	Vol.	Part	Page	Col.	Remarks
658	112N	11	Tishri	54					
659	"	19	June	62			5	6	
660	"	3	Jan.	63			5	4	
661	"	28	March	62			5	1	
662	"	22	June	62			5	1	
			June	53			3	3	
664	"	25	Oct.	62			8	7	
665	134N	3	July	60			2	5	
666	"	6	July	60			3	4	
667	129N	24	Oct.	56			190	5	
668	"	10	Oct.	56			157	4	
669	112N	5	May	53			5	5	
670	"	10	March	63			3	5	
671	112N	11	Nov.	62			6	6	
672	14B						248		
673	112N	19	Nov.;	63			5	7	
674	111N	22	Jan.	61			5	4	
675	"	18	Aug.	60			4	6	
676	14B						248		
677	1B						25		
678	14B						134		
679	111N	25	Oct.	58			5	5	
680	"	10	Dec.	60			6	4	
681	"	12	Dec.	60			4	6	
682	127N	16	Sept.	59			2	2	
683	17B						105		
684	145R	8	Nov.	61	8		311		
685	111N	5	Aug.	59			4	4	
686	"	24	July	61			6	6	
687	"	6	Aug.	61			6	1	
688	"	29	July	61			6	1	
689	115N	18	July	61					
690	111N	20	July	61			4	6	
691	"	24	July	61			5	1	
692	77E								Under Vogel.
693	111N	16	July	61			4	6	
694	"	12	Aug.	61			5	4	
695	"	31	Aug.	61			5	3	
696	112N	20	June	64			5	6	
697	"	22	Oct.	64			5	6	
698	"	4	Nov.	64			5	2	
699	"	4	Nov.	64			5	5	
700	"	29	Aug.	53			4	7	
701	"	4	Aug.	51			2	7	
702	106M	17	Nov.	51					
703	112N	11	Sept.	52			4	7	
704	"	23	Feb.	54			5	4	
705	"	11	March	54			4	6	
706	106M	14	Nov.	54					
707	87L	9	Sept.	55					
708	106M	1	Feb.	53					
709	147L	12	July	56					
710	83L	5	Dec.	56					
711	87L	1	Aug.	58					

# *References*

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712	83L	11	Jan.	59			
713	145R	8	Feb.	59	5	818	
714	"	10	Feb.	59	5	844	
715	87L	21	March	59			
716	"	7	April	59			
717	83L	11	Feb.	59			
718	87L	14	Feb.	59			
719	106M	5	Feb.	60			
720	41C	15	Oct.	60			
721	106M	4	April	60			
722	95M	10	March	61			
723	145R	17	May	60	6	1163	
724	174B					117	
725	175R	7	Nov.	54	80	330	
726	176R					360	33-34
727	174B					42	