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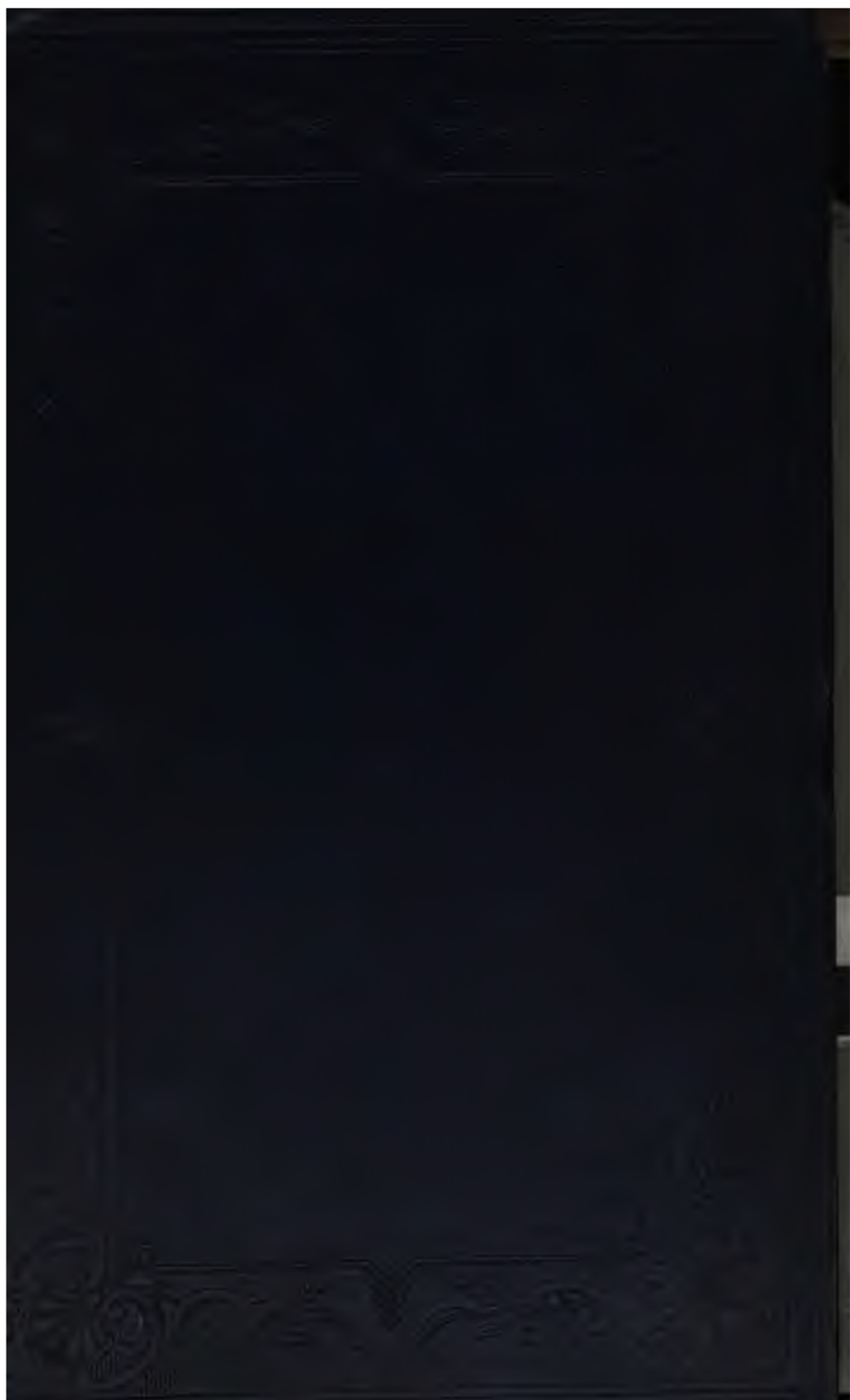
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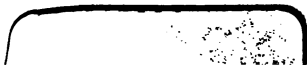
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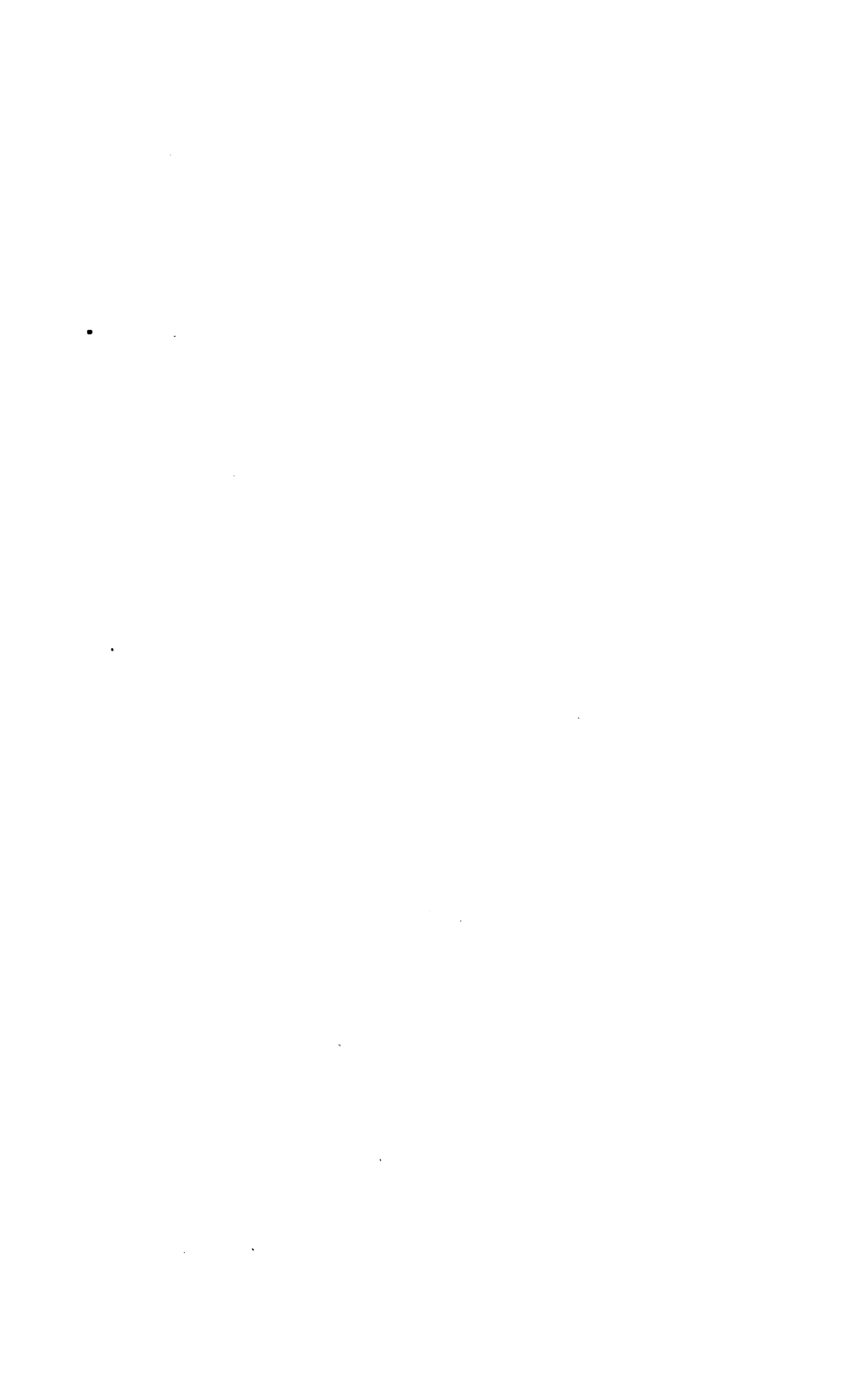




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THE  
HISTORY OF THE JEWS  
IN  
GREAT BRITAIN.

BY THE  
REV. MOSES MARGOLIOUTH,  
AUTHOR OF "A PILGRIMAGE TO THE LAND OF MY FATHERS,"  
&c., &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.



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## P R E F A C E.

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SIMPLE matter-of-fact statements, as to the literary labour of a work, are often misconstrued, and the Author is frequently charged with conceit and vanity. To avoid even the appearance of such unenviable features, the Author deems it sufficient simply to state that neither time, labour, nor expense was spared, in order to render the following volumes, of the annals of the "wandering tribes" of Judah's race, in this country, complete. .

The religious, civil, literary, and political history of the Jews, in this country, are amply portrayed.

The Author has aimed at the strictest impartiality. His own views have been scrupulously kept out of sight in the different topics which have fallen to his lot to record. The notices of the Anglo-Jewish

literary productions, have been penned under the influence of a sense of critical justice. That department has been treated, to use the words of a celebrated Anglo-Hebrew, "as an affair of literary conscience."

With reference to the vexed question of the admission of the Jews into the British Legislature, the Author has thought it his duty to give those speeches which he considered to bear most forcibly on the important subject, and which were calculated to throw light on the history of the Jews of England. He requests that the reader will bear in mind, that he did not write as a politician, but as an impartial historian.

The Appendix will be found to contain several important and interesting documents, strikingly illustrative of the history of the Jews in this country.

LONDON, MARCH, 1851.

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OF  
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# HISTORY

OF

## THE JEWS IN GREAT BRITAIN.

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### CHAPTER I.

#### INTRODUCTION.

Deficiency of Information on the History of the English Jews  
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between the Hebrew and Cornish Languages—Whole sentences alike in both Languages—The Jews Fathers of Literature—Britain one of “the Isles afar off”—The Terms of the Alliance between the Jews and the Romans—Augustus’s Edict in Favour of the Jews in Britain—A curious ancient Brick found—Richard Waller’s conjecture respecting it—St. Peter may have visited Britain for the sake of the Jews—The Success a Missionary meets with among unprejudiced Jews—Wolff’s Success in Bokhara, and Stern’s in Persia—St. Paul’s Visit to Britain fully established by Bishop Burgess, and many other learned Divines—The British Church established by Jews.

DIFFICULT as the historian may find it to fathom the origin of the first inhabitants who peopled this country, certain it is that it is as difficult to ascertain the Jewish early introduction and establishment in this realm ; which is enveloped almost in impenetrable obscurity. The sources from which any information can be drawn at all, on the subject, are very scanty. English historians afford us no information whatever, and neither have the ante-expulsion Jews bequeathed us any records or chronicles of their antiquities in this country. We are left, therefore, to conjecture from the glimmering sparks which we now and then catch in the pages of foreign literature ; but no one can venture to fix a posi-

tive date to the first landing of the dispersed of Judah on the shores of Britain.

In order to prevent erroneous conclusions, however, it may be well just to state the probable reason why the ante-expulsion Jews shed no light on their early history. Prejudice will readily exclaim, as a reason, "The Jews had no learned men amongst them to record their passing events;" or, "They were too much absorbed in money-getting, so that they could not find time to think of anything else." But any one acquainted with the national character of the Jews, will at once produce an array of facts which will prove, incontrovertibly, the fallacy of such reasons. The writer has already demonstrated elsewhere, that there never has been a period in their history when they were destitute of first-rate genius and learning. It is a striking fact, that there is no science in which some Jewish name is not enrolled amongst its eminent promoters. They always entertained a profound love for learning, and were inspired with an uncontrollable energy in the pursuit of knowledge. They grace the literary pages of Spain as pre-eminent philosophers, philologists, physicians, astronomers, mathematicians, historians,

grammarians, orators, and highly-gifted poets.\* The younger Disraeli does not improbably put the following sentence into Sidonia's mouth: "You never observe a great intellectual movement in Europe in which the Jews do not greatly participate,"† which he illustrates by notorious facts, and which the great traveller, Dr. Wolff, corroborates. But, besides all this, we shall see from their history in this country, even from the little that we can gather of it, that the ante-expulsion Jews really had learned men, who were able to vie even with the most learned ecclesiastics of their day, as will be shown in the progress of the work. Mr. Moses Samuel, a learned Jew, of Liverpool, observes: "Let me tell you," addressing his brethren in this country, "that you had great men living in England eight hundred years ago. The sayings of the wise men of Norwich and of York are quoted in some of the additions made by the expounders of the Talmud."‡ A modern Christian writer bears testi-

\* See "The Fundamental Principles of Modern Judaism Investigated;" "Address to Christians."

† "Coningsby." Vol. ii. p. 201.

‡ "An Address on the Position of the Jews in Britain." Page 27.

mony to the same effect ; he says : “ Their (*i. e.* Jews’) schools afforded a far more superior education than those of the Christians, and the children of the latter were invariably instructed in those schools in arithmetic and medicine, and also in higher branches of study.”\*

But what, then, may the reason be for the melancholy deficiency of their own historical records ? The probable cause may be this ; the severe ill-usages which have been the painful lot of the Jews to encounter. For the history of the then Jews is an extremely dreary tale of woe.

The Jewish historian finds himself in the same dilemma in which Gildas, commonly called “ the wise,” found himself, who sadly lamented (in the beginning of his epistle, in which he has undertaken to give some account of the ancient British Church) the want of any domestic monuments to afford him certain information. “ For,” saith he, “ if there were any such, they were either burnt by our enemies, or carried so far by the banishment of our countrymen, that they no longer appear ; and therefore I was forced to pick up what I could out of foreign writers, without

\* Knight’s “ London.” Part xxxi. p. 5.

any continued series." So it is with the Jewish historian.

Fearful in length is the catalogue of the massacres, extortions, and persecutions which the Jews sustained in this country during the dark ages of its annals. Let us consider how many times they were plundered, how often fire was set to their houses, which destroyed all their possessions. Behold them at York: how that, before they destroyed their own persons, they first burnt everything belonging to them; view them just before their final banishment, robbed on every side,—all which shall be shown more fully in their proper places. Let all this be taken into consideration, and the probable reason will suggest itself: viz., that the Jewish records perished with their proprietors and other possessions. It is not too much to assume, for any one who knows the real character of the Jews, that they were in possession of important documents relative to their earliest introduction into this country, but which were lost with the rest of their valuables, by which, not only they themselves sustained a great loss, but also their survivors.

Deprived as we are of Jewish information

respecting this important inquiry, and silent as are the ancient English historians touching their first setting foot on Albion's ground, which puts it beyond the modern historian's power to ascertain the positive date of their doing so ; still any one who has paid critical attention to the subject, must come to the conclusion that those English historians who fixed the time of the introduction of the Hebrews into this country to be coeval with the Norman conquest, were wrong. It is highly probable that the Jews visited this country at a very early period.

Be it recollected that the Jewish nation has been trained to be a wandering nation—to be prepared, no doubt, for their mighty dispersion. Their progenitor, Abraham, seems to have been a type of the same, who was thus commanded (Genesis xii. 1), "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee ;" and his descendants have ever and anon manifested a peculiar migratory disposition, as is to be seen in holy writ.

Some may, however, object and say, "It may be all true that the Jews betrayed a migratory disposition at a very early period of their

history ; but it must be confined to the East, for surely it cannot be imagined that they travelled as far as the West, at a remote age ; especially, when we take into consideration the rudeness of the state of navigation in those days. The writer would respectfully call to such objectors' minds a statement of an eminent ancient writer, viz., Tacitus, who says that the first colonizing expeditions were performed by water, not by land ;\* and the result of research into the affinities of nations seems to have established, that at no time, however remote, has the interposition of sea presented much obstacle to the migratory disposition of mankind.

But not only were Abraham's descendants trained to be a wandering people, they were moreover exercised to be a maritime nation ; in which pursuit we find them employed soon after they entered the land of promise. Not only did they possess the small Sea of Gallilee, but they were placed all along the upper border of the Great, or Mediterranean Sea ; and no sooner were they established in their country than they began to be engaged in maritime

\* " Nec terra olim, sed classibus advehebantur, qui mutare sedes quaerebant."

affairs, as we read in sacred history "And King Solomon made a navy of ships in Eziongeber which is beside Eloth, on the shore of the Red Sea, in the land of Edom. And Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea, with the servants of Solomon. And they came to Ophir, and fetched from thence gold, four hundred and twenty talents, and brought it to King Solomon."\* Also, "For the King had at sea a navy of Tharshish, with the navy of Hiram: once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold and silver, &c."†

The Israelites, therefore, had an opportunity of traversing the known world at a very early period of their history, and thus made known the wisdom of their Heaven-taught monarch: we can, therefore, admit in the amplest magnitude of signification the following narrative, "So King Solomon exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom. And all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart. And they brought every man his present, vessels of

\* 1 Kings ix., 26—28.

† Ibid. x., 22.



gold, and garments, and armour, and spices, horses and mules, a rate year by year. And Solomon gathered together chariots and horsemen; and he had a thousand and four hundred chariots, and twelve thousand horsemen, whom he bestowed in the cities for chariots, and with the king at Jerusalem.”\*

It will not be uninteresting to take a brief view of the navigating expeditions of the Phœnicians at that period, which was their most prosperous epoch, and who, with far more knowledge of the art of navigation than modern assumption gives them credit for, were to be seen in the Mediterranean, the Baltic, the Atlantic—every where upon the waters. In doing so, we must refer to Ezekiel, where we have a concise, but exact description of their marine expeditions, which is as follows:—  
“O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, thus saith the Lord God; O Tyrus, thou hast said I am of perfect beauty. Thy borders are in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty. They have made all thy ship boards of fir trees of Senir; they have taken cedars from Lebanon to make masts for

\* 1 Kings x., 23—26.

thee. Of the oaks of Bashan have they made thine oars ; the company of the Ashurites have made thy benches of ivory, [brought out of the Isles of Chittim. Fine linen with brodered work from Egypt, was that which thou spreadest forth to be thy sail ; blue and purple from the Isles of Elisha was that which covered thee. The inhabitants of Zidon and Arvad were thy mariners : thy wise men O Tyrus, that were in thee, were thy pilots. The ancients of Gebal and the wise men thereof were in thee thy calkers ; all the ships of the sea with their mariners were in thee to occupy thy merchandize. They of Persia, and of Lud, and of Phut, were in thine army, thy men of war : they hanged the shield and helmet in thee ; they set forth thy comeliness. The man of Arvad with thine army were upon thy walls round about, and the Gammadines were in thy towers : they hanged their shields upon thy walls round about ; they have made thy beauty perfect. Tharshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kind of riches ; with silver, iron, tin, and lead they traded in thy fairs. Javan, Tubal, and Meshech, they were thy merchants ; they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market. They of the house of Togarmah traded

in thy fairs with horses, and horsemen, and mules. The men of Dedan were thy merchants ; many isles wore the merchandize of thy hand ; they brought thee for a present horns of ivory and ebony. Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making : they occupied in thy fairs with emeralds, purple, and broidered work, and fine linen, and coral, and agate. Judah and the land of Israel, they were thy merchants ; they traded in thy market wheat of Minnith, and Pannag, and honey, and oil, and balm. Damascus was thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches ; in the wine of Helbon, and white wool. Dan also and Javan going to and fro, occupied in thy fairs ; bright iron, cassia, and calamus, were in thy market. Dedan was thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots. Arabia and all the princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs, and rams, and goats : in these were they thy merchants. The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were thy merchants : they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones and gold. Haran, and Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad, were thy merchants : these were

thy merchants in all sorts of things, in blue clothes and broidered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords, and made of cedar, among thy merchandise. The ships of Tharshish did sing of thee in thy market, and thou wast replenished and made very glorious in the midst of the seas. Thy rowers have brought thee into great waters; the east wind hath broken thee in the midst of the seas.”\*

It would be beside the immediate subject to enter into an investigation, of all the places mentioned in this portion of Scripture. We shall therefore confine ourselves to the meaning of *Tharshish*, which bears close connexion with the object we have in view. After a rigorous and critical examination of different works on the subject, we are led to adopt the view of the profoundly learded Bochart—viz., that the Tarshish of the Scriptures was the Tartessus of Spain, with a district around including Cadiz. Let us view for a moment the state of Spain in ancient times. Its treasures of gold and silver were immensely vast. We read in Strabo a description of the natives by Posidonius, who he says, used mangers and barrels of gold and silver. Such a country could not fail of being very attractive to the

\* Ezekiel xxvii., 3—26.

Phœnicians. The fact that the Phœnicians did trade to Carthage and Spain need not be authenticated.

But we also read of Israel's monarch "And all King Solomon's drinking vessels were of gold, and all the vessels of the house of the forest of Lebanon were of pure gold ; none were of silver; it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon. For the King had at sea a navy of Tharshish with the navy of Hiran : once in three years came the navy of Tharshish, bringing gold, and silver, &c."\* Now if Tharshish be Spain, the conclusion that the Israelites must have visited the western countries in the days of Solomon, is inevitable.

The conclusion resulting from an examination of the meaning of Tharshish, is confirmed by two very ancient sepulchral monuments found in Spain. As these monuments attracted the attention of the learned Christian antiquarians about two hundred years ago, it may not be uninteresting to give a short sketch of their history ; and especially since they form an important link in the chain of evidence of the very early wanderings of the Jews. The Duke of Savoy, formerly viceroy of Valencia, presented Francis

\* I. Kings., x., 21—22.

Gozanga, Bishop of Mantua and General of the Franciscans, with a manuscript which was originally dedicated to Alfonso Duke of Segorbe and Count of Ampurias, written in an antique Spanish dialect, in which the ruins of Saguntum are noticed. After a description of many Roman monuments, a sepulchral monument, bearing a Hebrew epitaph, is mentioned as being of far greater antiquity than the Roman monuments; for the characters were more ancient than the square alphabet now in use, which must have been the Samaritan, as those characters were used by the Hebrews prior to their Babylonish captivity. In consequence of the stone being much fractured and defaced, parts only could be decyphered, but sufficient to give a correct idea of its date.

The following is a literal English translation:—“This is the grave of Adoniram, the servante of King Solomon, who came to collect the tribute, and died on the day . . . .”

The Bishop of Mantua published a history of the Franciscan order, in which he mentioned, on the authority of the manuscript alluded to, the existence of the above-mentioned manuscript. Villalpando, a learned Jesuit and a shrewd critic, read the book: but not being willing to put implicit confidence in the bishop's startling asser-

tion, desired his brethren, the Jesuits, who were stationed at Murviedro, a beautiful little place built from the ruins of Saguntum, to make great search for that particular stone on the site described: his requests was complied with; an investigation was instituted. The Murviedro natives immediately pointed out a large stone near the gate of the citadel, which was commonly called by the natives, "The Stone of Solomon's Collector." There was an almost obliterated Hebrew inscription on the self-same stone, but not corresponding to the one looked for: which we shall presently notice. There was, however, a manuscript chronicle preserved in the town, in which they found the following entry: "At Saguntum, in the citadel, in the year of our Lord, 1480, a little more or less, was discovered a sepulchre of surprising antiquity. It contained an embalmed corpse, not of the usual stature, but taller than is common. It had, and still retains on the front, two lines in the Hebrew language and characters, the sense of which is—'The sepulchre of Adoniram, the servant of King Solomon, who came hither to collect tribute.'

Of this Adoniram, the servant of Solomon, mention is made in the 5th chapter [14th verse,] of the first book of Kings, and more expressly in

the 4th chapter [6th verse] of that book. The Hebrew letters rendered into Roman are these : 'Ze hu keber Adoniram ebed ha Melec Selomo, seba ligbot et hammas, voniptar yom.' "

In page 112 of the same chronicle they found the following : "The marble mausoleum of surprising antiquity, which was discovered at Saguntum in the year of our Lord, 1482, and was inscribed with the Hebrew letters which are these in Roman, 'Ze hu keber,' &c. [as above] still exists in the citadel before the outer gate." Villalpando did not stop there, he succeeded in possessing himself afterwards of a careful copy (through others of his order) of some other manuscript, which makes honorable mention of the same monument.

Were the Rabbies the originators of this circumstance, we should certainly have hesitated before we brought it before the critics of Great Britain ; not because that we think that everything rabbinical is of necessity absurd, ridiculous, and false ; but in order to conciliate the strong prejudices of some who do think so, and treat everything coming from that quarter with contempt ; and generally, because the majority of critics do not understand them. Not a word of the whole transaction is mentioned



by any one of the Rabbies. The investigation was set on foot by Christian authors of great learning and extensive reading. Nor can it be said that it was a story conjured up by the Jesuits. There was no object in their doing so. The disciples of Loyola were never friendly to anything Jewish : and in Villalpando's time the most venomous animosity prevailed in their breast against everything Jewish. Again, if their object was to deceive, why did they not make out the inscription on the monument which the natives have pointed out to them, to correspond with the one recorded in the Duke of Savoy's ancient manuscript ? There is not the remotest affinity between the two epitaphs. All the incidental circumstances connected with those monuments seem to conspire to attest that it was not their object to deceive in this matter. Now for a brief remark on the inscription which Villalpando's friends discovered on the stone pointed out to them by the natives.

It is the following, in English characters, according to their decyphering :—

“ Sadran N'bach Pkoud Marah  
L'sarou K'chon yah.  
Whadah Melech Amatzyah.”

The inscription, as thus given, though it makes

rhyme, certainly makes no sense whatever. To say the least, it is very bad Hebrew, if Hebrew at all.

Strange to say, however, there were found Hebrew scholars, so called, who were able to favour the world with a literal translation, as they think, of the inscription; and it is the following:—"Of Oran Nebahh, the President who rebelled against his Prince. The Lord has taken him . . . and his glory to King Amaziah." The only words which one may conceive to be Hebrew are *Marah*, which has been translated "rebelled," instead of bitter; *Yah*, the Lord; and *Melech Amatziah*, King Amaziah. It must be confessed, that were a Hebrew scholar asked to translate the above, he would have humbly to acknowledge his ignorance, without the least compunction.

In an old Hebrewbook, however, called *Darcay Noam*, or "Ways of Pleasantness," (written by R. Moses, bar Shem Tob, Aben Chaviv, above a century before Villalpando instituted the inquiry) is found an account of an epitaph, respecting which there can be no doubt, that it is none other than the same with the one which the Jesuits attempted to decypher; and the following is the Rabbi's account of it:—

“When I was in the kingdom of Valencia at the synagogue of Morviiri [Murviedro], all the people at the gate, as well as the Elders, informed me that a sepulchral monument existed there, of a Prince of the army of Amaziah, King of Judah. I hastened therefore to inspect it. The monument stands on the summit of a hill, whither having ascended with labour and fatigue, I read the inscription, which is as follows :—

“S'oo keenah B'koul Marah  
L'saar gadoul l'kachon yah.”

“Raise with a bitter voice, a lamentation  
For the great prince; the Lord has taken him.”

I could not read more; but at the conclusion was the word “L'aamatziyah,” “To Amaziah.” It seems evident that there was more than one Hebrew monument in Murviedro.

There need be no hesitation in saying, on the part of one who having diligently examined these and various other evidences bearing on the same question, that there is no reason for disbelieving that there were Jews in Spain in the time of David and Solomon—startling as it may appear.

Villalpando did certainly not arrive hastily at his conclusion; but it was after mature consideration that he decided that there existed colonies

of Hebrews all over the world in the reigns of David and Solomon, and that the Hebrews thus scattered remitted large sums of money for the erection and support of the temple. To do justice to this investigation would require a whole volume. We proceed, therefore, at once to trace the probable footsteps of the Israelites into Britain. Taking for granted that it is highly probable that the Jews visited Spain in the days of David and Solomon, in company with the Phœnician merchants, may we not extend the probability also to Britain?

Appian tells us, that the Spaniards of his time used to perform the passage to Britain in in half a day.\* Britain was a place of attraction to mercantile persons at a very early period, and London was styled by the ancients, at a remote date, "nobile emporium." There remains no doubt whatever respecting the early intercourse between the Phœnicians and the Britons—all historians are unanimous upon it.

Sir Isaac Newton tells us, "With these Phœnicians came a sort of men skilled in religious mysteries." Might they not have been Jews? True it is that we cannot appeal to monuments

\* "Quando in Britanniam, una cum aestu maris transvehunter quae quidem trajectio dimidiati diei est."

in order to establish our position ; but we can, at the same time, solicit attention to the languages of the Hebrews and ancient Britons, which furnish a strong argument that they have known something of each other.

We begin with the name the country bears, viz., Britain. Various are the conjectures which antiquarians and philologists advanced in order to explain why this island was so called. Herodotus calls the British Isles "Cassiterides," which signifies the islands of tin. It is a name whereby the Phœnicians jealously contrived to conceal from their Mediterranean neighbours the locality of these islands, being the remote sources of their wealth. Now, Strabo calls Britain *Βρετανικη*—Bochart, a profound Oriental scholar, shows that *Βρετανικη* is a corruption of the Hebrew words Barat-Anach, which are in signification the same as Casseritides. Is it not highly probable that Jews came over to this island with the Phœnicians, and named it according to its peculiar quality ; which designation was ultimately adopted by the aborigines, when they began to have intercourse with the Jews.

Any one having paid critical attention to the early history of this country, can scarcely remain in doubt as to the existence of an intimate

acquaintance between the Jews and the ancient Britons, or Welsh. An eminent Cornish scholar of the last century, who devoted a great deal of his time to prove the affinity between the Hebrew and Welsh languages, observes,\* “It would be difficult to adduce a single article or form of construction in the Hebrew grammar, but the same is to be found in Welsh ; and that there are many whole sentences in both languages exactly the same in the very words.”

Now, if the aboriginal Britons knew not the Jews, where could they have got hold of whole Hebrew—of purely Hebrew sentences ? We say then, again, is it not highly probable, if not demonstrated, that the Jews visited this island at a very early period, and tried to teach the natives the lessons which they have themselves learned ?

They possessed already the simple, but most sublime Mosaic records, written above 1000 years before the history of Herodotus ; the Psalms and Proverbs, written 1040 before Horace ; and, probably, Isaiah and Jeremiah, for they were written 700 years before Virgil. Many Jews were fathers in literature before any

\* See “Monthly Magazine,” 1796. Vol. ii. p. 543.

of the present nations, especially those of Europe, had their existence.

Another argument may be drawn from the proper names which have prevailed among the aboriginal Britons, as *Solomon*, of which name, according to Lloyd's "Cambria," they anciently had three kings. We read of a Duke of Cornwall, Solomon by name, openly professing christianity about the middle of the fourth century; Daniel, Abraham, Asaph, and Adam;—from which circumstance some antiquarians attempted to prove that the Welsh were descendants from the children of Israel.\* We are therefore very moderate in endeavouring to establish a probability of the Jews having mixed with the Britons earlier than is generally supposed.

It may not be out of place here to state, that "the isles afar off"† were supposed by the ancients to have been Britannia, Scotia, and Hibernia. The following statement was made by a celebrated and venerable divine of the Church of England, when pleading the cause of the "London Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews"—I mean the Rev. Dr. Marsh:—"The command is, to declare the Lord's

\* See "Jewish Expositor," 1828. Pages 125—130.

† Jeremiah xxxi., 10.

purpose concerning Israel, 'in the isles afar off' (the expression always used by the Hebrews for these islands—known to them through the reports of the merchants of Tyre—Britannia, Scotia, and Hibernia). The proclamation is to be made here." This notion receives additional force from the command contained in the 7th verse of the same chapter—"For thus saith the Lord, sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout among the chief of the nations: publish ye, praise ye, and say, O Lord, save thy people, the remnant of Israel. Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in *the isles afar off*, and say, He that scattereth Israel will gather him, and keep him as a shepherd doth his flock."

The prophet seems to behold Britain in his vision. There can be no doubt that Britain is now the "chief of the nations." Her monarch's territory is one "upon which the sun never sets." The expression "the end of the world,"\* is also supposed to mean Britain, which was a common appellation for this island in remote ages; an expression which readily brings to our mind the phrase—

". . . ultimos  
Orbis Britannos."

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\* Isaiah lxii. 11.



There is another circumstance which also gives colour to the idea that the Jews visited this country earlier than is generally supposed.

There existed once a very amicable alliance between the Hebrews and the Romans. It is a well-known fact, that many Jews served as soldiers in the Roman army; they resided in great numbers at Rome and other western countries in the days of the Cæsars. Josephon ben Gorion informs us, that when Julius became Cæsar, Hyrcanus sent messengers to Rome to renew the alliance, which had just then expired. Now (B.C. 55) Cæsar invaded Britain twice, and defeated its gallant natives in several battles, and compelled them to give hostages, and ultimately planted the Roman standard in this country. Why should it be a thing unlikely, that the Jews went with him as warriors into Gaul, and aided in his conquests, and from thence accompanied him into Britain, and remained here under the protection of the Roman banner? For to assist each other in war was in strict accordance with their original agreement, which is preserved in the 1st book of the Maccabees, viii. 22—29, and which is as follows:—  
“This is the copy of the epistle which the senate

wrote back again, in tables of brass, and sent to Jerusalem, that there they might have by them a memorial of peace and confederacy :

“‘Good success be to the Romans, and to the people of the Jews, by sea and by land for ever ; the sword also and enemy be far from them. If there come first any war upon the Romans, or any of their confederates throughout all their dominion, the people of the Jews shall keep them, as the time shall be appointed, with all their heart. Neither shall they give anything unto them that make war upon them, or aid them with victuals, weapons, money, or ships, as it hath seemed good unto the Romans ; but they shall keep their covenant without taking anything therefrom. In the same manner also, if war come first upon the nation of the Jews, the Romans shall help them with all their heart, according as the time shall be appointed them. Neither shall victuals be given to them that take part against them, or weapons, or money, or ships, as it hath seemed good to the Romans, but they shall keep their covenants, and that without deceit.’

“According to these articles did the Romans make a covenant with the Jews.”

A copy of a letter preserved in Josephon ben Gorion, which the Jews of Asia sent to Hyrcanus, and to the nobles of Judah, contains the following passage :—

“Be it known to you, that Augustus Cæsar sent, by the advice of his ally, Antoninus, throughout all the countries of his dominion, as far as beyond the Indian Sea, and as far as beyond the British territory, and commanded that in whatever place there be man or woman of the Jewish race, servant or hand-maiden, to set them free without any redemption-money. By the command of Cæsar Augustus and his ally, Antoninus.”

In the Tzemach Daavid, or “Branch of David,” a Jewish chronicle of some importance, written by Rabbi David Ganz, we have the following paragraph :—

“A. M. 4915.—Cæsar Augustus was a pious and God-fearing man, and did execute judgment and justice, and was a lover of Israel. And as to that which is recorded in the beginning of the book, ‘Sceptre of Judah,’ that Cæsar Augustus caused a great slaughter amongst the Jews, his informant deceived him ; for I have not met even with a hint respecting it in all the chro-

nicles I have ever seen. On the contrary, in all their [*i.e.* Gentile] annals, and also in the fifteenth chapter of Josephon, it is recorded that he was a faithful friend of Israel. He also records in the forty-seventh chapter, that this Cæsar sent an epistle of freedom to the Jews in all the countries of his dominion; to the east as far as beyond the Indian Sea, and to the west as far as beyond the British territory (which is the country Angleterre, and which is designated England in the *Lingua Franca*.)”

The Jews in this country chronicle the same event annually in their calendar, in the following words; “Augustus’s edict in favour of the Jews in England, c.Æ. 15.”

. An ingenious antiquary of the seventeenth century, Mr. Richard Waller by name, came to the same conclusion, in consequence of a curious Roman Brick which was found in his time in London, when digging up the foundation of a house in Mark Lane. The brick had on one side a bas-relief, representing Sampson driving foxes into a field of corn. The whole circumstance is thus related in “Leland’s Collections,” in the preface to the first volume, pp. 70, 71.

“And now I shall take notice of a very great

curiosity found in the Mark Lane, more properly called Mart Lane, it being a place where the Romans, and not improbably the Ancient Britains, used to barter their commodities, as tin, lead, &c., with other nations, it may be the Greeks, who often came into this island to purchase the like goods. . . . The curiosity I am speaking of is a brick, found about forty years since, [*i.e.* about 1670], twenty-eight feet below the pavement, by Mr. Stockley, as he was digging the foundation of a house that he built for Mr. Wolley. . . . This curiosity I am speaking of is a brick of Roman make, and was a key-brick to the arch of a vault where a quantity of burnt corn was found. 'Tis made of curious red-clay, and in **bas-relief**; on the front it hath the figure of Sampson putting fire to the foxes' tayles, and driving them into a field of corn. This brick is deposited in the Museum belonging to the Royal Society's house, Fleet Street." Dr. Leland then gives an extract from a letter of Mr. Richard Waller, which is the following: "How the story of Sampson should be known to the Romans, much less to the Britains, so early after the propagation of the Gospel, seems to be a great doubt, except

it should be said, that some Jews, after the final destruction of Jerusalem, should wander into Britain ; and London being, even in Cæsar's time, a port or trading city, they might settle here, and in an arch of their granary record the famous story of their delivery from their captivity under the Philistines."

All these circumstantial evidences are sufficient, we think, to establish a probability, at least, that the Jews visited this country at a more remote age than is generally supposed.

Baronius may, therefore, be right after all, that St. Peter preached the gospel in Britain, notwithstanding the learned Stillingfleet's opposition. The principal argument which the Bishop of Worcester advances against St. Peter's visiting the island for the purpose of preaching the gospel is, that St. Peter was emphatically called the "Apostle of the Circumcision;" "but," argues the learned prelate, "as there were no Jews in Britain at that time, consequently Baronius must be wrong." With all due deference to the most learned Stillingfleet, I venture to say, that his lordship took for granted what remains to be proved. Baronius himself must certainly have been convinced that there were Jews in this

realm in the days of the Apostles, or else he must have contradicted himself. He states that until the 65th year of our Lord, the Gospel was preached to none but to the Jews ; but he also tells us, that A.D. 61, Peter came over to Britain in order to preach the Gospel. Of course he must have meant to the Jews of Britain.

Lippomanus declares, and Nicephorus makes use of his declaration, that St. Peter preached also to the Britons ; “ for he carried,” says the latter, “ the same doctrine to the Western Ocean and to the British Isles.”

But some one may say, “ Suppose there were a few Jews in this island, would that circumstance afford St. Peter sufficient encouragement to visit it ? ” We answer, yes—there was encouragement and invitation enough for an apostle to the Jews to travel such a great distance. The Jews, being thus far removed from Jerusalem, had no opportunity of hearing anything of the awful scene that was exhibited on Calvary ; they would, therefore, be free from all the prejudices which prevailed in the breasts of their brethren in Palestine. The Apostle might, therefore, calculate on sure success ; for he would come to them, and preach the things

noted in their Scriptures of truth respecting their Messiah, who was then universally expected by them. St. Peter would unfold to them the ninth chapter of the Book of the Prophet Daniel, where the time of Messiah's first advent was fixed, as also that He was to "be cut off, but not for himself;" all of which is, to unprejudiced and unbiassed minds, so self-evident, that the then British Jews could not but believe, especially when preached by a holy and pious countryman of their own.

Dr. Wolff's last journal of his travels to Bokhara, evidences, that where the Israelites are ignorant of the controversy at issue between Jews and Christians, the Gospel meets with an easy and favourable reception by them, as will be perceived from the following extract:—"Here I may as well notice the Jews of Yemen generally. While at Sanaa, Mose Joseph Alkaree, the chief rabbi of the Jews, called on me. He is an amiable and sensible man. The Jews of Yemen adhere uniquely to the ancient interpretation of Scripture in the passage (Isaiah vii. 14), 'a Virgin shall conceive,' and they give to the word *Almah* the same interpretation, virgin, that the Christians do, without knowing the



history of Jesus. Rabbi Alkaree asserted, that in Isaiah liii., the sufferings of the Messiah is described as anterior to his reign in glory. He informed me that the Jews of Yemen never returned to Jerusalem after the Babylonish captivity; and that when Ezra wrote a letter to the princes of the captivity at Tanaan—a day's journey from Sanaa—inviting them to return, they replied, 'Daniel predicts the murder of the Messiah, and another destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple; and therefore we will not go up until he shall have scattered the power of the holy people, until the thousand two hundred and ninety days are over.' I demanded, 'Do you consider these days to be literal days?' The Alkaree replied, 'No; but we do expect the coming of the Messiah from the commotions now going on at Yemen. We think he begins to come from Teman, *i. e.*, Yemen, for you see the tents of Cushan are now in affliction, and the curtains of Midian tremble. There is now war in the wilderness unprecedented in our memory. There are twelve gates at Sanaa. As soon as one of them, the Bab Alstraan, which is always kept closed is opened, we expect Him. Rechab and Hamdan are before it.' I then expounded

Isaiah liii., and read him the holy history of Jesus. He said, 'Your exposition is in better agreement with the ancient interpretation; I approve it much more than that of our nation, which ascribes the passage to Josiah.' This kind Jew assisted me in the distribution of Testaments among his people. Sanaa contains fifteen thousand Jews. In Yemen they amount to twenty thousand. I conceive the total population of the Jews throughout the world amounts to ten millions. I baptized here sixteen Jews, and left them all New Testaments."\*

A traveller in Persia bears testimony to the same striking fact. The following is an extract from a letter of the Rev. H. A. Stern, dated Teheran, June 19th. 1845:—"May 16th, Kermanshah.—We were visited by Hassan Khan Kalentar: he was very polite, and offered us the use of his house, but we declined his offer, preferring to remain where we were. We went to the Jewish quarter, which is situated in the lowest part of the town, and inquired for the Synagogue. A crowd of Jews quickly surrounded us, and conducted us to it. We had to wait several minutes while a messenger was

\* Vol. i. p. 60.

despatched for the keys. On entering, we descended into an extremely poor place of worship, affording the strongest evidence of the poverty and oppression of the Jews here. They told us that they had repeatedly laid down expensive carpets, and ornamented the books of the law ; but the soldiers had as often broken in at night, and stolen every article of value. We then called upon one of the mullahs or rabbies, and preached Jesus of Nazareth to him. He confessed he had never heard of the message of salvation, and was entirely ignorant of every thing respecting a Redeemer. He repeatedly said, ' Did our forefathers so err ? ' During our conversation the greater part of the Jewish population had crowded round the door, and the people were anxiously listening to what was said.

" May 17th.—We went again to the synagogue, and had scarcely entered before we were called up to the oratory. The mullah, with whom we had the conversation after our former visit, said he was very sorry that we did not come before the reading of the law, as he would have conferred the honour upon us. Some of the Jews gave us vases of roses which were standing

near the reading-desk ; and at the conclusion of the service, two of the mullahs and another influential Jew requested the congregation to remain quiet while we addressed them. We did so, for some time, on the first advent of the Messiah, his rejection by the Jewish nation, his sufferings and atonement, the reason of his coming in humility the first time, and of his future coming in glory. We entreated them to believe in Christ, and no longer to reject the proffered salvation.

“ One of the Mullahs.—‘ We are in captivity, and groan under oppression. What can we do ?’

“ I.—‘ Believe in Jesus Christ, and he will redeem you. It grieves us much to see you scattered like sheep without a shepherd—instead of hearing the lovely songs of Zion, to hear the wailings of affliction. Shall the gold always remain dim, and the sword always reek with your blood ? No, come to Jesus ; hear the blessed Gospel, and you will then find peace here and life eternal hereafter.’ Upon which, the whole synagogue—men, women, and children—loudly answered, ‘ Amen ! speedily, speedily : and may the blessing of God rest upon your heads !’ We spoke Hebrew, and the mullahs

interpreted all we said to the people. We gave each of the mullahs a New Testament, and presented a Bible to the synagogue. Thus were we enabled, by God's grace to preach Christ to no less than three hundred souls, and in a public synagogue.

“As we were on our way home, one of the mullahs sent a messenger to invite us to his house; but his wife being ill, and he poor, we did not accept the invitation.”\*

But Dr. Wolff's late enterprise convinces us, likewise, that it is possible for a man who is inspired with benevolence and zeal, to travel 5,000 miles, in order to deliver two fellow-creatures only. Considering the superiority of the Apostle's mission, there will be no reason to object to the probability of St. Peter's visiting the Jews in this island, few as they may have been, in order to rescue them from that eternal death which, ever-dying, never dies.

As to St. Paul being one of the first heralds of salvation in this island, there can scarcely be any doubt on the subject. Indeed if we do not believe it, we must make up our minds to reject all the hitherto authentic historians. By them

\* See “Jewish Intelligence,” 1845, pp. 362—363.

we can prove, to a demonstration, that St. Paul did preach the gospel in Britain. However, as to prove this is not our object at present, we shall only confine ourselves to a few writers on the subject.

Dr. Burgess, late Bishop of Sarum, one of the most learned and pious Bishops of our Church, has shown most satisfactorily, in the tracts he published, that whilst to the Apostles generally—to St. Paul most particularly—is Britain indebted for the foundation of her National Church. Clemens Romanus, who was an intimate friend and fellow-labourer of St. Paul, declares in his Epistle to the Corinthians, that St. Paul having been a herald of the gospel both in the east and in the west, he received the noble crown of faith, after teaching righteousness to the whole world, and gone even, “to the utmost bounds of the west :” an expression well known to every scholar, that always designated, or at least included, the British Islands.

Theodoret, one of the most learned and sound Church historians of the fourth century, mentions Britain among the nations which had received the Gospel. He states in his observations on Psalm cxvi., that “Paul carried salvation to the

islands which lie in the ocean." Jerome shortly afterwards writes, when commenting on the fifth chapter of Amos, that "St. Paul's diligence in preaching extended as far as the earth itself." Again, "after his imprisonment he preached the gospel in the western parts" (*De Script. Eccl.*), in which (as is evident from a passage in his Epistle to Marcella) he included Britain. Venentius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers, who lived in the fifth century, states that "Paul having crossed the ocean, landed and preached in the countries which the Britons inhabit." We could multiply quotations on this subject almost without end; but they would be as tedious, as they are unnecessary. We may, however, observe, that some of the greatest men of this country, who spent no inconsiderable portion of their lives in such researches,—viz. the most learned Ussher, Parker, Stillingfleet, Cave, Camden, Gibson, Godwin, Rapin, and a great many others—have clearly shown that St. Paul was the founder of the British Church. But Archbishop Ussher proves also, that St. Paul did not quit this island before he had appointed the first Bishop or Bishops, and the other ministers of the Church;—that Aristobulus was

the first Bishop he had appointed. Some of the old Welsh writers state, that Bran, son of Llyr Llediaeth (who had been a hostage for several years at Rome, for his own son Caradoc or Caractacus), brought with him as preachers, on his return from Rome, one Aristobulus, an Italian, and two Israelites, named Ilid and Cynvan (Hughes' *Hora Britanica*, vol. ii. p. 23.) which must have taken place soon after St. Paul left Rome.

As far as the investigation of our subject is concerned, all the above rays of historical light converge to one point, which is, that some Jews must have been in this country during the first century; nay, that the government of the British Christian Church was established and set in proper scriptural order by Jews themselves, be they who they may—Peter, Paul, Simon Zealotes, Joseph of Arimathea, so that the British Church actually owes to the Jewish nation a great debt of gratitude, for her beautiful and scriptural order, and for all her divine religion.



## CHAPTER II.

Objections answered—Bede, the first English writer who mentions the Jews—Elgbright's edict—Whitglaff's edict—Edward the Confessor's edict.

IN the introductory chapter an attempt was made to establish, by circumstantial evidence, the probability that the Jews had visited this country at a very early period of their history. We think, however, that we have succeeded in demonstrating that some Jews were certainly in this island in the very first century of the Christian era. How few, or how many, is doubtful.

It is not at all unlikely that some objections against the arguments used may suggest themselves to some minds—objections which may at first sight seem both plausible and natural. For instance, a question suggests itself on taking the propounded view of the early introduction of the Jews into this country — why did

not Julius Cæsar make any mention of them in his history of Britain? We meet it by another question, Did Cæsar omit nothing else? Let his writings be read, and compared with the works of later historians, and it will plainly appear that his silence on the existence of the Jews in this country furnishes no argument against their having really been here. If, indeed, he omitted nothing else but the Jews, there would then be some force in the argument; but since we know that Cæsar's history of Britain affords us but a bird's-eye view of the state of the country in his time, what is the value of such an argument? Again, supposing that Cæsar wrote a minute and detailed description of Britain, would there have been any necessity on his part to mention the existence of the Jews? Certainly not: he wrote for the benefit of his countrymen, to give them some information respecting the Britons. The Romans knew who the Jews were; it would have been a waste of time on Cæsar's part to have given them information on a subject they were already acquainted with. He might as well have described the Roman army; especially since it is supposed that many Jews accompanied him as soldiers to Britain.

Another argument has been advanced against their establishment in this country at so early a period, which is, "It is not probable that a total silence respecting them would have prevailed among the British writers of those days, had any portion of them been then established in Britain." Those objections are mentioned, because they are the strongest which have been produced, and are found in the eighth volume of the "English Archæologia," page 390.

Now, we must meet this again by another question. To what early British historians does Mr. Caley refer?—for that is the name of the writer of the article on this subject in the "English Archæologia." England had no literature for a very long period. Gildas, commonly called the Wise, is the most ancient British historian extant. Any one who has ever taken the trouble to read through his "De Calamitate Excidio, et Conquestu Britanniaë," (this is the only work of his printed, and probably existing,) will despair of finding in it anything of importance. Next to him comes the Venerable Bede, who was, indeed, the brightest ornament of the eighth century; but he confined himself to ecclesiastical history. Bede, however, does incidentally mention the Jews, as we shall presently

see, which proves that they must have been here anterior to his time.

First, however, let the following striking feature of the history of the Jews in this country be taken into consideration. The Jews are never mentioned in the early history of England, except to record some flagrant persecution or horrible massacre; to reckon up the amount of sums extorted from them by kings in distress; or to detail some story about the crucifixion of infants. And when these subjects did not come to the hands of the monkish historians of the time—that is to say, when the Jews were unmolested, peaceably employing themselves in traffic, and gradually acquiring wealth, which was not demanded from them too largely or too rudely, in return for their safety and opportunities of commerce—it would be conceived that they were unworthy of mention. Historians always find the most prosperous to be the most barren periods of history; as the richest and most fertile country affords but an uninteresting landscape to the poet or the artist, when compared with the wild rocks, rugged precipices, and unproductive solitudes of mountain scenery. So we may fairly conclude that, until the reign of Stephen, they were enjoying, without molesta-

tion, the benefits of their traffic, and increasing in riches and wealth ; whilst the peace of their Gentile brethren was all that time rent asunder by different invasions and seditions.

The first mention we find of the Jews in English works, is that in Bede's " Ecclesiastical History," in connexion with the ridiculous and absurd controversies which prevailed between the Romish and British monks, viz., about the form of the tonsure and the keeping of Easter. The priests of all the then Christian churches were accustomed to shave part of the head ; but the form given to this tonsure was different in the Britons from that used by the Roman monks who came over to this country with Augustine. The latter made the tonsure on the crown of the head, and in a circular form ; whilst the former shaved the forepart of the head from ear to ear. The Romish monks, in order to recommend their own form of tonsure, maintained that it imitated symbolically the crown of thorns worn by our Lord in his passion. But as to the Britons, their antagonists insisted that their form was invented by Simon Magus, without any regard to that representation. The Britons also celebrated Easter on the very day of the full moon in March, if that day fell on a Sunday,

instead of waiting till the Sunday following. The Britons pleaded the antiquity of their usages; the Romans insisted on the universality of theirs. In order to render the former odious, the latter affirmed that the native priests once in seven years concurred with the JEWS in the time of celebrating that festival.

This incidental circumstance proves that there must have been Jews here who had synagogues, and observed the feast of Passover. The Jews must also have had learned men amongst them to arrange their calendars: and such an arrangement requires a fair astronomical knowledge, or else the charge would have been totally unintelligible to the Saxons.

The above charge will account for the edict published soon after by Elgbright, Archbishop of York, in the "Canonical Excerptiones," A.D. 740, to the effect, that no Christian should be present at any of the Jewish feasts, which establishes the fact that the Jews must have resided in this country at the time of the Saxon heptarchy, in tolerable numbers, and celebrated their feasts according to their own law; and what is more, that they desired to live peaceably with their Christian neighbours.

It also appears from a charter granted by Whitglaff, King of the Mercians, to Croyland Abbey, ninety-three years after the above edict was issued, that there were Jews in this country at that period, and that they possessed landed property; and what is most remarkable, they endowed Christian places of worship.

Ingulphus, in his "History of Croyland Abbey," relates that in the year 833, Whitglaff, King of the Mercians, having been defeated by Egbert, took refuge in that abbey, and in return for the protection and assistance rendered him by the abbot and monks on the occasion, granted a charter, confirming to them all lands, tenements, and possessions, and all other gifts which had at any time been bestowed upon them by his predecessors, or by any other faithful Christians, or by Jews

Lindo chronicles, in his Jewish Calendar, printed 1838, the following:—"Canute banished the Jews from England," A.D. 1020.\* Basnage

\* The author takes this opportunity for apologizing to Mr. Charles Egan, who did him the honour to make use of his "Jews in Great Britain," for misleading the author of "The Status of the Jews in England," with reference to that date. It was an oversight.

also asserts that "they were banished from this country in the beginning of the eleventh century, and did not return till after the conquest." The authority upon which these two statements rest is not given, and, moreover, it appears that some Jews were certainly resident in England towards the middle of the eleventh century, and prior to the Norman invasion.

By the laws attributed to Edward the Confessor, it is declared that "the Jews, wheresoever they be, are under the king's guard and protection; neither can any one of them put himself under the protection of any rich man, without king's license, for the Jews, and all they have, belong to the king; and if any person shall detain them or their money, the king may claim them, if he please, as his own:" another proof that the Jews were resident in this country prior to the invasion of William the Conqueror.



## CHAPTER III.

William I. invited the Jews to come and settle in England—The two distinct colonies of Jews—Matthew Paris's affirmation—The King's men, the Jews—William the Conqueror's policy—William Rufus's Convocation of Christian and Jewish Divines—Stephen, the Jewish convert—The prosperous state of the Jews at Oxford—The Jews appointed to take care of Vacant Benefices—Jews prosper in the reign of Henry I.—Their progress in Judaizing Christians—Joffred sent out Monks to Preach against the Jews—Eum Crescat, the Jew, mocks the Efficacy of St. Frideswide's Miracles—His supposed Punishment.

FROM the time of the Conquest, the information afforded by British historians respecting the Jews, becomes gradually more extensive. William I., soon after he had obtained possession of the throne, invited the Jews to come over in large numbers from Rouen, and to settle

in England; and he is reported to have appointed a particular place for their residence.

Of the name of this town we are not accurately informed. But Peck, in his annals, relates that many of the Jews who came over in this reign, took up their residence at Stamford. And Wood, in his "History of Oxford," shows, upon the authority of some ancient deeds, that in the tenth year after the Conquest, the Jews resided already in great numbers in that university.

It appears that there were two distinct colonies of Jews—the one within the walls of the city of London, the other in the liberties of the Tower. We are inclined to adopt the idea that the Jews who came to this country under the encouragement of the Conqueror, settled within the jurisdiction of the constable of his Palatine Tower; and that the Jews who settled in England before the Conquest, and who, according to the laws published by Edward the Confessor, were declared to stand under the immediate authority and jurisdiction of the king, were found immediately adjoining that quarter of the city, which appears to have been the Court, and under the Saxon monarchs.

Matthew Paris, a monkish historian, affirms

that St. Alban's Church, which stands nearly in the middle of a line drawn from "the Jewerie" within the city, to the angle of the wall at Cripplegate, was the chapel of King Offa, and adjoining to his palace. Mund mentions in his edition of Stow, that the great square tower remaining at the north corner of Love-lane, in the year 1632, was believed to be part of King Athelstan's palace. The name of Addle-street is derived by the same antiquarian from Adel or Ethel, the Saxon for noble. The original council chamber of the aldermen is known to have stood somewhere in Aldermanbury, which had its name from it.

Without a certain,—a positive belief in any one of these statements, their coincidence seems to render it extremely probable that the royal residence was in that quarter; which may account for the king's men—the Jews—taking up their residence near it.\*

William the Conqueror, as soon as he had brought the Jews into this country, adopted the policy of Edward the Confessor. The chronicler Hovedon states that in the fourth year of William the Conqueror's reign, he held a council of

\* See Knight's "London."

his barons, in which, among other things, it was provided "that the Jews settled in this kingdom should be under the king's protection; that they should not subject themselves to any other without his leave: it is declared that they and all theirs belong to the king; and if any should detain any of their goods, the king might challenge them as his own."

The first regular account we meet respecting the Jews in England, is during the reign of William Rufus, who, according to the unanimous testimony of historians, seemed to have a mind capable of rising above the superstition and ignorance of the age in which he lived, although not sufficiently enlightened to receive the glorious light of the Gospel; and owing to the distorted exhibition of Christianity by the teachers of the same, he almost fell into infidelity; and from the consistent conduct of the Jews, he was led to believe that Judaism was at least as good as Christianity. He went therefore so far as to summon a convocation, at London, of Christian Bishops and Jewish Rabbies, for the express purpose of discussing the evidences of their respective creeds; and the king swore by St. Luke's face—a favourite oath of his Majesty—

that if the Jews got the better in the dispute, he would embrace Judaism himself. The Jewish disputants seemed to stand their ground with vigour, for the Christian champions appeared rather apprehensive of the result. At the conclusion, as is generally the case in public controversy, both parties claimed the victory. The Jews, added, however, publicly that they were overthrown more by fraud than by force of argument. The Christians claimed the victory in consequence of a tremendous thunder-storm and a violent earthquake. All this, however, produced but little effect on the king's mind.

The conduct of Rufus towards the Church, and his frequent disagreement with the clergy, rendered him an object of dislike to the monkish writers, who were the principal historians of his period. The following is recorded of him by Hollingshed, and if true, his conduct was certainly chargeable with no small measure of guilt :—

“The king being at Rhoan on a time, there came to him divers Jews who inhabited that city, complaining that divers of that nation had renounced their Jewish religion, and were become Christians ; wherefore they besought him that,

for a certain sum of money which they offered to give, it might please him to constrain them to abjure Christianity, and to turn to the Jewish law again. He was content to satisfy their desires. And so, receiving their money, called them before him ; and what with threats, and putting them otherwise in fear, he compelled divers of them to forsake Christ, and to turn to their old errors.

“Hereupon the father of one Stephen, a Jew converted to the Christian faith, being sore troubled for that his son was turned a Christian (and hearing what the king had done in like matters), presented unto him sixty marks of silver conditionally, that he should enforce his son to return to the Jewish religion ; whereupon the young man was brought before the king, unto whom the king said—‘Sirrah, thy father here complaineth that without his license thou art become a Christian : if this be true, I command thee to return again to the religion of thy nation, without any more ado.’ To whom the young man answered—‘Your grace (as I guess) doth but jest.’ Wherewith the king being moved, said—‘What ! thou dunghill knave, should I jest with thee ? Get thee hence quickly, and

fulfil my commandment, or by St. Luke's face, I shall cause thine eyes to be plucked out of thine head.' The young man, nothing abashed thereat, with a constant voice answered—'Truly I will not do it; but know for certain that if you were a good Christian, you would never have uttered any such words; for it is the part of a Christian to reduce them again to Christ which are departed from him, and not to separate them from Him which are joined to him by faith.' The king, herewith confounded, commanded the Jew to get him out of his sight. But the father perceiving that the king could not persuade his son to forsake the Christian faith, required to have his money again. To whom the king said he had done so much as he promised to do; that was, to persuade him so far as he might. At length when he would have the king to deal further in the matter, the king, to stop his mouth, tendered back to him the half of his money, and kept the other himself. All which increased the suspicion men had of his infidelity."

The state of the Jews in Oxford at that time became very interesting. They were so exceedingly numerous and wealthy in that place, as to become the proprietors of the principal houses,

which they let to the students. Their schools were at this time called, from their Jewish proprietors, Lombard Hall, Moses Hall, and Jacob Hall; and the parishes of St. Martin, St. Edward, and St. Aldgate, were designated the Old and New Jewry, because of the great number of Jewish residents there. In one of the parishes they had a synagogue, wherein their Rabbies, instructed not only their own people, but several Christian students of the university.

When a see or living in the gift of this wary king fell vacant, he was in the habit of retaining it in his own hands, until he became pretty well acquainted with its revenues, when he sold it to the highest bidder.\* The royal simonist was in the habit of appointing Jews to take care of the vacant benefices, to farm them, and to manage these negotiations for his benefit. From this mark of confidence, and from the increasing wealth of the Jews, we may conclude that the reign of Rufus was very advantageous to the interests of his Jewish subjects. This king,

\* When Lanfranc, Archbishop of Canterbury, died, William Rufus appointed no successor for five years after, but kept the possession of the Archbishopric in his own hands.



however, did not enjoy his kingdom for any long duration. His tragical end is well known.

In the long reign of Henry I., we hear almost nothing of the Jews, which may be looked upon as evidence that they went on prosperously, and perhaps began to make some progress amongst their Christian brethren. Prynne, a Puritan writer, and the most virulent enemy of the Jews from among Protestants, informs us that the Jews were then beginning to proselytize, and even to bribe some Christians with money, in order to induce them to embrace Judaism, which may account for the incident mentioned in this reign, that monks were sent to several towns in which the Jews were established, for the express purpose of preaching down Judaism.

We read in Peck's "Annals of Stamford," that "Joffred, Abbot of Croyland, in the tenth year of Henry I., sent some monks from his abbey to Cottenham and Cambridge, to preach against the Jews ; and about the same time some ecclesiastics were sent from other parts to Stamford, to oppose the progress of the Jews in that place," where, as we are told by

Peter of Blessens, that "they preaching to Stamfordians, exceedingly prospered in their ministry, and strengthened the Christian faith against Jewish depravity."

It appears from the history of Philip, Prior of St. Frideswide, of Oxford, that the Jews used then to mock publicly the lying fables of the priests.

The prior, when writing of the miracles performed by the body of that famous saint (which was preserved in his monastery) tells us that "whereas people flocked from all parts of the kingdom to worship St. Frideswide, and were cured by her of all kinds of distempers, a certain Jew of Oxford, called Eum Crescat, the son of Mossey, the Jew, of Wallingford, was so impudent as to laugh at her votaries, and tell them that he could cure their infirmities as well as the saint herself, and therefore hoped they would make him the same offerings, to prove which he would sometimes crook his fingers, and then pretend he had miraculously made them straight again; at other times he would halt like a cripple, and then in a few minutes would skip and dance about, begging the crowd observe how suddenly he had cured himself.

Wherefore (the most devout amongst them wishing some exemplary judgment might befall him) St. Frideswide, no longer able to suffer his insolence, caused him suddenly to run mad, and hang himself, which he did with his own girdle, in his father's kitchen." Upon which, says the historian, "he was, according to custom, conveyed in a cart to London, all the dogs of the city following his detestable corpse, and yelping in a most frightful manner."

## CHAPTER IV.

Jews Disappointed in their Expectation—Their Accumulation of Wealth banished their Security—No Peace to the Jews after the Death of Henry I.—With the Reign of Stephen the Jewish Troubles commenced—The Empress Maud—The Jews accused of Crucifying Children—The absurd Assertion with respect to the Use of Christian Blood amongst the Jews—The Charge still Repeated—Ecclesiastics already Debtors to the Jews—A Curious Story—Henry II. and Thomas à Becket—Monkish Admonition to Henry II.

THE Jews having experienced so much favour and protection from the first three Norman monarchs, were naturally led to expect that they had found in this country a permanent asylum from their persecutions. Under this impression, they had employed the season of their tranquillity in the acquirement of property. They were,

however, soon made to experience the fallacy of their expectations; for with the accumulation of wealth their security vanished; and as their riches increased, so, in proportion, did their oppressions.

From the period of the death of Henry I. to the time of the expulsion of the Jews, English histories abound with details of Jewish hardships. A melancholy monotony pervades the history of those two hundred years. Indeed, the treatment they received in this country, during that period, was of a nature more disgraceful than that they received in other parts of Europe; for while elsewhere as in Spain and Germany, the monarchs generally exerted themselves to repress the hostility of the clergy and people, the English kings, scarcely one excepted, manifested as persecuting a spirit as any of their subjects. It would be as useless, as it would be tedious, to notice each particular instance of cruelty and tyranny which is mentioned to have been exercised towards them, for there is scarcely a year without some records concerning them, and hardly a record which relates to them but furnishes some evidence of their sufferings. Taxes and contributions to an

exorbitant amount, were continually imposed upon them at the mere will of the Crown,\* and payment enforced by seizure of their properties, by imprisonment, and frequently by the infliction of the most cruel and wanton bodily torture. Crimes of every description—many of a nature the most absurd and groundless—were laid to their charge; and the severest penalties inflicted for them. Tumults were, on the most frivolous pretences, excited against them; their houses were pillaged and burned, and hundreds of them were massacred by the populace, without regard to either age or sex. That under such an accumu-

\* Whether the invitation of William I. to the Jews, to enter this country, was designed as a lure, we have no means of discovering; but certainly the terms on which they were induced to come, however flattering to the ear, established a power over them on the part of the Crown, but of which their subsequent persecutions had their rise. They were called "the King's men;" and it was enacted, as we have seen, that they should be under his protection, that they and all theirs belonged to the King, and that if any should detain any of their goods, he might challenge them as his own. Thus, it is obvious that the Crown reserved to itself the power of dealing with the Jews as it pleased. That, accounted as citizens, they were taxed directly by the Crown, and in a measure commensurate with its immediate wants or its irresponsible will.

lation of misfortunes, the Jews should not only have continued to reside in England, but greatly to increase in numbers, cannot fail to excite wonder and surprise.

If Jews were the historians who handed down to us the accounts of their sufferings, we might doubt the veracity of their statements, or believe them greatly exaggerated. It is not, however, from themselves that much of our information is derived, for, as it has been already stated, they did not bequeath to us any annals of their own in this country. Our information is derived principally from the testimony of Christian writers—from authorities which admit of no dispute.

With the reign of Stephen, the Jewish troubles commenced. He being solicitous to obtain the good will of the clergy, the best means to compass such an end in those days was to inflict cruel injuries on the Jews; and as he gave up the sources of income which his predecessors had enjoyed—viz., the appropriation of the revenues of the vacant sees and benefices, he fixed his avaricious eye upon the wealth of the Jews: and in the fifth year of his reign exacted a heavy fine,

amounting to 2,000*l.* from the Jews residing in London, under pretence that some one of their body had been guilty of manslaughter.

The Empress Maud, to whom, as it was well said, "moderation in prosperity was a virtue unknown,"\* during the eight months of her authority in England, compelled the Jews settled at Oxford to pay her an exchange of money. Stephen coming again to the possession of power, followed the example of the empress, and required the Jews at the same place to give him three and a half exchanges; threatening, on default of immediate compliance, to set fire to their houses. The Jews first attempted to evade the payment: the king, to show that he was in earnest, ordered the house of one of the richest of their body to be burned, and this command having been put into execution, the whole sum was forthwith produced.

In the ninth year of this reign, the Jews were for the first time accused of the crime of crucifying an infant—William by name.

The circumstance in this instance is only briefly noticed by historians, and is stated to have taken place at Norwich. Various are the absurd reasons which have been advanced to account for that

\* Henry's "Britain," vol. v., p. 104.



base and false calumny, which was subsequently brought against the unfortunate Jews, in various countries of their captivity.

Some asserted that the Jews required Christian blood for the celebration of the Passover. Another set of ignorant fanatics affirmed that they wanted it to put into their unleavened cakes, at Easter. It was also gravely stated that the Jews used Christian blood to free them from an ill odour, which, it was supposed, was common to them ; others said, that of Christian blood they made love potions ; others, that with it they stopped the blood at the circumcision of their children ; others, that it served as a remedy for the cure of secret diseases ; others, that it was required for the Jewish bride and bridegroom during the marriage ceremony ; others, that the Jewish priests were obliged to have their hands tinged with it when they pronounced the blessing in the synagogues ; others, that it helped Jewish women in childbirth, and promoted their recovery ; others, that the Jews used blood to make their sacrifices acceptable.

But the most common story was, that the blood was used to anoint dying Jews ; that at the point of death the Rabbi anointed his

departing brother, and secretly whispered into his ear these words :—“ If the Messiah on whom the Christians believe, be the promised, true Messiah, may the blood of this innocent murdered Christian help thee to eternal life.” Picius Valerianus assures us “ that the Jews purchase at a dear rate the blood of Christians, in order to raise devils, and that by making it boil, they obtained answers to all their questions.”\*

Englishmen now regard such tales as but the vestiges of a period long passed by ; they listen to them with a smile as belonging to the “ olden time ;” and because such ridiculous calumnies are no longer brought against the Jews in this highly favoured and enlightened country, they may think it ill-timed to rake up acts of fanatics of the dark ages, which have long since been buried in oblivion. But it is not so in some other countries of Christendom ; the same incredible charges are even now brought against the Jews, and are believed. Not longer than a few years ago, the Jews of Damascus suffered greatly because of such accusations.† In the annals of

\* See Dr. M'Caul's excellent pamphlet, entitled “ Reasons for Believing that the Charge lately revived against the Jewish People is a Baseless Falsehood,” p. 23.

† Only a few years ago, a poor Jewish blacksmith, in Lithuania, in Poland, was incarcerated in consequence of a charge

the reign of Henry II. we read of the same charge being brought against the Jews twice. In the sixth year of that reign the deed is stated to have been perpetrated at Gloucester.

The ecclesiastics were already debtors to the Jews, and therefore began to charge them with usury, which was on all occasions held up by the clergy to be a crime of the greatest magnitude. Had they been impressed by this belief, they should not, for the sake of moral consistency, have resorted to such sinners when they wanted money. Yet we learn that they trusted them with the vessels of their churches; for, in the records of this reign, which have come down to us, we find it stated, among other things, that a Jew of Bury St. Edmund's, Sancto by name, was fined five marks for taking in pledge from the monks of that place certain vessels dedicated to the service of the altar. Another Jew of Suffolk, Benet by name, was fined twenty

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of murder, and was on the point of being transported to Siberia, when the zealous Christians of the nineteenth century, of that province, who brought the accusation, quarrelled amongst themselves, which circumstance discovered the real culprit, who was a Christian by profession, and who had perpetrated the murder on a young girl in order to accuse the Jew.

pounds for taking some consecrated vestments upon pawn.

A curious story is also related by Hoveden and Brompton, respecting William de Waterville, the Abbot of Bury. He was deposed for having entered the church at the head of a band of armed men, and taken thence the arm of St. Oswald, the martyr, to pawn it to the Jews.

One of the claims advanced by King Henry II. against Archbishop Thomas à Becket, was in respect of a sum of 500*l.*, for which that prince had been surety for him to a Jew.

All those things coming to light, however, could not fail to swell that animosity against the Jews, which had already existed in the breasts of the clergy, who even before that regarded them with particular abhorrence.

They seized, therefore, every opportunity of prejudicing the people against them, and rendering them the objects of general detestation.

Fox, the martyrologist, favours us with a list of admonitions which were given to King Henry II., and in that list we find him required by the bishops "to banish all the Jews, allowing them to take with them sufficient property to pay their travelling expenses." What "tender mercies!"

## CHAPTER V.

The Jews subjected to severe Exactions under Henry II.—  
The Effect of the Emperor Barbarossa's Embassy—Jose,  
the Jew of Gloucester—Henry allowed the Jews Local  
Cemeteries—A Jewish Punster—Accusations against the  
Jews a lucrative Revenue to Church and State—The  
Crusading Mania—Jews required to support the Crusade  
—The King's Death afforded the Jews some respite—  
The Jewish *Literati* and their Seats of Learning—Aben  
Ezra's Visit to England—Jews distinguished Physicians.

DURING the reign of Henry II. the Jews were subjected to severe exactions from the Crown : on one occasion a tallage of one fourth part of their chattels was levied upon them. When Ambassadors were sent over to the King by the Emperor Barbarossa, to induce him to take part against Pope Alexander in a schism which then existed in the Church of Rome, respecting the right of succession to the papal chair, the sum of

five thousand marks was demanded of the Jews, to be applied for the purpose of enlisting the emissaries to the King's interest.\* This sum was directed to be paid without delay; and those who refused to contribute, were immediately banished from the country. Besides these demands upon the body of the Jews generally, individuals amongst them were also compelled to pay sums to a large amount.

We read of a Jew of Gloucester, Jose by name, who was fined for supplying the Irish rebels with great sums of money.

However, King Henry, in the twenty-fourth year of his reign, was pleased to show the Jews some slight indulgence. He allowed them to have cemeteries at the out-side of every town they inhabited, for until that time they had only one place of interment, which was near London, in the parish of St. Giles, Cripplegate, commonly designated in ancient deeds, "The Jews garden."

\* Henry II., King of England, and Louis VII., King of France, held respective councils of their clergy in July, 1161, for the purpose of taking into consideration the pretensions of Alexander III. and Victor IV., both of whom claimed the papal throne. The monarchs met at a general council in Thoulouse, in August, and agreed to acknowledge Alexander as Pope.—W. Neubrigen, livre ii., c. 9.

Having experienced such an especial favour at the hands of the King, their spirits were raised a little, and they even ventured to show their independence in the presence of their bitterest foes, viz., the ecclesiastics.

We read in Giraldus Cambrensis, of "a certain Jew, who about this time chanced to travel towards Shrewsbury in company with Richard Peche (sin) Archdeacon of Malpas (bad-steps), in Cheshire, and a Reverend Dean, whose name was Deville. Amongst other discourses which they condescended to entertain him with, the Archdeacon told him that his jurisdiction was so large that it would reach from a place called Ill-street, all along till they came to Malpas, and that it took in a very wide circumference of the country.

"To which the Infidel, being more witty than wise, immediately replied, 'Say you so, sir? God grant me then a good deliverance; for it seems I am riding in a country where Sin is the Archdeacon, and the Devil himself the Dean; where the entrance into the archdeaconry is Ill-street, and the going forth from it Bad-steps.' Alluding to the French words péché and mal-pas."

It was properly observed, that "it is perhaps too much to judge of the state and condition of a body of people by a casual jest which fell from an individual of that body ; and yet we would not wish for better information concerning the actual condition of a small society of men, dwelling in and at the mercy of an alien country, than the manners and character of a single person out of the whole community."\*

Dr. Jost thinks that the above piece of wit owed its existence to the French schools ; and justly observes, that "it does not follow from it that the Jews were prone to ridicule their fellow-creatures (as Dr. Tovey intimates), even if they disregarded the clergy. Truth to speak, it would seem that they merited nothing else from the hands of the Jews but disregard and even contempt." †

\* "Retrospective Review." Vol. i. p. 207.

† "Vor ihren Hange zur Witzelei, der sich bei allen die aus der französischen Schule entsprossen sind, und noch entspriessen, immer findet, hat uns die Zeit noch eine Anekdote erhalten, die wir als characteristisch nicht übergehen können. . . . Daraus folgt nun gerade nicht, was der Berichterstatte daraus entnehmen will, dass die Juden so gerne ih re Nebenmenschen beleidigten, da sie sogar die Geistlichen nicht geschont hätten."—Jost's "Geschichte der Israeliten." Vol. vii. p. 114.



The priests, however, did not appreciate the buoyancy of the Jewish spirits, and were not backward in depressing them, and their tolerance, therefore, was but of short duration. They watched every opportunity of persecution, and the King's necessities afforded them a convenient season. The King wanted money—and the monks knew it : they therefore accused the Jews of crucifying a boy at Bury St. Edmund's, Robert by name, which proved a source of great income both to Church and State. Bury St. Edmund's had already become famous for its monastic establishments, and the monks, it appears, who were settled there, did not fail to derive advantage from the feelings which the belief of the crime excited.

They caused the body of the child to be interred with great ceremony and every mark of respect ; the shrine was declared capable of producing supernatural effects, and speedily became renowned for the miracles it wrought. Persons from all parts, either led by curiosity, or induced by feelings of superstition, visited the shrine. The offerings which were made on the occasion, could not fail to be productive of considerable profit to the Church.

The king, on the other hand, took advantage of the supposed crime, and banished the wealthiest Jews out of this country; and, as a matter of course, confiscated their properties, and fined heavily those he allowed to remain.

This alone was enough to cramp and to depress their spirits; but the measure of their sufferings was not yet full in this reign. The crusading mania revived: King Henry determined to take an active part in that affair, together with Philip Augustus, King of France; the want of cash in such an expedition was inevitable. The king saw fit to assess them at 60,000*l.* towards it; whilst the whole Christian population of England were only required to furnish 70,000*l.* It is easy to imagine in what a state of consternation this poor, persecuted race must have been thrown.

It can readily be conceived,—a fast-day proclaimed, and an especial prayer-meeting announced,—that God would avert that impending calamity. Happy for the poor Jews, however, that the then dispensation was a quarrelsome one: the harmony between Henry II., of England, and Philip Augustus, soon came to a termination. The British king is supposed to

have died of grief, in consequence; and with his death the Jewish prospects of prosperity revived. The Jews began to hope that their apprehended troubles had disappeared, and that an era of better days was on the eve of being introduced into their British annals.

They began again to apply themselves to commerce, of which they were the masters: they traded with the south of Europe, and thus accumulated vast sums, which they transferred from one hand to another by means of bills of exchange—an invention for which commerce is said to be indebted to them, and which enabled them to transfer their wealth from land to land, that when threatened with oppression in one country, their treasure might be secure in another.

The learned amongst them employed themselves in literature and the sciences, and promoted the same amongst their Christian neighbours. Whilst the Christians of that period were groping in the darkness of superstition and ignorance, the Jews enjoyed and heightened the sunshine of intellect and knowledge. They were honoured in Spain by the appellation of *Sapientissimi*. Whilst the Greek authors were totally

neglected by Christians — and even John of Salisbury, though a few Greek words are to be found in his compositions, seems to have had only the slightest possible acquaintance with that language—the Jews were reading, in their own language, several works of Aristotle, Plato, Ptolemy, Appollonius, Hippocrates, Galen, and Euclid, which they derived from the Arabic of the Moors, who brought them from Greece and Egypt; and employed much of their time in writing dissertations and controversial arguments upon them. They were the means, therefore, of the old classics being actively disseminated amongst the western colleges of Christendom.

The Jews also held the principal chairs of mathematics in the Mahommedan colleges of Cordova and Seville: they came in contact with many Christians, and spread themselves into various countries; they taught the geometry, the Algebra, the logic, and the chemistry of Spain, in the universities of Oxford and Paris, while Christian students from all parts of Europe repaired to Andalusia for such instruction.\* In

\* See "The Fundamental Principles of Modern Judaism Investigated." Pages 238. 239. Also, "An Apology for

this country, the Jews had schools in London, York, Lincoln, Lynn, Norwich, Oxford, Cambridge, and other towns, which appear to have been attended by Christians as well as by those of their own persuasion. Some of these seminaries, indeed, were rather colleges than schools. Besides the Hebrew and Arabic languages, arithmetic and medicine are mentioned among the branches of knowledge that were taught in them; and the masters were generally the most distinguished of the rabbies.\*

In this reign the celebrated Aben Ezra visited England, delivered public lectures, and wrote here three works. The first was "Egereth Ha Shabbath," (Epistle on the Sabbath.) From the date the Rabbi prefixed to that work, which runs thus—"And it came to pass in the year 4919, A. M. [1159 A.D.], in the middle of the night, even on a sabbath night, on the fourteenth day of the month Tebath, [corresponding to January], and I, Abraham Aben Ezra, the Sephardy [or Spaniard] have been in one of the cities of the the Study of Hebrew and Rabbinical Literature." By the Rev. Dr. M'Caul.

\* "Knight's Weekly Volume," xvii. p. 64.

island called 'the end of the earth,'"—It is evident that this Rabbi visited this country a great deal earlier than Dr. Tovey fancies, who thinks that it was in King Richard's time.\*

The second work which that distinguished *savant* composed in this country was—"The Foundation of Fear, and the Foundation of the Law," a MS. of which is deposited in De Rossi's library, (code 314), and bears an inscription to this effect: "I Abraham, from Spain, son of Meir, commonly called Iben Ezra, began this work in the Holy city of Sassandres, in the Isle of England, in the month of Tamooz, and finished in the month of Ab, in the year 4919, [1159]."

The third work according to Joseph from Modyl, in his preface to Exodus—is the commentary on the twelve minor Prophets: Rabbi Joseph writes thus,—“and I Joseph from Modyl, have heard the explanation of these dissertations from the mouth of the sage our Rabbi, Abraham Aben Ezra, in London; and I have explained them here in his own words: just as I understood him, so it is here recorded.”

The Jews practised successfully as physicians

\* "Anglia Judaica." Page 35.

in this country : they possessed a thorough knowledge of the medical science in all its branches. The monarchs and powerful barons of the time frequently committed themselves to the charge of some experienced sage amongst them, when wounded or in sickness ; and in consequence of the many cures which their superior medical skill enabled them to effect, they incurred the envy of the monks, who pretended to effect cures by the means of sainted relics. They therefore circulated a report that the Jews were acquainted with the occult sciences, and with the cabalistic art, and that they therefore must have performed their cures by incantations and witchcraft ; and a general belief was soon entertained that the Jews were sorcerers which proved a source of no small calamity to them in subsequent reigns.

## CHAPTER VI.

The Reign of Henry II. not so unfavourable in the main—  
 Monkish Patent Medicines and Jewish Physicians—An-  
 drew's Observation—The Jews begin to hope for better  
 days from Richard—Sir Walter Scott's Description a true  
 one—Jewish History of that time—Jews and Women ex-  
 cluded from witnessing the Coronation of Richard—Cœur-  
 de-Lion's Reign ushered in with a Massacre of the Jews—  
 A false Report—The King's Order ineffectual—Three of  
 the Rioters executed—Rabbi Jacob of Orleans amongst the  
 Slain—Benedict's Baptism—His Confession—The Arch-  
 bishop's Advice—The Archbishop's Brains.

THE reign of Henry II. seems, upon the whole,  
 —especially when compared with subsequent  
 reigns,—not to have been very unfavourable to  
 the prosperity of the Jews. They experienced the  
 usual share of imprisonments, fines and banish-  
 ment, which does not seem to have much depressed



their general state From the nature of some of the fines, which have been already described, the wealth and power of individuals among them, may be easily inferred ; and although the Jews had been frequently subjected to heavy pecuniary exactions under that reign, still the vigorous administration of that Prince had shielded them from popular violence. They were still able to carry on their trades and their professions. In spite of the reports circulated by the monks, that the Jews were sorcerers (in consequence of their superior medical skill), christian patients would frequent the houses of the Jewish physicians in preference to the monasteries, where cures were pretended to have been effected by some extraordinary relics, such as the nails of St. Augustine, the extremity of St. Peter's second toe, the breath of our Lord, which Nicodemus secured in a glove ; the feathers of the wings of the Archangel Michael, and more such-like patent medicines. It need hardly be added that the cures effected by the Jewish physicians were more numerous than those by the monkish impostors.

Andrews—who was evidently no friend to the Jews—in his continuation of Henry's Britain,

observes—"The partiality in favour of Jewish physicians was unaccountable, and probably ill-founded ; yet Elizabeth chose to trust her health in the hands of the Hebrew, Rodrigo Lopez, rather than have recourse to many English students in medicine, of considerable abilities, who attended her court." And in a note he adds—"The same fantastic preference had made Francis I., when indisposed with a tedious complaint, apply to Charles V. for an Israelite, who was the Imperial physician. Accordingly the person whom he sought for visited Paris ; but the king finding that he had been converted to Christianity, lost all confidence in his advice, and applied to his good ally, Soliman II., who sending him a true hardened Jew, the monarch took his counsel, drank asses' milk, and recovered."\*

When King Henry died, the Jews began to hope for better days. They were encouraged in their hopes by Richard's conduct, who, after his return from Normandy—where he had been as Duke—proclaimed liberty to all prisoners and captives, even to the greatest criminals. The coronation day, which was to take place in the beginning of the month of September, A.D. 1189,

\* Vol. ii. p. 63.

was proclaimed by the king, to be an universal day of joy; and to crown all, that year was believed by all Jews to have been one of their jubilees.

All these circumstances conspired to flatter the oppressed Jews, and to raise their expectation that they also would experience mercy from the lion-hearted monarch, and led them to hope that, together with this reign, an era of better days would be introduced into the annals of their history in this country. But, alas! "hope told them a flattering tale."

From the accession of this sovereign to the throne, the Jews had to date in characters of blood the commencement of a new and most severe series of sufferings and outrages. It is no exaggeration to say that their footsteps in this country from the days of Richard, to the days of Edward I.—when they were finally banished—may be tracked by their blood. Against them, sympathy had been steeled, and for their rights, justice has had no balances. So far has the bitterness of their affliction been from exciting commiseration, or their hopeless prostration from disarming cruelty, that however Norman, Saxon, Dane, and Briton, may have

differed in other respects, and, however adverse they were to each other, they concurred in treading down the Jews, and contended which should look with the greatest detestation upon a people whom it was accounted a point of religion to hate, to revile, to despise, to plunder, and to persecute.

How truly was it said, that “except, perhaps, the flying fish, there was no race existing on the earth, in the air, or in the waters, who were the objects of such an unintermitting, general, and relentless persecution as the Jews of this period. Upon the slightest and most unreasonable pretences, as well as upon accusations the most absurd and groundless, their persons and property were exposed to popular fury.”\*

It may not be uninteresting, however, to dwell on the history of the Jews in this realm during that period—though a dreary tale of woe—as it throws a great light upon the national character of the people of this country, and the nature of its government during the dark ages of its annals; and if it be painful to Englishmen to read of massacres, extortions, and persecutions perpetrated by their ancestors, upon a defenceless

\* Sir Walter Scott.

people, it may, nevertheless be a subject of congratulation that they are permitted to turn their eyes upon the improved state, both of the persecuted and the persecutors—an idea which is naturally reflected from the opaque surface of these barbarous times with a luminous brightness, upon their own more happy epoch.

Richard Cœur de Lion, whose whole thoughts were engaged in the contemplated relief of the Holy Land, and the recovery of Jerusalem, seems to have regarded the Jews with feelings of especial antipathy, as being the determined and sworn enemies of a religion, of which he professed himself so zealous a champion. The courtiers and the clergy,—especially Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, endeavoured to make the king believe that the Jews were, in general, sorcerers, and might possibly bewitch him if allowed to be present at his coronation.

Actuated by these sentiments, and desirous, perhaps, to give proof of the Sovereign contempt he entertained towards the opponents of Christianity in general, Richard, as one of the first acts of his reign, caused a proclamation to be issued the day before his inauguration, forbidding any woman or Jew to approach the

palace during the ceremony of his coronation. Both women and Jews were considered by the ministers of the Church to practice sorcery and witchcraft.\*

The issuing of such a proclamation at the commencement of the reign, was an ill omen of the treatment which the Jews were to expect under the government of the new monarch. They were desirous, if possible, to conciliate the mind of the king; and with a view to this purpose, deputed some of the chief men from amongst them to carry rich presents to his majesty.† The deputies, hoping that they would be protected by reason of the gifts of which they were the bearers, which, as Dr. Tovey says, "were full worthy of his acceptance," ventured to approach the court-yard of the palace at the time of the coronation, in order to crave leave of admittance, but the crowd pressing forward,

\* Miss Strickland gives the following as a reason for the exclusion of women: "As the etiquette of the Queen-mother's recent widowhood prevented her from sharing in this splendid festival, all women were forbidden to be present at its celebration."—"Queens of England." Vol. i. p. 373.

† Those who came from a distance must have been totally ignorant of the royal proclamation, since it was only one day old.

the Hebrews were forced within the gates before they could obtain permission to enter. The attendants who were stationed at the entrance, charged the Israelites with disobedience to the king's command, and with blows forced them back into the street. The mob who were assembled at the outside, when they saw what took place, raised a cry, that the king desired the proclamation which he had issued to be enforced, and forthwith fell upon such of the Jews as were mingled with the crowd, and began to beat most cruelly, the most loyal, yet defenceless Jews : many were severely wounded, some killed, and many were left half dead.

A report was now quickly spread through the city that the king had ordered all the Jews to be put to death, for the disregard shown to his proclamation. The populace lost no time in putting this supposed order into execution. The Jews were sought out by the mob in every quarter of the city, and wherever they were found, were slain without mercy. Many took refuge in their houses, and defended themselves with determined courage, till the rabble, whose fury was increased by the opposition they experienced, set fire to their victims' houses, and

burned them to the ground ; the Jews and their families perishing in the flames. The cruelties that were inflicted were so atrocious, that the more sober-minded citizens, who had in vain endeavoured to restrain the mob, at length sent information to the king of what was taking place. He was at the time seated at the banquet, but immediately gave directions to Randolph de Grandville, the Lord High Steward, to quell the tumult. This officer, taking with him some of the chief nobility, used his endeavours to put a stop to the outrage ; but the populace would pay no regard to his authority, threatened him with violence, and compelled him to retire.

No interference of the chief justice and his officers, whom the king had despatched to quell the tumult, availed, until the multitude were gorged with spoil, and wearied with the labour of slaughter. The tumult continued during the whole night ; the houses of all the Jews were plundered, and most of them burned, and it was not till the next day that an end was put to the proceedings, by a large force sent into the city by the king. A few of the most active of the rioters were apprehended, and three of them



were afterwards executed. It may excite surprise that so few suffered death at the hands of justice for the perpetration of so monstrous an outrage ; but it is only fair to assume that the judges, even in Richard's reign, regarded it as the effect of a blind fury of the populace, inflamed and precipitated by the supposed proclamation of an order. Yet what a state of things is here disclosed to us ; in which the prejudices and evil passions of a populace could lead them into such excesses ; and in which the plea that they were set on to the commission of robbery and murder by a royal mandate, sufficed to exempt the criminals from punishment ; such plea being held to be probable and rational enough. For it is observable that one of the three was hanged, not because he had plundered the Jews, but because he had taken advantage of the uproar to plunder the house of a Christian ; and the other two—who also met with the same fate—because by setting fire to the house of a Jew, they had exposed the dwellings of the neighbouring Christians to destruction. And we are further informed by another historian, “that the inquiry soon stopped, as many considerable

citizens were involved in the guilt, and as the priests applauded the pious zeal which destroyed so many enemies to the Christian faith.”\*

The celebrated Rabbi, Jacob of Orleans, was among the great number of Jews who were slain on this night; as appears from the following short notice of that awful event, by Rabbi Gedeliah ben Yoseph Yaahija, in his “Shalsheth Hakabbalah :”—

“In the year 4930 [A.M. 1190, A.D.] when Richard became new king in the city of London, which is in England, our Rabbi, Jacob of Orleans, was put to death in glorification of God’s name, and many other Jews with him.”

The following circumstance which occurred during that dreadful uproar, will give us some idea of the means which the Christian Church of that period employed, in order to bring the Jews to a knowledge of Salvation. Whilst animated by the above-mentioned mad frenzy and murderous rage, a Jew who was called Baruch (being interpreted, Benedict, or Blessed), of York, was seized, and commanded to choose either to profess Christianity, or to die immediately. This man, to save his life, called out

\* “Noorthouck,” p. 34.

that he would embrace the Christian faith ; whereupon he was carried by the mob to the Prior of St. Mary of York, and was by him baptized, The king hearing of the conversion, or rather of the baptism, commanded the Jew to be brought into his presence, and catechized him whether he had sincerely renounced his former faith. He answered that he had not, but only through fear of death submitted to whatever the Christians required of him. Richard, who was at the time attended by the chief dignitaries of the Church, asked the Archbishop of Canterbury what punishment should be inflicted on the apostate ? The Archbishop replied—Not any ; for if he will not be a man of God, let him be a man of the devil.”

“With which answer,” says the author of the “*Anglia Judaica*,” “the king being something surprised, suffered the man to slip away, and there was no further notice taken of him.” He continues, “This Archbishop, delighting more in carnal than spiritual warfare, had his brains knocked out within a few months after, at the siege of Acre.” Poor Benedict, however, did not survive more than a few days after this ordeal.

The Jews in order to secure the king's favour came forward with large supplies of money towards the expedition which the king undertook that year, and were therefore declared by proclamation to be under the king's special protection.

## CHAPTER VII.

The Spirit of Persecution speedily communicated to other Places—Citizens of Norwich—The Jews profess Christianity in Dunstable and other places—Their Treatment in Lynn—The Circumstances of their Persecution there—Their misplaced Zeal—Dr. Jost a partial Historian—Converted Jews still ill-treated by the unconverted ones—A suspected Convert at Liverpool—The Rev. Mr. Pauli—The Rev. S. H. Joseph—The Effect of the Crusade upon the Jews—The Treatment the Jews experienced at Stamford—At Lincoln.

THE spirit, however, which had broken out in London against the devoted Israelites, was speedily communicated to other parts of the country. To put an end to these disorders, the king caused writs to be issued throughout all the counties, forbidding any molestation to be offered to the Jews. But notwithstanding these

writs, the Hebrews were, in many places, subjected to severe persecutions ; they were attacked in so many places at once, that their utter ruin seemed determined and inevitable. Brompton tells us that the citizens of Norwich were the first who followed the example of the Londoners, and were soon followed by those of other places. In Dunstable and some other towns they saved themselves by professing to renounce the Jewish faith, and by being baptized into the Church of Christ. In the town of Lynn they were treated with great severity and cruelty. And here must be remarked—for it is the part of an impartial historian to state the whole truth, *pro* and *con*—that the Jews were themselves the authors of their sufferings at Lynn.

The circumstances under which the tumult in that town took place were the following :—A Jew had been converted to Christianity ; his brethren were enraged at his conduct, and sought to be revenged. They waylaid him, and one day as he passed through the streets, endeavoured to get him into their power. He, however, fled, and took refuge in a neighbouring church ; some of the Jews pursued him thither ; whereupon the sailors belonging to a ship lying

in the harbour, raised a cry that it was intended to put the convert to death, and being joined by the townspeople, under the plea of saving the man's life, they fell upon the Jews, drove them to their dwellings, and entering, slew many, carried off whatever valuables they could find, and then set fire to their houses. The mariners, enriched by the spoil, embarked immediately on board their vessel, and putting to sea, got clear off. ' "

The townspeople were called to account for the outrage which had been committed, in disobedience to the proclamation issued by the king, but escaped by laying the whole blame to the charge of the sailors.

Dr. Jost betrays here—as well as in many other places—no small measure of partiality, when he takes upon himself, without any reason whatever, to assert that “it was doubtless *his* (*i.e.* the convert's) fault, that he was persecuted in the open street by his former co-religionists.”\*

The same spirit of animosity still pervades

\* Den Anlass dazu gab ein getaufter Jude, der, ohne, Zweifel durch seine Schuld, von seinen ehemaligen Genossen auf offener Strasse rerfolgt wurde. “Geschichte der Israeliten.” Vol. vii. p. 119.

the feelings of the Jews towards their converted brethren. A circumstance to the same effect happened in Liverpool a few years ago. A Jew, who had been groundlessly suspected of inquiring into the doctrines of Christianity, entered a Jewish shop, on the eve of the Passover, and was accosted by another Jew, who was in the shop, by the salutation, "You are an accursed M'shoomad,"\* which the accused repudiated with disdain. The accuser, thinking no doubt, that he had an opportunity to do God service, gave his brother a tremendous blow on his face ; by which he almost broke his nose. As we have said, the charge was made without any ground ; the insulted Jew, therefore, who was ignorant of the precept, "pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you," took out the offender, on the first day of Passover, from the synagogue, and brought him before the mayor of the town, and had him duly punished.

The Rev. Mr. Pauli, missionary to the Jews at Amsterdam, writes thus on the 8th of June,

\* A nickname given by unconverted Jews to their brethren who believe in Christ.



1845 :\*—"This moment I hear of the following extraordinary occurrence. Last night a Jewish gentleman, no doubt from the country, was passing the Jewish quarter. Some Jews mistook him for me, and in a second a tremendous crowd, chiefly Portuguese Jews, was assembled, and in spite of all the remonstrances of the poor man that he was not 'Domine' Pauli, they rushed upon him, and beat him unmercifully, and left him half dead. When the mistake was found out, they did all they could to prevent the ill-used gentleman from giving notice of the affair to the police. He complied with their request, only wishing heartily that his bruises and broken head could be transferred to me."

The Rev. H. S. Joseph, formerly a Jewish Rabbi, now a clergyman of the Church of England, was called upon, after his conversion to Christianity, by a Mr. Moses F. Ansell, a connexion of his, who professed to be friendly disposed towards him ; and wishing to discuss in a quiet manner the doctrines of Christianity, Mr. Joseph readily complied. The discussion lasted for some time, during which the convert, endea-

\* See "Jewish Intelligence." Vol. xi. p. 259.

vouring to prove to his friend that his reasons for embracing Christianity were cogent ones ;\* Mr. Ansell, finding that he could not disprove the convert's arguments from Scripture, said to him—"Now we are by ourselves; you need not be afraid of me; I will divulge your mind to nobody. Tell me, then, do you really believe that Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified one, was the Messiah?" (The unbelieving Jews fancy that it is impossible for a Jew to be really a believer in Christ, however powerful the arguments are in favour of Christianity.) Mr. Joseph replied—"I believe from my heart that Jesus of Nazareth was the true Messiah, and in him alone do I hope for salvation." No sooner did he utter that confession, than his guest laid violent hands on him, and knocked him down to the ground. What carnal weapons! It was well for Mr. Ansell that Mr. Joseph was a Christian. To return, however, to the twelfth century:—

King Richard had passed over to the Continent, to join the King of France in the crusade to Palestine. Those who had taken the cross

\* See a small pamphlet of his, entitled "Reasons for believing that Jesus of Nazareth was the Expected Messiah."

were assembled in most of the principal towns, preparing to follow him. Of these, the greater number were ill-provided with funds to defray the expenses of their journey to the Holy Land, and their zeal in the cause readily justified any conduct, whereby the object to which they were pledged might be advanced. They observed, with envy, that the Jews were possessed of wealth; they regarded them as infidels, and worked themselves into a belief that they should, render good service to God, if, by wresting the riches from the hands of unbelievers, they obtained the means for aiding in the overthrow of the enemies of Christianity in the East.

On the seventh day of March, 1190, a public fair being held at Stamford, had drawn together to that place great multitudes of people, and amongst them whole troops of those roaming saints, as they were called. These zealous men, indignant that the enemies of Christ should abound in wealth, while they, who were His great friends, were obliged to strip their wives and children of common necessaries, in order to be provided with travelling expenses, argued that God would be highly honoured if they were first to destroy all the Jews, and then possess

themselves of their property. "So ready are men to believe what makes for their worldly advantage," observes Tovey; adding, "accordingly they flew upon them with great vigour and resolution, and finding very little resistance from an oppressed and spiritless enemy, quickly made themselves masters of their persons and fortunes; the former of which they treated with all kinds of barbarity. Some few of them, indeed, were so fortunate as to get shelter in the castle, whither, as they fled without their riches, the source of all their misery, they were not earnestly pursued. And as these devout pilgrims pretended to do all this for the advancement of God's glory, to show they were in earnest, they took shipping as fast as they could, and fled away to Jerusalem; not so much as one of them being detained by the magistrates, or any further inquiry made by the king into such a sanctified piece of villany." \*

Similar outrages were committed in several other parts of the kingdom. The same spirit prevailed also at Lincoln. An attack was on the point of being made on the helpless Jews there: but as by that time the melancholy

\* "Anglia Judaica," pp. 19—20.

intelligence was noised abroad, and the Jews were everywhere made acquainted that the faithful (?) aimed at their destruction, they retired as soon as possible into the king's fortress, which liberty they purchased, with a large sum, of the governor ; so that the majority of them escaped with little damage.

## CHAPTER VIII.

The Origin of Jewish Sufferings at York—The Jews take possession of the Castle—Refuse entrance to the Officials—The Exhortation of an Ecclesiastic—The Priest's Fate—The Rabbi calls a Convocation—His Address—The Besieged determined to terminate their Existence by their own Hands—The Secret of the Awful Catastrophe—The King's Orders to Apprehend the Offenders—They make their Escape—Richard Mala Bestia—Richard Cœur de Lion's Investigation—His Exchequer of the Jews—The Regulations of the same—The Jewish Justices—Their Contracts—The Star Chamber.

AT York, the popular feeling communicated itself to all classes of the inhabitants, and many of the nobles and principal gentry of the neighbourhood associated themselves with the soldiers of the cross, and with the knights of the temple, whose characters were stained with the vilest of human passions.

The origin of their persecution at York, was the following. It appears that Benedict and Jocenus, two of the richest Jews of York, were deputed by their brethren of that city to carry presents to the king on his coronation day. The fate of the former has been narrated already ; the latter was so far fortunate as to be able to return to York, where he related the sad catastrophe which had befallen his brethren in London ; but instead of exciting commiseration in the breasts of his Gentile neighbours, his narrative had the effect of stimulating them to a like outrage. The houses of the richest of the Jews were accordingly spoiled and burned, and many, together with their families, were murdered. The common people, urged by the example of their superiors, fell upon such as escaped the first assaults, and with savage fury slew them, without regard to age or sex.

Fifteen hundred, with their wives and children, escaped to the castle, and, by permission of the sheriff and keeper, took refuge there. The poor Jews, however, had soon good reason to think that these officers also had taken part with their assailants, and therefore refused to allow the castle officials to enter the gates of the

fortress ; whereupon the sheriff assembled an armed force, and laid siege to the castle. The mob joined in the attack, and though they were before sufficiently bent upon destruction and plunder, they were,—to the shame of the ecclesiastics of that day be it recorded—further stimulated by the exhortations of the clergy. One in particular, a canon of the order of Præmonstratenses, displayed uncommon zeal on the occasion. For several days he appeared amongst the people, dressed in his surplice, after having eaten a consecrated host, and greatly increased the fury of the rabble by continually calling out in a loud voice—“Destroy the enemies of Christ!—Destroy the enemies of Jesus!” At length the priest received the punishment his conduct justly merited ; for having approached too near the walls, he was crushed to death by a stone which was rolled down from the battlements.

For a time the Jews defended themselves with desperate bravery ; but the assault being warmly pressed, they found that they had no hopes of escape : they offered therefore a large sum of money that their lives might be spared. This was refused, and they proceeded to take vigorous measures for their defence, determining to hold



out to the last moment ; calling at the same time a council, to take into consideration what was to be done in case of their being driven to extremities ; which consultation altered their purpose completely. For, when they gathered themselves together in one place, one of their Rabbies, a man of great authority amongst them, and who also made the convocation, stood up and addressed them in the following words :—“ Ye men of Israel, the God of our fathers, to whom none can say, What doest thou ? commands us at this time to die for his law ; and behold ! death is even before our eyes, and there is nothing left us to consider but how to undergo it in the most reputable and easy manner. If we fall into the hands of our enemies, (which I think there is no possibility of escaping), our deaths will not only be cruel but ignominious. They will not only torment us, but despitefully use us. My advice therefore, is that we voluntarily surrender those lives to our Creator, which he seems to call for, and not wait for any other executioners than ourselves. The fact is both rational and lawful, nor do we want examples from amongst our illustrious ancestors, to prove it so ; they have frequently proceeded in the like manner upon

similar occasions." Thus spoke the old Rabbi, after which he sat down and wept.

The auditors looked first wistfully at each other, and then gave utterance to their thoughts, some loudly approving the advice of the Rabbi, whilst others, with tears in their eyes, avowed their dissent from the Rabbi's opinion.

To which the Rabbi, standing up a second time, replied—"seeing brethren, that we are not all of one mind, let those who do not approve of this advice depart from this assembly." The less courageous departed. But by far the greater number adhered steadfastly to the leader's proposal. And as soon as they perceived themselves alone, which increased their despair, they first burned everything belonging to them that was consumable by fire, and buried the remainder in the earth (to prevent its falling into the possession of their enemies); they then set fire to several places of the castle at once, after which, each man took a sharp knife, and first cut the throats of his wife and children, and then his own. The persons who remained last alive were this rash counsellor, and the aforementioned Jocenus, who were possessed of a strong desire to see everything performed according to their

directions. They did not survive much longer ; as soon as that atrocious deed was done, the Rabbi, out of respect to Jocenus (who was a person of importance), first slew him, and then himself.\* When this dreadful tragedy was completed, those who remained alive took up the dead bodies, and threw them over the walls, on the heads of the besiegers ; and determined at last upon the expedient of their deceased brethren. They also burned their clothes, and such of their valuables as would consume, and threw the rest of their treasures into the sinks and drains of the castle ; and the greater part of those who survived, collecting themselves together in one of the buildings, set fire to it, and resigned themselves to the flames. A few only, of less courage than their brethren, still remained. These, coming forward upon the ramparts, called out to the assailants, and showed the manner in which their companions had fallen, and offered to receive baptism if their lives might be spared.

\* Dr. Jost states that "Jocenus first strangled his wife Hannah, with his five children, and then allowed himself to be slain by the Rabbi, whose example was followed by all the remainder." *Jossen erwürgte seine Frau Hanna mit fünf Kindern, und liess sich dann von dem Rabbi niederschlagen. Seinem Beispiel folgten alle Uebrigen.*

This was granted to them ; but they no sooner passed the gate than the people flew upon them and slew them, with the exception of one or two who escaped ; which proved that the Rabbi was not far wrong in his calculation. The populace afterwards betook themselves to the destroying and burning of all the houses of the Jews in the city, which had not been previously demolished. Thus perished nearly two thousand Jews at York on this occasion, besides those who fell in the other parts of England. The elder Disraeli in his "Curiosities of Literature," makes the following remark at the conclusion of an article on the above melancholy tragedy. "My Rabin is a companion for Cato. His history is a tale,

‘ Which Cato’s self had not disdained to hear.’”

Now comes the secret. No sooner did the English make an end of butchering that unhappy people, than many gentlemen of the province—who having been their debtors, and took, therefore, the most active part in the carnage—repaired to the cathedral, where their bonds were deposited, compelled the officer to deliver those obligations, and burned them in the church with great solemnity before the altar.

When the account of these outrages reached

the king's ears, he was exceedingly enraged at this insult upon his authority, which at the same time effected his revenue ; he sent over immediate directions to the Bishop of Ely, his Chancellor, to apprehend and punish the offenders. The Chancellor accordingly proceeded to York with a strong force, to execute the king's commands. The principal actors in the massacres, however, being warned of his approach, made their escape ; some of them taking refuge into Scotland, but the greater number proceeding on their journey to the Holy Land. The governor of the castle and the sheriff were, however, apprehended, and not being able to clear their conduct, were deprived of their respective offices. A heavy fine was also imposed upon the inhabitants of the city, for which the Chancellor took one hundred hostages with him. Richard, (*mala bestia*, wicked beast), or, as he is called *Mallebisse*, was obliged to pay twenty marks for the use of his land, as also for protection to himself and his two esquires, till the king's return ; but with these exceptions, it does not appear that any individual was brought to punishment for the part he had taken in the late disturbances.

When Richard returned home, after his cap-

tivity, the affairs of the Jews were again brought under his consideration ; and he appointed justices itinerant to proceed through the different parts of England, for the purpose of making further inquiries concerning the slaughter of the Jews :—Who were the murderers ?—what lands and chattels belonged to them at the time they were slain ?—who took possession of the same ? &c. He established very curious regulations, professedly for the protection of the Jews, but really, as it was well observed, “that he might fleece them at his pleasure.” He established the famous Exchequer of the Jews. The revenues arising from them were placed under the care of an office for the purpose, in which the Justiciaries of the Jews presided. To these places Jews and Christians were indifferently appointed. They had not only the Jewish revenues under their care, but were also judges of all civil matters where a Jew was one of the parties. Lord Coke takes notice of this court, and calls it the “Court of the Justices of the Jews.”

“In order to know,” observes Dr. Tovey, “what were the particular moneys, goods, debts, real and personal estates, belonging to

every Jew in the nation, he commanded (something after the manner of the Conqueror's 'Domesday,') that all effects belonging to the Jews should be registered.

“That the concealment of any particular should be forfeiture of body and whole estate.

“That six or seven public places should be appointed, wherein all their contracts were to be made.

“That all such contracts should be made in the presence of two assigned lawyers, who were Jews, and two that were Christians, and two public notaries.

“That the clerks of William de Sancta Maria and William de Chimelli should likewise be present at all such contracts.

“That such contracts should likewise be made by indenture ; one part of which was to remain with the Jews, sealed with the seal of him to whom the money was lent ; and the other in a common chest, to which there were to be three locks and three keys.

“One key whereof was to be kept by the said Jewish lawyers ; the other by the Christian lawyers ; and the third by the aforesaid clerks.

“The chest also was to be sealed with three seals.

“The aforesaid clerks were also commanded to keep a transcript-roll of all such contracts ; which roll was to be altered as often as the original charters of contract were altered.

“And the fee for drawing every such charter was to be three pence ; one moiety whereof was to be paid by the Jew, and the other moiety by him to whom the money was lent ;—whereof the two writers were to have two pence, and the keeper of the rolls the third.

“It was ordained likewise, that as no contracts for money, so no payment of it, or acquittance, or any other alterations in the charters or transcript-rolls were to be made, but in the presence of the aforesaid persons, or the greater part of them.

“The aforesaid two Jews were to have a copy of the said transcript-roll, and the two Christians another.

“Every Jew was to take an oath upon his roll,\* that he would truly and faithfully register all his estates, both real and personal, as above directed ; and discover every Jew whom he

\* Parchment MS. of the Pentateuch.



should know guilty of any concealment ; as likewise all forgers or falsifiers of charters, and clippers of money.”

Under these regulations the Jews lived peaceably ; for they very seldom, on their part, violate any regulations established between themselves and others, especially when under an oath ; and as it was the king’s interest to adhere to the above regulations on his part, the Jews enjoyed comparative tranquillity—but at no small expense.

The justices of the Jews at that time were a certain Benedict and Joseph Aaron. Their contracts, or, as they were then called, Shtaroth, from the Hebrew—or, rather, Chaldee word Shtar—were written either in indifferent Hebrew or bad Latin, or the same sort of French. That court where all those documents were deposited obtained the name of “the Star Chamber.” It was well remarked, that Richard made the Jews most unfortunate. He used them as a press, with which to squeeze his subjects ; by which they incurred no small degree of animosity from their Christian neighbours.\*

\* See “Geschichte der Israeliten,” vol. vii. p. 130.

## CHAPTER IX.

King John's unenviable Notoriety—Rebecca's Reply to the Lady Rowena—John, artful as well as wicked—Began his Reign with pretended Kindness—His Charter to Rabbi Jacob—The Second Charter—Jews much Privileged—The Great Charter of Jewish Privileges—The Price of the Charter.

THIS chapter commences with the history of the Jews in this country, during the reign of King John—the reign of one who has acquired an unenviable notoriety in the political history of this country—one who is well known as a disobedient son, an unnatural brother, and a savage monarch—one who disregarded the rights of all men—one, in short, who trampled under foot all laws, both divine and human.

What could the Jews expect from such a character? The natural effect of the cruelties to

which they had been subjected during the last reign, under Richard Cœur de Lion—who though generous, was yet rash and romantic, which was the cause of their very great sufferings—we say, the natural effect would have been to deter them from attempting to accumulate any more wealth in this country; and it was to be apprehended that on the accession of such an unprincipled man to the throne, and the semi-barbarian state of the then people of England, who were continually quarrelling amongst themselves, and were ready at all times to plunge the sword or the lance into the breasts of each other: the Jews, under such circumstances, instead of resorting to England, as holding out to them inducements for the acquirement of riches, might have been expected to have quitted this island altogether. It was well put into the mouth of a Jewish maiden of that age, “Such is no safe abode for the children of Israel. Ephraim is an heartless dove—Issachar an over-laboured drudge, which stoops between two burdens. Not in a land of war and blood, surrounded by hostile neighbours, and distracted by internal factions, can Israel hope to rest during her wanderings.”\* It was to have been

\* Sir Walter Scott's “Ivanhoe.”

imagined that they would have betaken themselves to Spain, where their brethren were just then highly honoured, and in the enjoyment of great favour at the Spanish courts. But John was artful as well as wicked.

The law which his brother Richard enacted, relative to the Exchequer of the Jews, permitted the king to exercise unlimited power over the properties of the Jews. This circumstance afforded him great facilities for obtaining supplies to a large amount, upon any emergency.

John wanted money continually, in consequence of his incessant disagreements with his people. He saw it necessary to devise some expedient measure which would have the effect of allaying the fears of the Jews; and he therefore began his reign with pretended kindness towards them, holding out to their view the expectation of greater security in future.

Accordingly, King John, in the first year of his reign, to show the Jews that they would not be molested by reason of any antipathies which he entertained towards them on account of their creed, granted them permission to nominate a person to the office of chief Rabbi of England,

and confirmed the appointment by the following charter :—

“The King to all his faithful, both to all the Jews and the English, greeting. Be it known, that we have granted, and by our present charter confirmed, to Jacob the Jew, of London, Presbyter of the Jews, the jurisdiction of all the Jews throughout all England; to be had and to be held by him during his lifetime, freely and quietly, honourably and entirely, so that no one may presume to molest, or trouble him in any way. We wish, therefore and firmly command, that the same Jacob, Presbyter of the Jews of all England, may live secure, shielded, and peaceably defended. And if any one shall presume to impeach him on that account, that without delay you cause amends to be made (our interference to be procured for our protection), as also for our Dominican Jews, whom we keep in our special service. We also prohibit any plea to be entered in, concerning any thing that belongs to him, unless before us, or before our chief justice, as it is appointed by our brother Richard.”

Highly flattering as this appointment must have been to the Jews, the king complimented

them still more by granting Jacob, who was their first chief Rabbi, a charter of safe-conduct throughout his dominions, honouring him in the record with the highest terms of love and respect, and commanding all his subjects to regard his person with the same reverence and affection as they were bound by their allegiance to pay to the king himself.

As this was the first time that the Jewish nation had been so honourably mentioned, and so carefully protected, a perusal of the whole charter may not be unacceptable. The original is a mixture of Latin, Saxon, and French.

“John, by the grace of God, &c., to all his faithful subjects, to whom these letters may come, as well beyond as on this side the sea. You are commanded and enjoined, that through whatever village or place our well-beloved and intimate Jacob, the Presbyter of the Jews, may pass, that you allow him and every thing belonging to him to pass safely and freely, and that you do not suffer any injury, trouble, or violence to be offered to him any more than to ourselves; and if any one should presume to injure him in any wise, that you cause redress to be made without delay.”

In furtherance of the same purpose of conci-

liation, the king, also, in the second year of his reign, granted two other important charters : the one extended to the Jews of Normandy, as well as to those of England ; the other was confined to England alone. By these charters, it was, amongst other things, granted to the Jews, that they might live freely and honourably within the king's dominions, and hold lands, and have all their privileges and customs, as quietly and honourably as they had in the time of Henry I. : that if a Jew died, the king would not disturb his possessions, provided he left behind him an heir who could answer his debts and forfeitures ; that they should be at liberty to go where they would, with all their chattels and effects, without restraint or hindrance. Certain regulations were also prescribed for the adjustment of any differences which might arise between the Jews themselves, or with the Christians ; as between themselves, all disputes were to be settled according to their own laws ; if any Christian had a plaint against a Jew, it was not to be tried in the ordinary manner, but by a Jury of Jews, and before particular Judges, as will be seen by the following literal translation of the same great charter of the Jews :—

“ John, by the grace of God, &c. Be it

known that we have granted to all the Jews of England and Normandy to have a residence freely and honourably in our land, and they are to hold all things of us, which they held of King Henry, our great grandfather ; and all those things which they now lawfully hold in land, bonds, and mortgages, and their chattels. That they may have all the liberties and customs which they had in the time of the said Henry, the grandfather of our father, in a better and more quiet and more honourable manner.

“ And if complaint shall arise between a Christian and a Jew, let him who shall have appealed against the other procure witnesses to substantiate his plaint, viz., a lawful Christian and a lawful Jew. And if a Jew shall have a writ concerning his plaint, his own writ shall be his witness. And if a Christian shall have a plaint against a Jew, the plaint shall be tried by the Jew’s peers. And when a Jew dies, his body shall not be detained above the ground ; and let his heirs have his money and his debts, so that he be not disturbed thence, that is to say, if he have an heir who would be responsible for him, and do justice as touching his debts and forfeitures. And let it be lawful for Jews to buy



everything offered to them, and to receive them, except such things as belong to the Church, and crimson cloth.

“If a Jew be summoned by one without a witness, let him be free from such a summons by his single oath taken on his book ; and if he be summoned concerning things which belong to the Crown, let him likewise be free by his single oath on his roll. If a difference arise between a Christian and a Jew about the lending of money, the Jew should prove the capital, and the Christian the interest ; that a Jew may lawfully and quietly sell a mortgage made to him, when he is certain that he held it a whole year and a day ; that the Jew should not be entered into any plea, except before us, or before the keepers of our castles, in whose bailiwicks the Jews resided. That the Jews, wherever they are, may go whither they please, with their chattels, as if they were our own chattels, nor may any man detain or hinder them ; and we ordain that they should be free throughout England and Normandy, of all customs, tolls, and modiations of wines, just as much as our own chattels are. And we command and order you to keep, defend, and protect them ; and we prohibit any one

from impleading them in opposition to this charter, touching the things mentioned above, under pain of forfeiture, as the charter of our father, King Henry II., did reasonably command."

And as a particular encouragement to the English Jews, John granted, moreover, by another charter, dated the same day, that all differences among themselves, which did not concern the pleas of the crown, should be heard and determined by their rabbies, according to their own law: a privilege which must have been of great importance to them, as the Jews consider it strictly unlawful to go to judgment before Gentiles.

In return for these Charters the Jews paid the sum of 4000 marks.

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## CHAPTER X

The Royal Favour excited the Envy of the Gentiles—Bonefand, a Jew of Bedford—The Jews ill-treated by the Citizens of London—The King's Letter to the Mayor and Barons of London—The King unmasked—The Reason of his former Generosity made palpable—The Jews taxed Sixty-six Thousand Marks—All Jews, of both sexes imprisoned—The Jew's Eye—Abraham, the Bristol Jew, and his Teeth—John's Wars—The multifarious Taxes John imposed upon the Jews—The Jews of Southampton—John's Wedding Gifts—His Present to the Earl of Ferrars—The Effects upon the Barons—The Reason of the Jews being noticed in the Magna Charta—The Barons' Conduct towards the Jews at that time. An ancient Hebrew Tombstone found—"The Hospital of Converts"—John's last Act towards the Jews.

THE Jews, encouraged by such extraordinary marks of respect and kindness, fancied once more that they had found in England a home, and great numbers began to come over from the

continent. The royal favour, however, tended to excite the envy of their Gentile neighbours, who began to accuse the Hebrew financiers again of various crimes, as crucifying children, and falsifying the coin, &c.

In the fourth year of this reign, a Jew of Bedford, Boneland by name, was indicted for a crime of a very incredible nature ; which alleged crime, however, could not be proved, and the Jew was, therefore, honourably acquitted.

In the fifth year of this reign, the Jews were subjected to many ill-treatments and indignities from the citizens of London ; but the king still continued to show a desire of affording his Hebrew subjects protection. They petitioned him to interfere his authority, and obtain them security from a recurrence of like grievances ; whereupon he immediately wrote a sharp letter to the mayor and barons of London, in which he told them that, "as they knew the Jews were under his special protection, he wondered that any ill had been suffered to come upon them ;" and after committing the Jews to their guard and protection, concluded with saying, that if any fresh injuries should be allowed to befall them, he

should require their blood at the hands of the citizens.

The measures of conciliation had the desired effect: the Jews, placing reliance in the protection thus offered them by the king, again applied themselves, with full confidence, to the acquirement of property; and before ten years of this reign had passed away, their increasing wealth rendered them capable of affording a rich harvest to the Crown. When the fickle tyrant found that this was the case, he did not any longer keep the mask of kindness on his face: he began to throw aside the disguise he had assumed, and by every means which lay in his power he endeavoured to reap the advantages which his policy had placed within his grasp.

It evidently appears that the reason he lavished so many privileges upon them, was for the diabolical purpose of alluring them into his power, that he might plunder and oppress them at pleasure. It was aptly said by a French historian, that the Jews were used like sponges, allowed for a time to suck up a large amount of wealth, which was wrung out, when filled, into the coffers of the Crown.

In the year 1210 he laid a tallage upon the Jews of 66,000 marks, and enforced payment by imprisonment, and by the infliction of various modes of bodily torture. He commanded all the Jews of both sexes throughout England to be imprisoned, till they would make a discovery of their wealth, which he appointed officers to receive in every county, and return to his exchequer.

The generality of them had one eye put out, which may be the origin of estimating riches by the price of a Jew's eye. One Jew of Bristol, said to have resided on the Broad Weir, Abraham by name, who hesitated to pay the sum at which he was assessed, (no less than 10,300 marks of silver) is stated to have been condemned to the cruelty of having one of his teeth torn from his head each day, until he had discharged his quota. For seven days he submitted to the torture : on the eighth day, having lost all his teeth but one, he produced the amount demanded of him .

The many wars King John was engaged in about that time, pressed him very hard for money. He not only waged war against France, Ireland, and Wales, but also against his own barons. Money was indispensable, and the poor Jews were the sufferers.



The next year a further tallage was levied, in which one Jew alone paid 5,500 marks. In the sixteenth year of his reign, John imposed another heavy tax, and compelled its payment by imprisonment and other measures of violence. Some of the Jews of Southampton were rather backward in their payments; they were ordered to be imprisoned and sent to the Castle of Bristol.

Besides the sums which were thus raised upon the Jews by the means of taxes affecting their whole community, the king derived considerable advantages from appropriating the property of individuals amongst them.

Was he desirous of making a handsome wedding gift to any one, he did so by sending the favoured party a full receipt of all the debts owed to the poor Jew, as was the case with a certain Robert. In some instances he would seize upon their houses, and grant them away, as was the case with Isaac of Norwich, who had a house in London, which the king, without ceremony, presented to the Earl of Ferrars. But the mode he more generally adopted to turn their acquisitions to account, was to enter into agreements and compromises with their debtors—either releasing in full the sum which was due, or

discharging the interest payable upon the amount.

It would appear that the right which the king thus assumed of treating the debts due to the Jews as his own, although it brought considerable advantage to the Crown, was found, in some instances, to be grievous to the people in general ; it placed all persons who were under engagements to the Jews, in the same situation as the debtors to the king, and thereby subjected them to liabilities much more extensive than those to which, in common cases, they would have been exposed. When, therefore, the barons forced from King John the great charter of liberty, they included in it two several clauses, which have for their object the regulation of the claims in respect to these debts, and the twelfth clause in *Magna Charta* declares—"If any one have borrowed anything of the Jews, more or less, and dies before the debt be satisfied, there shall be no interest paid for that debt, so long as the heir is under age, of whomsoever he may hold ; and if the debt fall into our hands, we will take only the chattel mentioned in the charter or instrument." The thirteenth clause further declares, "If any one shall be indebted

to the Jews, his wife shall have her dower, and pay nothing for the debt ; and if the deceased leave children under age, they shall have necessaries provided for them, according to the tenement of the deceased, and out of the residue the debts shall be paid, saving, however, the service of the Lord.”

The barons, who had assembled with the view of compelling the king to grant this charter, collected part of their forces in London ; and whilst they remained there, imitated the king's conduct and broke into the residences of the Jews, and pillaged them of whatever valuables they could find ; and then, pulling down the houses, carried the stones of which they were built, and used them for the purpose of repairing the walls of the city.

About two hundred and seventy years ago ; when Ludgate was rebuilt and enlarged, a very large stone was discovered with the following Hebrew inscription :—

MATZABH R. MOSHEH BEN HARABH R. YITZCHAK. CH. W.

“The tombstone of Rabbi Moses, the son of the Rabbi Isaac the wise and learned.”\*

\* The absurd criticism of Dr. Tovey on the above epitaph has been already refuted by Dr. Jost. See “Geschichte der Israeliten.” Vol. vii. p. 405.

There were some, however, in this reign who were interested in the spiritual welfare of the poor persecuted Jews.

The king himself was indeed an infidel, and cared for no religion, and loved no God but the god of money, and, therefore, cared for nothing but the treasure of the Jews. There was, however, a Prior, Richard by name, of Bermondsey, who, A.D. 1213, built a house for the reception of Christian Jews, and called the building, "The Hospital of Converts." The Prior did it in honour to St. Thomas.\*

The last act of King John towards the Jews was to employ them in a barbarous deed, to execute which he could not compel any of his Christian subjects

Having taken prisoners a great part of the Scotch army at Berwick, who assisted the barons, he determined to inflict such a variety of cruel and inhuman tortures upon them, that he could find none, except the Jews, whose obedience he was able to command. The Jews in the neighbourhood were, therefore, reluctantly obliged

\* It appears that there was an institution of that kind in the city of Oxford. See Wood's "History of the University of Oxford."

to become their executioners. It is not to be supposed that the Jews lamented much his decease, since even a modern Jew can yet exclaim at the mention of his name, "Thank God that there was only one King John."

## CHAPTER XI.

Henry III. in his Minority—The Earl of Pembroke befriends the Jews—Hubert de Burgh equally kind—Reason for the Jewish Distinguishing Badge in this Country—Apparent Kindness allured them into this Country—Reason of the Clerical Hatred towards the Jews—The Archbishop of Canterbury and Bishop of Lincoln—Jews more accomplished than their Gentile Neighbours—Stephen Langton's Edict at his Provincial Synod—The Royal counter Edict.

WHEN Henry III. succeeded to the throne, he was only nine years old; and owing to the impious and arbitrary conduct of the late king, the country was in a state of general turbulence and discontent. It was, therefore, fortunate for the Jews, in common with the nation at large, that the administration of affairs, in the early years of this reign, fell successively into the hands of men of distinguished ability and virtue.

The Earl of Pembroke, whilst by his talents and vigour he reduced the disaffected to respect the power of the Crown, also reconciled all ranks of men to his authority by the equity and impartiality of his measures.

As soon as he entered on his exalted office, as guardian to the youthful King, he adopted measures for the special relief and protection of the poor persecuted Jews.

Many individuals amongst them were exonerated from burdens which had been previously imposed upon them ; and numbers were immediately liberated from imprisonments, to which, upon various pretences, they had under the late king been condemned. Writs and letters-patent were issued, directed to the principal burgesses of each of the towns where the Jews resided, viz., London, Lincoln, York, Hereford, Worcester, Stamford, Bristol, Northampton, Southampton, Winchester, Gloucester, Warwick, and Oxford, in all which places great numbers of Jews were yet to be found, commanding that they should be held secure from any injuries, either to their persons or to their properties ; and particularly that they should be guarded against any violence from the hands of the crusaders. In addition to

these measures, a confirmation of the charter they had obtained in the beginning of the late reign was granted, by the terms of which, it will be remembered, that most important privileges were accorded them, and their estates and persons were shielded from violence. At the same time, with this confirmation of their former charter, the Jews were further exempted from the jurisdiction of the ecclesiastical courts ; and to secure them a more strict administration of justice, the judges, who in the late reign had presided over their affairs in the exchequer, and who had shown themselves unworthy of their trust, were removed from their office, and persons of character appointed in their place.

Hubert de Burgh, who, upon the death of the Earl of Pembroke, succeeded him in the chief direction of the government, was little inferior to his predecessor in the wisdom and probity of his conduct. During the fifteen years that these ministers continued in power, no instances are recorded of any acts of violence having been offered to Jews ; but we are, on the contrary, informed that many unlooked for privileges were lavished upon them. In conjunction with these measures, the sheriffs of the different places, where the Jews resided,



were directed to require that the Jews should distinguish themselves by wearing, on all occasions, a particular mark upon their clothes. The mark was to be attached to their upper garment, and was to consist of two white tablets of linen or parchment, and to be affixed to their breasts. Some historians wish to persuade us, that although this order bore the appearance of being of a nature at once degrading and oppressive, it had nevertheless been dictated by no unkindly intention; and it has been remarked, that by making the Jews thus plainly known from other persons, any one who offended against the directions given for their protection, would be deprived of the excuse they might otherwise have made, of being ignorant of their persons. This certainly sounds plausible, but a critical reader of history will at once discover that such a reason is a mere gloss. The real reason for the enactment of that strange order seems to be, that the Jews should be discernible in the eyes of the king, in order that when he wanted money he should know where to find it without great search; for we are informed by Dr. Tovey, that "the next year [of Henry's reign], the king being informed of his council that great profit would arise from the

Jews if they were kindly dealt with, sent forth the following writs to the respective sheriffs and officers, commanding them to elect twenty-four burgesses out of every town where the Jews resided in any number, to watch carefully over them that they received no injury, and particularly guard them against the insults of "Jerusalem Pilgrims." So that, it appears that the government after all watched more jealously their purses than their persons !

However, the protection which was thus extended to them again inspired them with confidence : those who had survived the oppressions of the last reign began afresh to accumulate wealth ; and numbers of their nation were induced to come over from the continent, and settle in this country. The new comers were at first treated with violence by the wardens of the Cinque Ports where they landed. They were thrown into prison, and pillaged of their effects. For though the policy of the government towards the Jews had changed, the hatred and cupidity of the people in general remained unchanged. When however, information was given at court of the circumstance, relief was quickly afforded. Writs were issued to the officers of the different

ports, commanding that such Jews as had been imprisoned should be set at liberty, and be allowed to live freely and without restraint, upon consenting to enter their names upon the Rolls of the Justices of the Jews, and not to depart the country again without permission.

The clergy, it would seem, took umbrage at the privileges which the Jews enjoyed, and resolved to attempt, by an exercise of ecclesiastical authority, to overrule the effects of the protection which had been afforded by the measures of government. Stephen Langton, Archbishop of Canterbury, in conjunction with Hugo de Velles, Bishop of Lincoln, published a general prohibition, by which all persons were forbidden to buy anything of the Jews, or to sell them any victuals or necessaries, or to have any communication with them ; declaring, at the same time, that they were persons, who, by the laws of the Church, were excommunicated for their infidelity and usury. Indeed the ecclesiastics had more cause to be jealous of them then than at any subsequent period.

The Jews were then a more accomplished and enlightened race, than centuries of feudal oppression had made them four or five hundred years

later. Benjamin of Tudela, the great Jewish traveller of the preceding century, informs us, that every association of Jews in the more important cities of Europe, had its college, or seminary, for training men learned in their law : whilst on the other hand, Christians were then groping in the darkness of superstition and ignorance. The laity, and even the priesthood, were then, in point of enlightenment, as far inferior to their descendants four hundred years later, as the Jews were superior to theirs. In England, the balance of learning and accomplishments decidedly preponderated in favour of the Jews, as was already shown in a former chapter. There was a difference too in the relative holds of the two religions upon the minds of their votaries. Both rested upon one common basis—the Old Testament. The faith which spiritualizes the types and forms of that sacred volume was then comparatively new in the Island ; many of its inhabitants had been pagans only two or three centuries before, and were yet wavering in their faith. On the other hand, the Jews were stronger in faith then than they are now.

The Jews were then a proselytising race : now they no more seek to make converts than the

Society of Friends. All which tended to excite emulation on the part of the Church. \*

Stephen Langton issued, therefore, the following edict respecting the Jews, at his provincial synod :—"That the Jews do not keep Christian servants ; and let the servants be compelled by ecclesiastical censure to observe this, and the Jews by canonical punishment, or by some extraordinary penalty contrived by the diocesans. Let them not be permitted to build any more synagogues, but be looked upon as debtors to the Churches of the parishes wherein they reside, as to tithes and offerings.

"To prevent likewise the mixture of Jewish men and women with Christians of each sex, we charge by authority of the general council, that the Jews of both sexes wear a linen cloth, two inches broad and four fingers long, of a different colour from their own clothes, on their upper garment, before their breast ; and that they be compelled to do this by ecclesiastical censure ; and let them not presume to enter into any Church."

How little solicitous was the Christian Church in the middle ages to bring the Jews to a know-

\* See Knight's "London."

ledge of the truth ! The above edict virtually acknowledges the friendly disposition which pervaded the breasts of the Jewish people towards their Christian neighbours ; nay more, it virtually maintains that the Jews desired to visit Christian places of worship, but were forced back by Christian bishops.

The Jews appealed to the Crown for protection and obtained relief. Directions were sent to the sheriffs of the different counties and cities, to prevent the prohibitions being enforced ; and orders were given to imprison all persons who, by reason of the commands of the Church, refused to sell provisions to the Jews. This edict of the Church was published in the seventh year of this reign.

## CHAPTER XII.

Seven Years' Silence—The Prior of Dunstable—The Murmurs against the Jews—The King seizes the Effects of Jewish Converts—A Pleasing Consideration—Augustin a Jewish Convert—Change of Feeling towards the Jews—New Jewish Synagogue Seized, and converted into a Church—Dr. Jost's just Remark—An Armenian Bishop and the "Wandering Jew"—The King's Manifesto in behalf of the Christian Religion—His Mode of Enforcing the Payment of Exorbitant Taxes—The King seized by a Charitable Fit—The Cause—The King's Charter for the Jewish Convert's House—Henry was no loser by the Establishment—Legitimate Suggestion.

IN the annals of the succeeding seven years, no mention is made of the Jews, and we may therefore conclude that during that period they were permitted to live free from persecution. They experienced marks of liberality even from

some of the clergy. We know an instance in the conduct of the Prior of Dunstable, who granted several of them permission to reside within his jurisdiction, and to enjoy all the privileges in common with the Gentiles, for the annual payment of two silver spoons, each of which was to weigh twelve pennyweights. Unfortunately for them, as well as for the nation in general, the conduct of public affairs assumed a different aspect; it was after that time taken out of the hands of Hubert de Burgh, who till then had continued in power, and was placed under the control of men whose principles and motives were entirely opposite to those of that minister. From henceforth the Jews, in place of the security they had previously enjoyed, were subjected to continued violence and arbitrary exaction.

The English subjects began to murmur that too much favour had been shown to the Jews, and consequently charged the king with indifference towards the Christian religion. The king, therefore, wishing to convince them that he was zealous for Christianity, and thereby quiet the turbulent minds of his subjects, determined to seize upon the whole effects of any



Jewish convert to Christianity.\* It is a pleasing consideration, however, that in spite of such a cruel and anti-Christian conduct there were some Jews of some celebrity in this country, who hazarded every thing for the sake of truth. We have an instance in a Jew of Canterbury, Augustin by name, who about that time embraced Christianity; and the monkish historians relate as an act of great kindness on the part of Henry, that he was actually graciously pleased to give him his house again to live in, notwithstanding that he was converted.

The change of feeling on the part of the government towards them, was first manifested in the fourteenth year of this reign. In this year they were compelled to give up a third part of their moveables to the Crown. Immediately after the imposition of this tax, the Jews in London were subjected to another unexpected act of injustice and oppression. By permission of the king, they had lately completed a syna-

\* A most impious custom practised by a great many Christian monarchs of that age, who justified their infamous conduct by a reference to Jesus' command to the young ruler.

gogue, upon a scale of great magnificence, which surpassed all the Christian churches in architectural taste. No objection whatever was made to the work in its progress; but as soon as it was finished, the king sent directions to have it seized, and forthwith granted it to the brothers of St. Anthony of Vienna, to be by them converted into a church. Dr. Jost, a modern German Jewish historian, observes: "A folly into which all Jews, at all times, suffered themselves to be misled by propitious circumstances; not considering that this desire of vain self-exaltation stimulated jealousy, and had the inevitable effect of bringing them down very low." \*

About this time an Armenian bishop arrived in this country with letters from the pope, in order to see some curious relics; and among other things which he stated—the truth of which cannot be vouched,—he related the extraordinary circumstance about the Wandering

\* "Eine Thorheit, zu welcher die meisten Juden zu allen Zeiten sich durch günstige Umstände verleiten liessen, nicht bedenkend, dass dieses auf Eitelkeit beruhende Sich-Erheben den Neid erwecken und zu ihrem tiefem sinken Anlass geben müsse."—"Geschichte der Israeliten." Vol. vii. p. 140.

Jew ; and as the old man has been of late very much talked of, it may not be uninteresting to give here the description which that dignitary favoured England with, at that time, as it is recorded by Matthew Paris, a contemporary monkish historian. That writer tells us seriously that "several persons examined the Armenian bishop about this wonderful Jew, and that the prelate gave them his word that he was then living in Armenia ; and an officer of the bishop's retinue, who came along with him ; he informed the examiners more particularly, that this Jew had formerly been porter to Pontius Pilate, and was called Cataphilus, and that, standing by when our Saviour was dragged out of the judgment-hall, he smote him upon the back,—at which Jesus being offended, turned about and said to him, 'The Son of Man will go, but thou shalt stay till he come again.' That afterwards he was converted to the Christian faith, baptized, and called Joseph, living to be an hundred years old. But then growing sick and impotent, he fell one day into a swoon ; upon coming out of which he found himself young again, and as vigorous as a man of thirty, the age he was of when Christ was crucified."

The same officer assured him that his master was intimately acquainted with this strange person, and dined with him not long before he came into England; that he himself had seen him several times; that he was a man of great seriousness and gravity, never laughing when any questions were put to him concerning ancient history,—such as the resurrection of the dead bodies that came out of their sepulchres at the time of the crucifixion, the apostles' creed, and other circumstances relating to those holy persons; that he was very fearful of Christ's coming to judge the world, for then, he said, he was to die; and that he trembled whenever he called to mind the grievous crime of smiting the Son of God, yet hoped for salvation, because it was a sin of ignorance.\* A most fit person for examining old relics.

From this time, scarce a year was allowed to pass without taxes, to a grievous amount, being exacted. In the seventeenth year of this reign, the king manifested great zeal for the Christian

\* A different account of a wandering Jew was announced about five centuries later, which will be noticed in vol. ii.

religion, by taxing the Jews again to the amount of 18,000 marks of silver.

These taxes were enforced by imprisonment, by seizing the property and possessions of the Jews, and by taking from them their wives and children; and punctuality of payment was secured by obliging the richest of their community to become sureties for the rest, under similar penalties. In addition to these tallages, extending to the whole community of the Jews, the title which the Crown claimed to their property was continually enforced against individuals; and on every succession of property they were constrained to pay fines, often most exorbitant in amount, to the king, for permission to take possession of it.

However, the king was seized with a charitable fit this year, and erected an institution for Jewish converts. The reason of that fit was, to deliver his father's soul from the flames of purgatory. Conscious, as it were, that his father, by his cruel conduct towards the Jews, deserved a larger share of punishment than any king before him, Henry thought, perhaps, doing something for Jews would quench the purgatorial fire a little. Most important was and is the existence

of such an institution or institutions, since the Jew who was convinced of the truth of Christianity, experienced at the same time the loss of all things besides.

The following is the king's charter :—

“The king to the archbishops, &c., greeting :  
Be it known that we, by the institution of God, and for the safety of our soul, and of the souls of our predecessors and of our heirs, have granted, and by this our charter confirmed, for us and for our heirs, to the house which we caused to be built in the street which is called New-street, between the old and new Temple of London, for the maintenance of the converted brethren, and those to be converted from Judaism to the Catholic faith, and for the aid of the maintenance of these brethren that dwell in the said house, the houses and lands which belonged to John Herberton, in London, and are in our possession as forfeited (except the garden which belonged to the said John in the aforesaid New-street, and which we granted formerly by our charter to the Venerable Father Rudolph, of Chichester, our Chancellor), and all other forfeitures which in our time, by felony, or from

any other causes, which shall fall to us in our city, or in the suburbs of our city, London.

“Wherefore we wish, and firmly enjoin for us and for our heirs, that the aforesaid house have and hold, freely and quietly, and in peace, for the maintenance of the converted brethren, and those to be converted from Judaism to the Catholic faith, in aid for the maintenance of these brethren that dwell in the same house, the houses and lands which belonged to John Herberton, in London, and are in our possession, as if our forfeiture (except the garden which belonged to the same John in the aforesaid street, New-street, and which formerly by our charter we granted to the Venerable Father Rudolph, Bishop of Chichester, our Chancellor), and all other forfeitures which in our time, by felony, or from whatever other causes, will fall to us in our city, or in the suburbs within the liberty of our city, London, as we have before said.”

This is the first royal interest taken in the conversion of the Jews. Individual cases were known earlier than Henry's time—even in King John's time, as was already stated in the preceding chapter. Henry was no loser by this

establishment ; the house itself belonged to a Jew ; and he took, moreover, care to indemnify himself more than enough by the exorbitant imposts he put upon the Jewish community from time to time. Would it not be quite a legitimate thing to restore those revenues to the purposes for which they were originally granted?



## CHAPTER XIII.

The Jewish wealth, and Damocles' Banquet—The Sufferings of the Jews of Norwich—The King's Wants—The Jews accused of Circumcising a Christian Child—the punishment of the accused—The charge against a very rich Jew, Jacob of Norwich—A most difficult case—The Strangeness of the Accusation—The Bishops arrogate to themselves the judgment seat—The mode the trial was conducted—The Verdict—The Ecclesiastics rendered hateful to the Jews—The effect on the Populace—The Jews of Newcastle—Christian Women Prohibited from being Jewish Nurses—The Reason—Pope Innocent guilty of a filthy Epistle—The Inconsistency—The Christian Inhabitants of Southampton—The King's wants of money, a never-ceasing torment to the Jews—The Cost of Queen Eleanor's Two Uncles.

THE great wealth which the Jews acquired during the administrations of the Earl of Pembroke and Hubert de Burgh, could be as much enjoyed by them as the celebrated banquet by

King Damocles. The Israelites beheld, amid their enormous affluence, the sword which was suspended over their heads by a single hair.

All sorts of ridiculous and base calumnies began to be invented against them, in order to furnish a warrant for inflicting upon them fines, extortions, imprisonments, banishments, and other unheard-of cruelties.

The sufferings of the Jews of Norwich come next under review—sufferings which owe their existence to the venomous calumnies invented by Christians, in order to possess themselves of their Jewish neighbours' wealth. In the year 1235—a year when Henry was greatly in need of money, in consequence of his great outlay on his sister Isabella's marriage to the Emperor of Germany, as well as his own contemplated marriage with Eleanor of Provence—the poor Count Berenger having positively declined giving the twenty thousand marks which the mean Henry asked as a dowry—the king must therefore have been very glad of getting an opportunity, be it ever so foul, of extorting the required sum from the poor Jews. The Jews of Norwich were at that time enormously rich; seven of them were therefore accused of circumcising a Christian

child of that city; and they were brought before the king himself, whilst he was celebrating his nativity at Westminster. The poor Jews were condemned to be drawn and hanged, and, of course, their property confiscated; and thus were the king's wants supplied for that time.

The next subject which we shall briefly notice, is the famous trial of Jacob of Norwich. It is hardly possible to give an idea of the nature of that *in-famous* process, or of the absurd charge which originated that trial. Such as we can we shall endeavour to give.

In the trial, 1240, a very rich Jew of the city of Norwich, Jacob by name, was accused of stealing a boy from his parents, and circumcising him. The monkish historians tell us, that it proved a case of such difficulty, that the *postea* was thought proper to be returned to Parliament.

Parliament could not decide. Indeed the strangeness of the accusation would have puzzled any body of men to decide. Four years were allowed to elapse before the charge was brought, and the principal witness was a little boy, of nine years of age, who stated that when he was about five years old, he was playing in a certain street; the Jews allured him into the house of

one Jacob, where they kept him a day and a night, and then blindfolded him and circumcised him.

Yet, strange to say, with his eyes blinded, and amidst the confusion of so painful an operation, the youthful boy was able to note several minute particulars, which he narrated, but which certainly never had any existence, inasmuch as the particulars he related to have taken place after the circumcision, have no connexion with that rite.

In addition to the boy's unlikely story, there were no symptoms whatever that witness ever underwent such an operation. Under the circumstances, and with such unsatisfactory evidence, the poor Jews would, doubtless, have been honourably acquitted.

But as this calumny originated, in all probability, with the ecclesiastics, they could not brook disappointment: and contrived, therefore, to become accusers, witnesses, and judges themselves.

The bishops, accordingly, insisted upon the matter being tried in their courts; and as soon as the charge was dismissed by Parliament, as incapable of being proved satisfactorily, the professing ministers of Christianity, who stated

that the boy was circumcised in derision and contumely of their Lord and Master, determined to take the law into their own hands. They maintained that such questions belonged exclusively to the jurisdiction of the Church, and that the State had no right to interfere.

Baptism and circumcision, they argued, being matters of faith, the ministers of that faith had, therefore, alone the right of deciding cases of that kind. The poor Jews were, therefore, once more dragged before a judge and jury, who were most inimical to them, whose avaricious affections were set on their hard-earned riches. One can easily guess the result of the judgment-seat, and the fate of the unfortunate Norwich Jews.

William Raleigh, Bishop of Norwich, acted as judge, the archdeacon and the priests as witnesses, who deposed on oath that they saw the boy immediately after he was circumscribed, and that there were then all the signs that such an operation had been performed upon him. Why and wherefore the archdeacon and the priests kept it quiet so long, the judge did neither ask nor care. How it came to pass that the signs had, in the short space of four years, totally disappeared, the judge did not investigate. A certain

Maude also deposed, in confirmation of the charge, that after the boy was taken home, the Jews called upon her to warn her against giving him any swine's flesh to eat.

Four of the accused were condemned to be dragged by horses' tails and be hanged. How hateful must the ecclesiastics have rendered themselves to the Jews! With what a despicable idea have the former furnished the latter of the Christian religion! Are we to be surprised that a Jew, who embraced Christianity, and received even holy orders, was induced to return to Judaism, and to submit to suffer persecution with his brethren, rather than countenance the religion of such men. Is it to be wondered at the paucity of Jews becoming the disciples of a religion whose professors were so devoid, not only of any religious feelings whatsoever, but also of any human feelings? And shall we wonder that the Jew who embraced Christianity in those days was so dreadfully hated by his brethren, and considered altogether such an one as his new co-religionists?

The populace, who, as usual, only waited for an opportunity to rob and plunder, as soon as the verdict was pronounced, set fire to the houses

of the Jews, and reduced them to ashes ; and so barefaced were those murderers and robbers, that when the Sheriff of Norfolk ventured to interfere on behalf of the wretched Jews, they complained to the king of the sheriff's audacious interference.

The Jews residing then in Newcastle-upon-Tyne were banished from that place ; we are not informed, however, of the cause of that cruel measure ; but simply in consequence of a petition of the inhabitants of that town, who, in all probability, mortgaged their houses to the Jews, and by the expulsion of their creditors from amongst them, hoped to rid themselves of their debts ; for no offence whatever is mentioned in the King's letter.

The king began zealously to espouse the conduct of the Church towards the Jews ; and by royal proclamation prohibited Christian women from entering into the service of Jews as nurses : and the reason given for this interdict is, that there was an universal custom among the Jews, of obliging their hired Christian nurses to abstain from nursing their children for three days after Easter, lest the body and blood of Jesus Christ—which all who called themselves

Christians in those Popish times were obliged to receive at that holy festival—should, by incorporation, be transfused into their children.

This abominable instance of blasphemy and folly emanated from the pen of Pope Innocent III., in an epistle to the Bishop of Paris, in a style unworthy of the polite English ear. How inconsistent! The Jews are first accused of little faith, or of total unbelief, and then again of believing too much. The ridiculous reason would imply that the Jews believed not only in the doctrines of Christ, but also in that of Anti-Christ, viz., the doctrines of transubstantiation. If the Jews had at all such a practice as above alluded to, it would have been because of Easter generally occurring about the time of the Jewish passover; and the fear of leaven being introduced into their dwellings might have induced them to have recourse to such an expedient.

The Christian inhabitants of Southampton, followed the example of those of Newcastle, and petitioned the king to rid them also of the Jews, and perhaps with them also of their debts, which the king readily granted.

When Eleanor's two uncles came over to this country—one of which having become primate



of England, has also become a great oppressor of the Jews—Henry, out of complaisance to his consort, received and entertained them with such magnificence, that, not knowing how to support the charge by honest means, he sent word to the Jews, that unless they presented him with twenty thousand marks, he would expel them all out of his kingdom ; and thus he supplied himself with money for this unjust generosity.\*

\* A. Strickland. M. Paris. Speed.

## CHAPTER XIV.

The King's Appeal to the Barons—Their reply and concession unsatisfactory to his Majesty—The King fell to work upon his Jewish mines—Appointed ten sureties—Aaron, of York—Hamon of Hereford—His daughter Ursula—The Charge against the Oxford Jews—Absurd accusations—Parliamentum Judaicum—The sanguine hopes—The sad disappointments—Henry's expedition against France.

THE following circumstance is related by Dr. Tovey, on the authority of Matthew Paris:—

“The next year, [the nineteenth year of this reign,] the king, keeping his Christmas at Winchester, sent out writs to all his archbishops, bishops, barons, abbots, and priors, that without any excuse, they should meet him in parliament upon the octaves of Epiphany at Westminster, to treat upon matters of the highest consequence. Whither, when they were all come, William de

Keele, the king's secretary, stood up, and told them he was commanded by the king to say, that however ill his majesty might have behaved himself hitherto, in being guided by foreigners, he was determined to be so no longer; for they had cheated him of all his money: and that therefore as he intended for the future to have no other counsellors but his natural born subjects, he hoped they would give him a fresh supply! The manner of raising it, he said was to be left to themselves; and though the king was very necessitous in his private circumstances, he was willing, if they thought proper, that the money raised should be disposed of by their own commissioners to the public advantage. At which speech the barons being greatly surprised, made answer, that they had already given the king such large sums, without receiving any return from him, either of good government or affection, that they thought it inconsistent with their honours to lay any further tax upon the people till they saw better occasion, and therefore desired to be excused.

“But the king, who was not so easily to be satisfied, insisting upon the vast expenses he had been at lately, in marrying his sister to the

emperor (whose portion was three hundred thousand marks\*), as also from his own marriage; and likewise, swearing to take their advice in all things for the future and forsake his foreigners, they were prevailed upon to grant him a thirtieth part of all their moveables; and the clergy did the same. But as the money, by agreement, was not to be disposed of without their privity and consent; and was, likewise, to be deposited in some abbey, castle, or other place of security, and not in his exchequer; the king finding himself in a great measure disappointed, was resolved to get money by some other means, which he might call his own, and lavish away at pleasure. He, therefore, fell to work again on his Jewish mines, and extracted no less than ten thousand marks—from the immediate payment wherof no Jew was to be excused, but by the king's especial writ."

Ten of the richest Jews were obliged to become security for the payment of this unreasonable demand. Not that the Jews were unable at once to raise the required sum, but they dared not appear as wealthy as they really were.†

\* All of which he expended on Eleanor's coronation.

† See Dr. Jost's work.

The wealth which the Jews have accumulated in this country must have been enormously great; the ten sureties must have been equal to raise any sum, be it ever so large, if we may judge from the wealth of individuals amongst them. From one Aaron of York—who seems to have supplied a great part of the necessities both of the king and queen—in the short space of seven years, the king exacted upwards of thirty thousand marks of silver; and to the queen the same Jew also paid upwards of two hundred marks of gold.\* Dr. Jost says, “that Aaron’s riches were immeasurable.”† The same Aaron also entered into a compact with the king to pay him annually, during the whole period of his life, the sum of one hundred marks, in order to be free from taxes.‡

Nor was Aaron the only one gifted with this world’s riches.

\* *Aurum Reginae*, or queen gold, a due which the queens of England were entitled to claim on every tenth mark paid to the king, as voluntary fines for the royal good will. Eleanor sometimes demanded it in a most unreasonable manner.—Tovey; A. Strickland.

† “*Sein Reichthum war unermesslich.*”

‡ “*Considering the different values of money, this, I believe, is as much as the richest nobleman pays at present.*” —“*Anglia Judaica.*” Page 108.—“When we read or speak

We read of another Jew of Hereford, Hamon by name, who must have been equally rich. We do not hear anything about him during his lifetime; but we read, that when he died—which took place about two years prior to the above exaction—his daughter, was obliged to pay five thousand marks for a relief.\*

In order to diminish the enormity of the incessant persecutions the poor Jews were subject to, recourse was continually had to many mean and unworthy acts of vilifying them. Some of them were imprisoned at Oxford, under the pretence of having forcibly taken away a young Jew who had been converted and baptized—a charge which, as it was unjustly grounded was properly opposed, and in which their innocence

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of any sum of money in our histories, from the Saxon times to the year 1344, we are to consider it, on an average, as about thrice the weight and value of the like sum in our time.”—Introduction to the “History of Commerce,” by Anderson.

\* Though, by Magna Charta, the relief of an earl's son for a whole county, was settled but at one hundred pounds; of a baron's heir, for a whole barony, at but a hundred marks; and no more than one hundred shillings was to be paid for the relief of a knight's fee; all which were called the *antiqua*, or accustomed reliefs of the kingdom.

so plainly appeared, that the king, very soon after, commanded them to be released.

No offence was, indeed, too improbable to be laid to their charge. They were even accused of plotting against the state, and of attempting to overturn the government; but the most absurd accusation brought against them was, that a party of them had collected together large quantities of combustile materials at Northampton, for the purpose of employing them in the destruction of London, by fire. Upon this incredible charge, many Jews were burned alive, and their effects seized and delivered into the king's hands. Matthew Paris, who lived in this reign, and was an eye-witness of the oppressions to which the Jews were subjected by the crown, gives a distressing picture of their sufferings. He concludes his account of the manner in which the king practised his extortions, with these words: *Non tamen abrando, vel excoriando sed eviscerando extorsit.\**

To put a stop to the repeated calumnies which were brought against them, as clippers and falsifiers of the coin, the members of the synagogue came to the conclusion of paying the king

\* Matt. Paris, page 831. Blunt, page 42.

one hundred pounds, in order "that all Jews who should be lawfully convicted of clipping, robbery, or harbouring of clippers or robbers, should be for ever banished the realm."

We must also notice the memorable Parliamentum Judaicum, which occurred in the twenty-fifth year of Henry's reign, A.D. 1240. Soon after this public testimony of their loyalty, as citizens of the state in which they lived, they were agreeably surprised at hearing that a certain number of their nation were summoned to attend a parliament at Worcester, in order, as the writ ran, "to treat with the king as well concerning his own as their benefit." Many of them entertained the most sanguine hopes that such an occurrence would terminate as much to their honour as to their advantage. But in this expectation they were speedily and sorely disappointed; for the purport of his majesty's most gracious speech informed them that he wanted money; and that they must raise, among their own people, twenty thousand marks, half of which was to be paid at Midsummer, and the other half at Michaelmas. This peremptory command, however, they appeared, unable to obey, although they had the singular privilege



of appointing their own collectors ; but the collectors were not able to raise the demanded sum ; and the consequence was, that themselves their wives and children, were seized, and incarcerated, and their goods and chattels were taken from them.

Henry's expedition against the king of France, two years afterwards, in order to regain the provinces of Guienne and Poictou, was another reason for demanding money from his Jewish subjects. It need not be told however, that Henry was totally unsuccessful in that ill-advised expedition.

## CHAPTER XV.

The King and Queen at Bordeaux—Martyn, a Jewish Convert—Jewish Converts' Institution augmented—The awkward situation of the Converts—An Extraordinary made-up story—The praiseworthy Conduct of Jewish Converts—Richard and Sancha's Wedding—One of the Justices of Jews appointed by Parliament—The Jews have peace for a year—Ireland a penal settlement—A cruel proclamation—Westminster Abbey rebuilt by Jewish Money—Jewish alms to Westminster Abbey.

AFTER the French failure, the king and queen determined to spend a merry winter at Bordeaux. Whilst there, the king became interested in a certain Jewish convert, Martyn by name, whom he sent to this country with orders to the Archbishop of York, whom he had left as governor in England, and Walter de Cantelupe, Bishop of Worcester, to provide some convenient place for the well-educating of the same Jewish convert, and to furnish him with the means of subsis-

tence.\* The king seemed always kindly disposed towards Jewish converts.

The Jewish Converts' Institution, as a matter of course, must have been full; and we find it, therefore, soon after augmented. It appears that Peter Rupibus, Bishop of Winchester, had bequeathed a legacy of one hundred pounds for the existing Jewish Converts' Institution.

From the following circumstance, it would seem that the converts were expected to join their patrons in their railing accusations against their unbelieving brethren. The poor converts found themselves, therefore, very awkwardly situated, as will evidently appear to every intelligent reader of the following occurrence.

The Jews were again accused of crucifying a child. The story and the made-up circumstances are so extraordinary, that we shall give the whole account, as furnished by Matthew Paris, and translated by William Prynne, in his malicious "Demurrer."

"Anno 1244, in August, the corpse of a little male child was found buried in the city of London, in whose thighs and arms, and under whose paps, there was a regular inscription in Hebrew

\* A. Strickland.

letters. To which spectacle when as many resorted, admiring at it, and not knowing how to read the letters, knowing that the letters were Hebrew, they called thither converted Jews who inhabited the house which the king had founded in London, that they, as they loved their life or members, for the honour, love and fear of their Lord the King, without figment of falsehood, might declare that writing. For the king's bailiffs, and conservators of the peace were present. They likewise believed, neither without cause, that the Jews had either crucified that little child in obloquy and contumely of Christ, which was related frequently to have happened, or had afflicted him with sundry torments to crucify him, and when he had given up the ghost, they had now cast him there, as unworthy of the cross. Moreover, there appeared in his body blue marks, and rents of rods, and manifest signs and footsteps of some other torment. And when as those converts were brought to read those things that were inscribed, and studied that they might perfectly read them, they found the letters deformed, and now not legible, being many ways disordered, and tossed up and down, by reason of the extension and contraction of the

skin and flesh. But they found the name of the father and mother of the little child, suppressing their surnames, and that the child was sold to the Jews; but to whom, or to what end, they could not find. In the mean time, certain of the London Jews took a secret and sudden flight, never to return again, who by this very thing rendered themselves suspected. And some affirmed, that the Lord had wrought miracles for the child. And because it was found that the Jews at other times had perpetrated such wickedness, and the holy bodies crucified had been solemnly received in the church, and likewise to have shined brightly with miracles, although the prints of the five wounds appeared not in the hands and feet and side of the said corpse, yet the canons of St. Paul took it violently away, and solemnly buried it in their church, and not far from the great altar."

To the honour and credit of the then Jewish converts, let this event be recorded, that though they were stimulated by the Christians to accuse their unconverted brethren, by whom they were so violently hated, they brought no accusation whatever against their enemies; and their total silence respecting the charge of

crucifying Christian children should have convinced the dignitaries of the church, that that charge was nothing but a base and false calumny.

The king, after his return to England, found himself very much impoverished, having lost his military chest, and his moveable chapel royal, with all its rich plate, at the battle of Taillebourg. Henry wishing, however, to celebrate the wedding of his brother Richard with his sister-in-law, Sancha, in royal style, he called, therefore, upon the poor Jews to furnish the funds for the splendid festivities; and Aaron of York alone was compelled to pay no less than four thousand marks of silver and four hundred marks of gold; and the Jews of London were mulcted in like proportion. He was still poor, and wanted more money: he applied, therefore, to his parliament for it. They well knew that vast sums had been exacted by him from the Jews: the barons, therefore, inquired what became of all their money. The king did not relish this sort of procedure on the part of those noblemen, and appeared to refuse an answer to such an ill-timed query.

The barons, in order to be acquainted in future with his revenues derived from the Jews, insisted

\* M. Paris. A. Strickland.

on having one, at least, of the justices of the Jews appointed by Parliament. The king found himself obliged to acquiesce in that bold proposal, and moreover to confirm it by charter.

The Jews were by no means sorry for this baronical step, for it afforded them a little respite. For in return for the king's consenting to the new parliamentary measure, the barons were likewise obliged to yield to his request, and supply his pecuniary wants, so that the Jews had peace from him, during the whole of *that* year. But it was only for that year. The next one was introduced with another demand.

In consequence of the king's wanting money again to meet the Welsh incursions, the Jews were once more applied to and despoiled of ten thousand marks: transportation to Ireland was the punishment in case of refusal.

Many families removed and hid themselves, fearing Ireland, as it would seem, more than England;\* so that the king had recourse to his father's measures, and issued a most cruel proclamation respecting their wives and child-

\* It is a favourite boast on the part of many Irish Christians that their countrymen never persecuted the Jews. The above incidental piece of information may account for it.

ren : in which, orders were given to the justices appointed for the protection of the Jews, that “ they should cause to be proclaimed throughout all the counties of England, where the Jews were, that if a Jewess, the wife of any Jew, or their children, fly, or take to flight, or in any way skulk from the village where they were on the festival of St. Andrew, in the twenty-ninth year of that reign, up to the year following : so that if they did not promptly appear, at the summons of the king, or of his bailiffs, in the bailiwicks in which they dwelt, that the husband of that Jewess, and even the Jewess herself, and all their children, shall be presently outlawed ; and all their lands, revenues, and all their chattels, shall come into the hands of the king, and be sold, for the assistance of the king, and for the future, they shall not return into the kingdom of England, without the king’s special orders.”

Westminster Abbey was about this time rebuilt ; the Jews, who were prohibited from entering any Christian place of worship, were at the same time commanded to aid in the rebuilding and ornamenting of that magnificent Church. Lucretia, widow of David, a Jew of Oxford,



was obliged to pay two thousand five hundred and ninety pounds which were devoted to that undertaking.

Anderson tells us : " About this time, the beautiful and stately Abbey Church of Westminster began to assume the venerable and majestic appearance which it wears to this day, except the finely rebuilt north front, reared on the ancient foundation, which is now strengthened and new cased, where the stone had fallen to decay." Maddox, in his " History of Exchequer," adds : " For this purpose, Henry grants and dedicates to God and St. Edward, and the Church of Westminster for the re-edifying of that fabric, the sum of two thousand five hundred and ninety pounds, which he extracted from Lucretia, the widow of David, a Jew of Oxford." Upon which Hunter, in his " History of London," remarks : " It is amusing to reflect that one of our noblest and most ancient Christian structures owes its renovation and embellishment to the Jewish nation."

There was a tallage laid upon the Jews, for that very purpose, which went by the name of the Jews' alms, which is evident from the following passage in Prynne's " Demurrer :"—

“In the 29th of Henry III., the king sends writs to his justices for the custody of the Jews, and to his sheriffs to levy the debts due to him from the heirs of Hamond, the Jew of Hereford, and that Crispin, a Jew, should pay him twenty-eight marks, to be laid out in silk and cloth of gold for Westminster Church, as his alms.”

## CHAPTER XVI.

A Disagreeable sameness—Henry's inexcusable Extortion—Usury permitted to the Jews by Act of Parliament—The Pope's Usurers—The Jews amused at the Pope's method—The Caursini—One of their Bonds—The King the *soi-disant* Jewish Heir—The King's Revenue from a dilapidated Jewish Cemetery—An awful Incident—Abraham Strangles his Wife, the beautiful Flora—Abraham turns Informer against his Jewish Brethren—No Jewish Convert willingly troubles his former co-religionists. ,

THE most uninteresting part of Jewish history in the annals of this country, is that during the reign of Henry III. We can scarcely relate anything but what is closely connected with the uncontrollable avarice of the British monarch, as well as that of his subjects. There is a disagreeable sameness in those annals. We must, however, once more relate, that Henry extracted again

sixty thousand marks from the Jews, for which even the monkish historians find no excuse. In order to keep the Jewish treasures well supplied, usury was permitted to the Hebrews by act of Parliament, which rendered them most odious in the opinions of their Gentile debtors, who, generally, as soon as they incurred some large debt, began to scheme their creditor's destruction, and which was the means of branding the Hebrew with the unobliterable stigmas of "the usurious race," and "money brokers," which polite Gentile writers indulge in even to this very day.\*

Whilst treating of this subject, it is deemed proper to call attention to the pope's usurers in this country, which will show that the poor Jews got more of the name than of the game. The pope's method was extremely characteristic.

The Jews were very much amused at it. Dr. Tovey, after expatiating for some time on the usurious practice of the Jews, proceeds, "When I said the Jews were the sole usurers of the kingdom, I meant to have excepted the pope; for he, indeed, the pope, was wont to carry on

\* Miss Strickland, in her popular work, "Lives of the Queens of England," seems to think such epithets quite elegant. See vol. i. p. 354.

that infamous trade, in such a shameful manner, by the help of several Italian merchants, called Causini, that the Jews themselves might have profited by his example. For though, according to the strict and legal acceptation of the word, his contracts were not usurious, yet the effects of them were the most unheard of usury.

“His method was this: if a person wanted a sum of money, which he could not repay under six months, he would lend it him for three, without any interest at all; and then covenant to receive fifty per cent. for every month afterwards, that it should remain unpaid. Now, in this case, said he, ‘I am no usurer, for I lend my money without interest; and what I was to receive afterwards was a contingency that might be defeated.’”

A bond of this kind, which surpasses everything of modern invention, is transmitted to us by Matthew Paris:—

“To all that shall see this present writing, Thomas the prior, and the convent of Barnwell wish health in the Lord. Know ye, that we borrowed and received at London, for ourselves, profitably to be expended for the affairs of our Church, from Francisco and Gregorio, for them

and their partners, citizens and merchants of Millain, a hundred and four marks of lawful money sterling, thirteen shillings and four pence sterling being counted to every mark, which said one hundred and four marks we promise to pay on the feast of St. Peter *ad vincula*, being the first day of August, at the new Temple in London, in the year 1235. And if the said money be not all paid, at the time and place aforesaid, we bind ourselves to pay to the aforesaid merchants, or any one of them, or their certain attorney, for every ten marks, forborne two months, one mark of money, for recompense of damages, which the aforesaid merchants may incur by the non-payment of it; so that they may lawfully demand both principal, damages, and expenses, as above expressed, together with the expenses of one merchant, for himself, horse, and servant, until such time as the aforesaid money be fully satisfied. And for the payment of such principal, interest, damage, and expenses, we oblige ourselves, our church, and successors, and all our own goods and the goods of our church, moveable, or immoveable, ecclesiastical, or temporal, which we have, or shall have, where-soever they shall be found, to the aforesaid merchants and their heirs. And do further

recognize and acknowledge, that we possess, and hold the said goods from the said merchants, by way of courtesy, until the premises be fully satisfied. Renouncing also for ourselves and successors, all help of canon, and civil law, all privileges, and clerkship, the epistle of St. Adrian, all customs, statutes, lectures, indulgences, and privileges obtained for the king of England, from the See Apostolic, as also the benefit of all appeal, or inhibition from the king of England; with all other exceptions, whether real or personal, that may be objected, against the validity of this instrument. All which things we promise faithfully to observe, and in witness thereof, have set to the seal of our convent.—Dat. London. die quinto ELPHEGI. [24 April.] An. Gratia, 1235.”

Matthew Paris adds,—“When the Jews came to understand this Christian way of preventing usury, they laughed very heartily.”

The king made himself heir of the Jewish possessions, whether houses or lands, which they should possess or purchase in this realm. Prynne furnishes us with a clause of the original writ, wherein the king claims to succeed to the Jewish property.

It appears that in consequence of the incessant

taxation of, and continual display of ill-will towards, the unhappy Jews, they began to think that England would not remain their home much longer, and were therefore careless about many things. Their cemetery was about that time out of repair, and there was a disposition on the part of many to leave it so ; but it seems that their leaders, who were perhaps urged by the king, insisted on having the burying-place repaired, and determined to compel every one to contribute towards it.

To be able to carry their intentions into effect they applied to the king for permission to excommunicate all such as should refuse to co-operate and assist in the undertaking. The king turned this circumstance to advantage, and granted the required license, on the condition that the fines which might arise out of the excommunications should go to him.

An incident which occurred about this time, of a most awful nature, furnishes us with some idea of the great animosity, which the Jews manifested towards the religion of their Gentile neighbours.—We will not call it Christianity—image-worship, is its proper appellation. It would seem that the Jews displayed their hatred of that



religion by treating the dumb Christian idols with contempt ; and any care taken of such an idol by their friends, inspired them with wondrous rage even against their nearest and dearest relations, as the following narrative shows.\*—The style is altogether popish.

“There was a certain rich Jew, having his abode and house at Berkhamsted and Wallingford, Abraham by name, not in faith, who was very dear to Earl Richard, who had a very beautiful wife, and faithful to him, Flora by name. This Jew, that he might accumulate more disgrace to Christ, caused the image of the Virgin Mary, decently carved and painted, as the manner is, holding her son in her bosom, to be put in an indecent place, and which is a great shame and ignominy to express, blaspheming the image as if it had been the very Virgin herself, threw all sorts of dirt upon her, days and nights, and commanded his wife to do the like. But Flora’s delicate feelings so revolted at the injunc-

\* It is to be noticed, however, that the Jew here alluded to was a most unprincipled man. His hatred did not arise out of conviction that his religion was the only true one. It is remarkable that, to this very day, the most ignorant and wicked Jews are the most hostile to Christianity.

tion, that she not only refused to be partner in the indecent act, but secretly removed the filth from the image as often as it was covered. Which when the Jew her husband had fully found out, he therefore privily and impiously strangled the woman herself, though his wife.\* But when these wicked deeds were discovered, and made apparent, and proved by the conviction, although other causes of death were not wanting, he was thrust into the most loathsome castle of the Tower of London. Whence to

\* This most impious and wicked man doubtless thought he did God service, and fulfilled a plain positive Mosaic precept, namely, "If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go, and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers; namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee or far off from thee, from the end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth; thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shalt thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him: but thou shalt surely kill him; thine hand shall be first upon him to put him to death, and afterwards the hand of all the people."—(Deut. xiii. 6—9.) Poor Flora did not entice him to worship the image. The whole Jewish congregation, therefore, justly considered Abraham as a murderer, and worthy of death.

get his freedom, he most certainly promised that he would prove all the Jews of England to have been most wicked traitors.

“And when as he was greatly accused by almost all the Jews of England, and they endeavoured to put him to death, Earl Richard interceded for him. Whereupon, the Jews grievously accusing him both of the clipping of money and other wickedness, offered Earl Richard a thousand marks, if he would not protect him ; which, notwithstanding, the Earl refused, because he was called his Jew. This Jew Abraham therefore gave the king seven hundred marks, that he might be free from perpetual imprisonment, to which he was adjudged, the Earl assisting him therein.” Whilst this Abraham was imprisoned, he promised to the king that if his liberty were granted to him, he would discover to his majesty, his brethren’s misdemeanours, stating that they had a great deal of wealth concealed from the king. Accordingly, as soon as he was set free, a royal search was instituted for all the Jewish estates, and was conducted in the most barbarous manner, inasmuch as that unprincipled Abraham went along with the commissioners appointed for that purpose, and urged them to

make diligent search, threatening them, if at all lax, to inform against them to the king. This man proved to them a source of immense trouble. It is a gratifying fact that no Jewish convert caused them willingly any trouble whatever.\*

\* It is an unjust insinuation on the part of Mr. Moses Samuel, in his "Address on the Position of the Jews in Britain," page 27, that the Jewish converts—as he peevishly calls them apostates—of that time were "breeding mischief against the sons of Judea, and vituperating their holy religion." Oh, no, Mr. Samuel; the unconverted Jews bred mischief against each other, but not the converted ones.

## CHAPTER XVII.

King Henry in Gascony—The Marriage of Edward and Eleanor—Jews pay the necessary Expenses—Henry III. insatiable—Jewish remonstrances and expostulations—The Senior Rabbi Elias' address—The Earl of Cornwall's reply—Jewish Memorial to the King—The King's Exclamation—The Jews sold to Duke Richard—The Jews accused of crucifying a boy at Lincoln—The concomitant circumstances—False confession extracted from Copin the Jew—The murderous effect of that venomous calumny.

It seems positively tedious to have again to repeat that the king was in want of money. He determined, once more, to see what the Jews could do for him. To begin with, they were obliged to furnish the king with five thousand marks previous to his leaving for Gascony.\*

\* W. Prynne.

Whilst there a match was made up between Prince Edward and Eleanora of Castille.

The intended marriage was necessarily attended with extravagant expenses. The king, therefore, commissioned his brother Richard to extort from the luckless Jews the sum required for the nuptial festivities of his heir.\*

But Henry was insatiable ; he wanted more money, for which he applied first to the barons, conjuring up a pitiable tale, viz., that he apprehended a Spanish invasion. But the barons happily could refuse to be caught with chaff, and therefore boldly confessed their unbelief, and declined to give money. The king therefore commissioned his brother, once more, to levy money from the Jews ; and a very large sum it was.

In vain did the Jews remonstrate against these accumulated oppressions ; their remon-

\* "As soon as Henry received the glittering fruits of this iniquity, he sent for Eleanor to assist him in squandering it away in the light and vain expenses in which they mutually delighted, and to grace with her presence the bridal of their eldest son, Prince Edward. King Henry waited at Bordeaux to receive his son's bride. He had prepared so grand a festival for the reception of the young Infanta, that he expended thirty thousand three hundred marks on the marriage feast, to the indignation of his English Peers."—A. Strickland.

strances were only met by a renewal of their hardships. In vain did they pray for permission to depart from the country, in order that they might seek an asylum in some other land ; this alternative was also denied them, and proclamations were issued, forbidding any Jew to leave England without the king's license. Having failed to obtain redress when sought in terms of humble supplication, they wanted not the courage to enforce their complaints in language at once bold and impressive. When the principal men amongst them had been summoned before the Earl Richard of Cornwall, the king's brother, and the council, and were threatened with imprisonment and death, unless they forthwith supplied the sum required of them, Elias, their senior Rabbi, stood up, and in the name of his brethren addressed the assembly in these words :—

“ O noble lords, we see undoubtedly that our Lord the King purposeth to destroy us from under heaven. We entreat, for God's sake, that he give us license and safe conduct to depart out of his kingdom, that we may seek a mansion in some other land, and under a prince who bears some bowels of mercy, and some stability

of truth and faithfulness, and we will depart never to return again, leaving our household stuff and houses behind us. But how can he spare us, miserable Jews, who destroys his own natural English? He hath people, yea, his own merchants, I say not usurers, who by usurious contracts accumulate infinite heaps of money. Let the king rely upon them, and gape after their emoluments. Verily, they have supplanted us, which the king, however, dissembles to know; extracting from us those things we cannot give him, although he would pull out our eyes or cut our throats when he had first taken off our skins." With so much feeling and sincerity was this address made, that as the orator concluded it, a sudden faintness seized him, from which he was with much difficulty recovered.\* The application for leave to quit this country was refused with as much courtesy and gentleness as possible. The king's brother, the Earl of Cornwall, knowing that their removal would prove injurious to his money-sucking brother, replied

\* The King did not leave Rabbi Elias' speech unresented, for, the following year, the King deprived him of the high office he held amongst the Jews, without alleging any offence against him.



to Rabbi Elias' application in the following words :

“The king, my brother, is your loving prince, and ready at all times to oblige you, but in this matter could not grant your request, because the king of France had lately published a severe edict against Jews, and no other Christian country would receive you ; by which means ye would be exposed to such hardships and difficulties as would afflict the king, who had always been tender of your welfare.”

Next year, when the king and queen returned from Gascony to England, the Jews had occasion to present a memorial to the king himself, in reply to another unreasonable request, in which they thus addressed him :—

“Sir King, we see thou sparest neither Christians nor Jews, but studiest with crafty excuses to impoverish all men. We have no hope of respiration left us ; the usurers of the Pope have supplanted us. Permit us to depart out of the kingdom with safe conduct, and we will seek for ourselves such a mansion as we can, be it what it will.” “Although we may admire the boldness,” observes Mr. Blunt, “with which the Jews (notwithstanding their degraded and de-

pendent situation) demanded relief from their wrongs, it can in no way excite astonishment to find that the language which they employed had not the effect of procuring them the redress which they claimed.

When the king received their memorial, and was informed of the address to the council, he expressed himself in terms of violent anger. The words which he used on the occasion are thus recorded :—"Is it to be marvelled at," he said, "that I covet money? It is a horrible thing to imagine the debts wherein I am held bound. By the head of God, they amount to the sum of two hundred thousand marks; and if I should say three hundred thousand I should not exceed the bounds of truth. I am deceived on every hand; I am a maimed and abridged king—yea, now but half a king. There is a necessity for me to have money, gotten from what place soever, and by what means soever, and from whomsoever."\*

No time was lost in devising measures for procuring a supply, according to the intentions

\* Well might Henry say, "that it would be a greater act of charity to bestow money on him, than on those who went from door to door begging alms."—M. Paris; A. Strickland.

thus expressed. The Duke Richard proposed to provide the King with the sum which was required, upon condition that the whole of the Jews should be assigned over to him. The King consented to the proposal, and forthwith, upon receiving the money, he sold the Jews to the Duke as a security for the sum advanced.\*

The Jews were again accused of crucifying a boy at Lincoln, Hugo by name, eight years of age. They are reported to have first fattened the boy for ten days with white bread and milk, in a secret chamber, and then sent for the principal Jews from all the cities of England, and appointed one to act as Pilate, others as the tormentors, and then re-enacted all the indignities mentioned in scripture; scourged him, cruelly crowned him with thorns, fastened him to a cross, gave him gall to drink, and lastly, when dead, pierced his side with a spear. To crown all, they took out his bowels, as being particularly serviceable in their magic practices, and then, that the matter might not be known to Christians, diligently concealed the corpse.

The earth, however, vomited forth the innocent

\* M. Paris, Maddox, Prynne, Toney, Blunt.

body, worthy of a more honourable sepulchre, and as often as the Jews tried to bury it, it showed itself next day above ground.

Terrified beyond measure, they threw it into a well, where the mother at last found it. The master of the house was seized, who confessing the whole matter, was tied to horses' tails, and thus torn to pieces. Ninety Jews were carried off in chains to London, and received their due punishment.

The whole story is thus related by Matthew Paris, and copied by Prynne into the first part of his "Demurrer":—

"The same year [*i. e.* when the king wanted so much money, and the Jews began to remonstrate], about the feast of Peter and Paul, the Jews of Lincoln stole a child called Hugo, being eight years old; and when as they had nourished him in a certain most secret chamber, with milk and other childish aliments, they sent to almost all the cities of England, wherein the Jews lived, that, in contempt and reproach of Jesus Christ, they should be present at their sacrifice at Lincoln; for they had, as they said, a certain child hid to be crucified. Whereupon many assembled at Lincoln. And coming together, they

appointed one Lincoln Jew for the judge, as it were Pilate. By whose judgment, by the consent of all, the child is afflicted with sundry torments. He is whipped even unto blood and lividness, crowned with thorns, wearied with spittings and strikings; and, moreover, he is pricked by them all with poniards, made to drink gall, derided with reproaches and blasphemies, and frequently called by them with grinding teeth, Jesus, the false prophet. And after they had derided him in divers manners, they crucified him, and pierced him with a spear to the heart.

“And when the child had given up the ghost, they took down his body from the cross, and took the bowels out of his corpse, for what end is unknown; but it was said it was to exercise magical arts. The mother of the child diligently sought for her absent son for some days, and it was told her by neighbours, that the last time they saw her child whom she sought, he was playing with the children of the Jews of his age, and entered into the house of a certain Jew. Whereupon the woman suddenly entered that house, and saw the body of her child cast into a certain pit. And having warily called the bailiffs of the city together, the body was found and

drawn forth, and there was made a wonderful spectacle among the people. But the woman, mother of the child, complaining and crying out, provoked all the citizens there assembled together, to tears and sighs. There was then present at the place John de Lexinton, a circumspect and discreet man, and moreover elegantly learned, who said—‘we have sometimes heard that the Jews have not feared to attempt such things in reproach of Jesus Christ, our crucified Lord.’ And one Jew being apprehended—to wit, he into whose house the child entered playing, and therefore more suspected than the rest, he saith unto him, ‘O wretch, knowest thou not that speedy destruction abides thee? All the gold of England will not suffice for thy deliverance or redemption. Notwithstanding I will tell thee, although unworthy, by what means thou mayest preserve thy life and members, that thou mayest not be dismembered. I will save both to thee, if thou dost not fear to discover to me whatsoever things are done in this case, without falsehood.’ Whereupon the Jew, whose name was Copin, believing he had thus found out a way of escape, answered, saying, ‘Sir John, if thou makest thy words good by thy deeds, I will

reveal wonderful things to thee.' And the industry of Sir John animating and exciting him thereto, the Jew said, 'those things are true which the Christians say. The Jews almost every year crucify one child, to the injury and contumely of Jesus; but it is not found out every year, for they do this secretly, and in hidden and most secret places. But this child whom they call Hugo, our Jews have most unmercifully crucified, and when he was dead, and they desired to hide him, being dead, he could not be buried in the earth, nor hid. For the corpse of the innocent was reputed unprofitable for divination, for he was unbowelled for that end. And when in the morning it was thought to be buried, the earth brought it forth, and vomited it out, and the body sometimes appeared inhuman, whereupon the Jews abhorred it.

"'At last it was cast headlong into a deep pit; neither as yet could it be kept secret, for the importunate mother diligently searching all things, at last showed to the bailiffs the body she had found.'\* But Sir John, notwithstanding this, kept the Jew bound in chains.

\* Let Copin's conduct be contrasted with the conduct of the converted Jews of that time.

“When these things were known to the canons of the church of Lincoln, they requested the body to be given to them, which was granted ; and when it had been sufficiently viewed by an infinite company of people, it was honourably buried in the church of Lincoln, as the corpse of a most precious martyr. The Jews kept the child alive for ten days, that being fed for so many days with milk, he might living suffer many sorts of torments.

“When the king returned from the northern parts of England, and was certified of the promises, he reprehended Sir John that he had promised life and members to so flagitious a person, which he could not give : for that blasphemer and homicide was worthy the punishment of many sorts of death. And when as unavoidable judgment was ready to be executed upon this offender, he said, ‘My death is now approaching, neither can my Lord John preserve me, who am ready to perish. I now relate the truth to you all. Almost all the Jews of England consented to the death of this child, whereof the Jews are accused ; and almost out of every city in England wherein the Jews inhabit, certain



chosen persons were called together to the immolation of that child, as to a Paschal sacrifice.'

“And when as he had spoken these things, together with other dotages, being tied to an horse's tail and drawn to the gallows, he was presented to the aerial Cacodæmons in body and soul; and ninety-one other Jews, partakers of this wickedness, being carried in carts to London, were there committed to prison. Who if so be they were causally bewailed by any Christians, yet they were deplored by the Causini (the pope's Italian usurers), their co-rivals, with dry eyes. Afterwards, by the inquisition of the king's justices, it was discovered and found that the Jews of England, by common council, had slain the innocent child, punished for many days and crucified. But after this the mother of the said child constantly prosecuted her appeal before the king against them; for that iniquity, and such a death, God, the Lord of revenges, rendered them a condign retribution, according to their merits; for on St. Clement's day, eighty-eight of the richest and greatest Jews of the city of London [what a bountiful harvest for the needy king] were drawn and hanged up in the

air upon new gibbets, especially prepared for that purpose; and more than twenty-three others were reserved in the Tower of London to the like judgment." \*

\* "Lying wonders form as much a part of the stories concerning the murdered children as those which describe bleeding crucifixes, or flying sacramental wafers; contemporary writers may be cited for the one set of facts as well as for the other. The atrocious and murderous lies which envelop this charge of using blood, give us strong reason for suspecting that it is as devoid of truth, as calumnious and as devilish as those image and wafer stories, by means of which so many thousands of unhappy Israelites were put to the sword, whose blood still cries to heaven for vengeance.

"The mere recital of these follies shows that they are the offspring of an unenlightened imagination, if not the invention of a malignant heart.

"The total absence of all credible testimony compels us to refuse our belief. The only evidence to be had is that extracted from the victims of the torture. But that mode of examination would have made the same persons confess that they were metempsychoses of Judas Iscariot or Pontius Pilate; that they had caused the ruinous convulsions of an earthquake, or the devastations of the cholera morbus."—Dr. Mc.Caul's "Reasons for believing that the Charge lately revived against the Jewish People is a baseless Falsehood." Pages 16. 24.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Earl Richard's ill-treatment of the Jews—Ecclesiastical animosity towards the Jews—Its cruel Edicts against the Jews—Henry sanctioned the cruel Edicts of the Church—Sancha's Funeral—Jews called upon to pay the Undertaker's bill—The King's opposition to the Barons, a two-fold scourge to the Jews—Henry not a man of his word—Barons massacre the Jews—Jews banished from many places—Epidemic fury against the Jews.

EARL Richard, having obtained his election as successor to the Emperor of Germany, he named himself King of the Romans. This exaltation had no favourable effect upon the unfortunate Jews. Tyranny and cruelty seem to have been the predominant features of royalty in those dark ages. He caused them to be arrested, and would not accept of any bail. The attorneys he employed were Jews, and in all probability of very indifferent characters—such

as his favourite Abraham, the murderer of his own wife—who made no effort to alleviate the oppression of their suffering brethren ; perhaps helped forward their affliction by telling the Roman king they could raise the money at once if made to do so.

There can be no doubt that the Jews had then able judges and lawyers of their own, and whom the king's court considered competent to decide all sorts of questions, spiritual as well as temporal. This circumstance annoyed the ecclesiastics not a little, which they did not fail to resent.

The prelates began to complain that the Jews were protected by the king's courts. Alas, for the protection ! Boniface, the primate, who was honoured with the well-merited appellation of "this ruffian, this cruel smiter . . . no winner of souls, but an exacter of money,"\* convened a provincial synod, in which the prelates enacted several severe and cruel edicts respecting the Jews, which are the following :—

"That because ecclesiastical judicature is confounded, and the office of prelates obstructed, when a Jew offending against ecclesiastical

\* M. Paris. A. Strickland.

persons and things is convicted of these, or other matters which belong to the ecclesiastical court of pure right, and yet is not permitted by the king's sheriffs or bailiffs to stand to the ecclesiastical law, but is rather forced to betake himself to the king's court; therefore all such Jews shall be driven to make answer, in such cases, before a judge ecclesiastical, by being forbidden to traffic, contract, or converse with the faithful: and they who forbid and obstruct them, and distress judges and others on this account, shall be coerced by the sentences of excommunication and interdict."

This primate "elected by female intrigue" proved a great source of trouble and virulent persecution to the poor Jews. He being uncle to Queen Eleanor—who, in fact, was the sole monarch of England, and even of her husband—had, as a matter of course, great influence with the king. Henry, therefore—though he opposed the decrees of the Church against the Jews during Stephen Langton's primacy—entirely concurred with the Church, in persecuting the Jews, during the administration of Boniface.

Accordingly, by an edict enacted in the thirty-seventh year of this reign, Henry sanc-

tioned Stephen Langton's decrees ; and it was ordained that " no Jew should remain in England who did not render service to the king ; that there should be no schools for Jews, except in places where they were wont to be of old ; that, in their synagogues, all Jews should pray in a low voice, according to the rites of their religion, so that Christians might not hear them ; that every Jew should be answerable to the rector of his parish for parochial dues, chargeable on his house ; that no Christian woman should suckle or nurse the child of a Jew, nor any Christian serve a Jew, eat with them, nor abide in their houses ; that no Jew or Jewess should eat meat in Lent, or detract from the Christian faith ; that no Jew should associate with a Christian woman, nor any Christian man with a Jewess ; that every Jew should wear a badge on his breast, and should not enter into any Church or Chapel, except in passing to and fro, and then should not stay there to the dishonour of Christ. That no Jew should hinder any other who was desirous to embrace the Cristian faith. That they should not abide in any town without the king's special license, save

in places where they were formerly wont to reside." On offending against any of these provisions their properties were to be immediately seized.

In the year 1261, unfortunately for the Jews, died the queen's sister, Sancha, Countess of Cornwall, and Queen of the Romans, for whom the king and queen made great lamentations, and gave her a magnificent funeral.\* As usual, the poor Jews had to supply the needful, for the king ordered that new inventories should be made of all their lands, tenements, debts, ready money, plate, jewels, and household stuff. The king's commissioners were to be assisted in their strict search by all sheriffs, constables of castles, mayors, &c.

The king's opposition to the barons proved a twofold scourge to the oppressed Jews. He took away their money, in order to be able to continue his opposition to the barons; whilst the barons took away their lives, with the remainder of their wealth, for yielding to the intolerable pressure of that covetous monarch. It was, therefore, a cause of joy to the Hebrew congregations, that a truce was established

\* A. Strickland.

between the sovereign and his barons, and that the former was prevailed upon to sign an amicable arrangement with the latter, by which he bound himself to confirm the provisions of Oxford. Henry, however, was not a man to abide, for any length of time, by any agreement, and as a matter of course refused to adhere to the rules of the compact, under the pretence that his consent and signature were extorted from him. He withdrew to the Tower of London. The offended barons unexpectedly entered the city, and eager for plunder, and athirst for blood, raised first a dreadful uproar against the luckless Jews, which was the prelude to a personal attack upon the queen, the most unpopular of all the queens of England.

The following are the particular details of this tumult, as related by Agnes Strickland, copied from T. Wilkes, a contemporary chronicler :—  
“ At the sound of St. Paul’s great bell, a numerous mob sallied forth, led on by Stephen Buckrell, the marshall of London, and John Fitz-John, a powerful baron. They killed and plundered many of the wretched people, without mercy. The ferocious leader, John Fitz-John, ran through with his sword, in cold blood,



**Kakien Abramson**, the wealthiest Hebrew resident in London. Besides plundering and killing five hundred\* of this devoted race, the mob turned the rest out of their beds, undressed as they were, keeping them so the whole night." During which catastrophe, a newly-erected synagogue was reduced to ashes.

The oppressions exercised towards the Jews by the king, rendered them obnoxious to the inhabitants of the places where they resided. The continual exactions to which they were subjected had necessarily the effect of withdrawing large sums from the towns of their abode; and it could not fail sooner or later, to be discovered that though the tax, in the first instance, fell upon the Jews alone, yet that eventually the wealth of the neighbourhood was thereby considerably diminished. It may have been partly with a view to this consequence, that many towns obtained, during the present reign, from the king, charters or writs, directing that no Jew should reside within their walls.

Charters or writs to this effect were granted to the towns of Newcastle, Derby, Southampton, as was already stated, Wycomb, Newberry, and

\* Others have seven hundred.

to other places ; and the Jews were forced to remove with their families and effects. It would have been happy for the Jews, if the necessity of changing the places of their residence had been the only hardship to which, through the popular feeling, they were exposed. In many parts of the country, the people treated them with open violence ; charges of the wildest description were raised against them, and made excuses for the exercise of every species of cruelty and extortion ; tumults were excited ; their houses were pillaged and burned ; and hundreds fell victims to the frenzy of the populace. At Norwich, on the occasion of some Jews being executed upon a charge of having stolen a Christian child, which has already been mentioned, the citizens broke into the houses of the Jews there and stripped them, and then setting fire to them, burned them to the ground. At Canterbury, the Jews were subjected to a similar violence, the immediate cause of which is not mentioned ; but it is stated, that the clergy there did not scruple to encourage the outrage, and to take an active part with the mob on the occasion. At Oxford,

the scholars of the university, having upon some pretext picked a quarrel with the Jews, broke into their houses and pillaged them of their property.\*

\* Prynne, Tovey, J. E. Blunt.

## CHAPTER XIX.

The Jews assigned to Prince Edward—Edward Pawned them with the Catercensian merchants—The effect of the battle of Lewes upon the Jews—Jews enjoy a brief respite—A Jew accused of forging a bond—Sir Walter Scott's picture of the English at that time—The Jews of Oxford—Merton College—Individual accusations—The University in want of a respectable cross—Jews obliged to erect one—The inscription.

WHEN Prince Edward returned from his victorious campaign in Wales, he was so poor that he could not pay the arrears which he owed to the troops, and, unwilling to disband men whom he foresaw his father's cause would require, the king fixed on the expedient of presenting him with the Jews—the King of the Romans must have got, by this, all he wanted from them—with a new privilege, viz., that of having all

writs of judicature, which had been formerly sealed by the justices of the Jews, sealed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the profits of which were to be paid to the prince. Edward, however, did not keep them long in his grasp; being in want at once of ready cash, he assigned them, with his father's consent and signature, for two years, to the Catercensian merchants. No more did the latter keep them long, for Edward was soon after accused of a conspiracy against his father; the king therefore seized upon the Jews.

The battle of Lewes is another memorable event in the history of the Jews in this country. This battle, as is well known, terminated in the complete discomfiture of the king's party. The common people being disbanded and out of employment, betook themselves to persecute the unfortunate Jews. They pretended that that people conspired with the king's party to destroy the barons and the good citizens of London, which, they thought, gave them a right to plunder that defenceless people wherever they were found. They began with London; and the conduct of the metropolitans was soon followed by the inhabitants of other places. Lin-

coln, Northampton, Canterbury, and many other towns in the kingdom, became the scenes of plunder and persecution. The London Jews were placed in imminent danger; and in all probability those who survived the massacre of Montfort and John Fitz-John would have shared the fate of their five hundred or seven hundred brethren who perished in that city; but the constable of the Tower opened the gates, to afford them a timely refuge.

The king, in conjunction with the barons, endeavoured to quell those riots, and issued letters-patent to the mayor and sheriffs of London, and to the persons put under authority in all those places where outrages were committed, to suppress all sorts of disorders; and, as peace had been established throughout the kingdom, the Jews should share in that peace.

A proclamation was therefore to be published, for the Jews to return peaceably to their homes, Few indeed must have been the number who found homes. It was also announced that any molestation offered to the Jews would subject the offender to the danger of life and limb.

The king, being anxious to procure for himself the services of his friends, after his disastrous

differences with his Gentile subjects, resolved to do so at the expense of his Jewish ones. He remitted the interest-money which was owing to them from several of his friends. So that, though they were permitted to return to their homes, they had well nigh been deprived of any means of subsistence in those homes. Parliament, however, soon met, and enacted that their houses, goods, and chattels should be restored to them in the same condition they were in before the battle of Lewes. The Jews therefore enjoyed comparative tranquillity for the period of four years, from the time of that meeting of parliament. They agreed to pay a thousand pounds to be free from taxes during that period; under the proviso, however, that neither the king nor the prince should undertake any crusade during that time: and some few had even great favours bestowed upon them, especially those who rendered the king effectual service in his distresses. Yet was their tranquillity only comparative; they were by no means universally exempt from trouble and annoyance, and individuals were subject to grievous calumnies and accusations, as was the case with the Jews of Lincoln during that period. The dean and chapter of that city

would not pay their debts ; they contrived to accuse their Jewish creditor of forging a bond. It is a faithful picture of the English of those days, "that when churchmen and laymen, prince and prior, knight and priest, come knocking at Isaac's door, they borrow not his shekels with these uncivil terms. It is then, Friend Isaac, will you pleasure us in this matter, and our day shall be truly kept, so God save me?—and, kind Isaac, if ever you served a man, show yourself a friend in this need.—And when the day comes, and I ask my own, then what hear I but, the curse of Egypt on your tribe, and all that may stir up the rude and uncivil populace against poor strangers."\*

The Jews in Oxford for a long time seem, upon the whole, to have been more prosperous than their brethren in many other places. It was already stated that they had schools and seminaries there at an early period of their history in England. Their occupation there seems to have been almost altogether in the literary line ; so that we do not find any documents respecting forged bonds. The Jews have always appreciated learning very much, and encouraged it.

\* Sir Walter Scott.



We read of individuals selling some land at a very low rate indeed, for the erection of an institution for that purpose. The celebrated Sir Walter de Merton, the founder of a college in Oxford bearing his name, purchased a site for that building from a Jew, as appears from a deed in the college treasury.

Yet they were now and then subject to some accusations ; for instance, we learn from a writ of release, and which has been alluded to already, that several Jews in that city were imprisoned on a charge brought against them of taking away a boy belonging to a Jewish convert and concealing him. However, it proved a false alarm ; the child was soon found : the prisoners were therefore forthwith released.

Prynne briefly notices an investigation respecting the murder of a certain Jew there, Jacob by name.

The university, however, was at that time very badly off for a nice elegant cross ; they had no means of erecting it. The authorities therefore ingeniously contrived to make the Jews erect it for them. One of them was accused of having, on Ascension Day—whilst the chancellor, masters, and scholars of the university

were walking in solemn procession, to visit the sainted reliques of Frideswide, bearing the cross before them—snatched the cross—a wooden one—from its bearer, and trodden it under his feet in contempt of Christ. A very likely story.\*

Strict search was made after the culprit, but in vain. Of course, there was evidently no culprit to find; if there were, he could not possibly have escaped, as no Jew was allowed to travel from place to place without especial license.

All those, therefore, who could be found within the city, were seized, and imprisoned until they had provided sufficient funds for the erection of a cross of white marble, with golden figures of the Virgin and Jesus Christ, and also a rich silver cross, to be carried before the masters and scholars of the university in their processions. The marble cross was placed in

\* Judging from the Popish customs still existing in the countries where that religion is national, we should say that certainly no Jew was permitted to appear in the street during that or any similar procession-day, as is the case to this day in Poland, and other Roman Catholic countries. A Jew, in all probability, ventured out at that time, and thus gave his enemies an opportunity to fabricate the above adventure, which ended in the erection of a splendid cross by its enemies.

Merton College, and the silver one intrusted to the Fellows of that society.

The large marble cross appears to have existed till Henry VI., according to John Ross, a contemporary antiquary, who copied from it. just before it was destroyed, the following inscription :—

Quis meus author erat ? Judaei. Quomodo ?  
Sumptu. Quis jussit ? Regnans. Quo procurante ?  
Magistris. Cur ? Cruce pro fractu LIGNI. Quo  
tempore ? Festo Ascensus Domini. Quis erat  
locus ? Hic ubi sisto.

At Brentford, the people rose up against the Jews, and robbed them of whatever goods they could lay their hands upon. On this occasion, forty-five of the principal actors in the outrage were apprehended by the authorities of the place.

The whole of these were, however, shortly after liberated, upon the intervention of the Bishop of Lincoln, because it was maintained that no man could impeach them of any crime or breach of the peace.

## CHAPTER XX.

The battle of Eversham—The Lincoln and Cambridge Jews—

The opinion of the populace respecting the Jews—Directions for protection—Prince Edmund was presented, by his father, with the wealthy Aaron—Jewish favorites—The envy of the populace—The statute of pillory—Henry's plundering the Jews proved oppressive to the nation at large—Henry's charter against the Jews.

AFTER the battle of Eversham, when the rebel barons had assembled an army in the eastern counties, they marched a part of their forces to Lincoln, broke into the houses of the Jews, and plundered them of their wealth; then making an excursion to Cambridge, they committed a similar outrage, and carrying away with them the richest of the Jews, forced them to pay heavy ransoms for their liberation. These, and

many other acts of oppression and cruelty, were inflicted on the Jews by the populace.

The conduct of the people was the natural result of the unrestrained extortions practised by the Crown. The daily occurrence of these extortions led the populace to regard the Jews as persons who were not within the usual protection of the law, and they therefore considered it no crime to enrich themselves at the expense of that unfortunate people.

But though the king did not hesitate to oppress the Jews himself, yet he had good reasons for shielding them against the violence and extortions of his subjects. He considered the Jews and all they possessed as his own peculiar property, and he consequently looked upon every act by which they were impoverished, as withdrawing so much from his own wealth. Measures were therefore taken to prevent a continuance of the outrages of the people; and directions were issued to twenty-six of the principal inhabitants of the towns where the Jews resided,\* to protect them from any further acts of violence, under heavy penalties for disobedience.

\* Dr. Jost observes how great must their danger have been since twenty-six burgesses in each town were necessary to protect them.

The Jews seem to have been treated by that monarch exactly as slaves, and were presented as gifts to his children. Prince Edmund was presented with a rich Jew, Aaron. As it happened, however, Aaron was not the worse off on that account ; for Edmund did not seem to have inherited much of the avarice and rapacity either of his father or mother. This Jew, therefore, fared far better than many of his brethren. He was enfranchised altogether by that prince for the trifling remuneration of an annual pair of gilt spurs, and had, moreover, the peculiar liberty of residing wherever he liked in any part of the kingdom. There were several others who were favoured with the king's countenance ; for instance, Cressey and two other Jews of London were freed, by the intercession of the King of the Romans, from all sorts of tallages, for the space of five years, for the trifling remuneration of one mark and a half of gold, to be paid by each of them annually. And also to a certain Jacob le Eveske, by the interference of the queen, an exemption was conceded from all sorts of tributes and taxes all his life-time ; and the same privilege was granted to his son Benedict, after his father Jacob's death. A few other instances of that kind are adduced by Prynne.

However, the favour bestowed on individuals had only the effect of exciting the odium of the populace against the whole community, and thus kindled the flame of persecution in the breasts of the British Christians to an incredible pitch. In fact, they first pretended that the Crown lavished too many favours on the Hebrews, and then maintained that the king was not a good Christian in consequence, till they worked him up to the culminating point they aimed at.

Eleanor, even, who was as unprincipled a plunderer of the Jews as the king himself, whenever an opportunity occurred, was also accused of patronising them, simply because it was supposed that when Eleanor was married to Henry, a great number of Jews followed her to this country, hoping to experience the same favour they enjoyed in her paternal country. All these pretences pressed heavily upon the poor Jews. New and cruel enactments were devised against them; and the king was obliged to sanction them, in order to retain the pretensions to the name Christian. Cruelty to the Jews seems, then, to have been an infallible feature of a good Christian. Thus, in the fifty-first year of this reign, when the statute of pillory passed, it was enacted, amongst other things, that "no person should purchase

flesh of a Jew." "The regulation of these statutes," says Mr. Blunt, "had reference principally to the conduct of the Jews, and to their intercourse with the Christians."

If their fury went no farther, the Jews would have had no reason to be sorry; for truth to speak, the less intercourse the Jews had with those Christians, the safer they were. But the people did not stop there. Indeed, there were circumstances arising out of the authority claimed by the Crown over the Jews, which induced the nation to require some regulations with respect to their property and possessions. The right of the Crown with respect to them, was not unfrequently, in its exercise, oppressive to the Christian inhabitants. When the king seized the estate of a Jew into his hands, he claimed to be entitled, as part of his effects, to all the debts which were at the time owing to him, and the debtor to the Jew thereby became the debtor of the king—a situation which the wants of the Crown in those times rendered dangerous and oppressive. It was the custom of the Jews, instead of advancing money on mortgage, to purchase certain rent charges on annuities, secured upon the landed estates of the debtor.



These rent charges had increased to a very large extent, and by becoming vested in the king, were probably found to give the Crown a dangerous hold upon the landed proprietors of the country. As a further consequence, also, of the title claimed by the king to the property and estates of the Jews, an encroachment was made upon the accustomed rights of the tenure. When a Jew became entitled to any landed property, the fruits and privileges of the lord of the fee became immediately endangered or suspended; for besides that the land was liable at any time to be seized into the hands of the king, who, upon feudal principles, could not hold of any inferior, the lord was deprived at once of his chance of escheat and the advantages of reliefs, as the king claimed in all cases to succeed to the lands of a Jew upon his death; and the heir, for permission to take the land of his ancestors, paid his relief to the king. In cases of outlawry, moreover, the king stepped in and deprived the lord of his escheat.

In consequence of this state of circumstances, the king was constrained, towards the conclusion of his reign, to grant the following charter:—

“Henry, by the grace of God, king of England,

&c. To all our sheriffs, bailiffs, and liege subjects, to whom these presents shall come greeting. Know ye, that for the honour of God and the universal church, for the amendment and advantage of our kingdom, and for relieving Christians from the damages and grievances which they have suffered by the freeholds which our Jews claimed to have in lands, tenements, fees, rents, and other tenures; and that no prejudice may hereafter happen to us, to the commonwealth of our kingdom, or to the kingdom itself, we by the advice of our bishops, nobles, and great men, who are of our council, have provided, ordained, and enacted, for us and our heirs, that no Jew shall henceforth have a freehold in any manors, lands, tenements, fees, rents, or tenures whatsoever, either by charter, gift, feoffment, confirmation, or other grant, or by any other means whatever.

“Provided nevertheless, that they may hereafter hold, as in times past they were accustomed to hold, those houses in our cities, boroughs and towns, which they themselves inhabit; and likewise that they may let those houses to lease, which they now hold for that purpose, to Jews only but not to Christians.

“ Yet nevertheless it is here provided, that it should not be lawful for our Jews of London to purchase, or by any other method to acquire, more houses than they now have in our said city of London ; by which the parochial churches of the said city, or their incumbents, may incur a loss. However, it shall be lawful for the said Jews of London at their pleasure to repair their houses, and even to rebuild and restore to their former condition such of their old houses as have fallen down or been demolished.

“ We likewise, by and with the advice of our said council, provide and enact, that with respect to the said houses so to be inhabited, or let to lease as aforesaid, no Jew shall sue or be sued by our original writs out of chancery, but before our justices appointed for taking care of the Jews and by the writs of Judaism hitherto used and accustomed.

“ But with respect to those lands and tenures in which the Jews were before this statute infeoffed, and which they now hold, our will is, that such infeoffments and grants shall be absolutely annulled ; and that the said lands and tenements shall return to the Christians who granted the same ; but upon condition that the

said Christians shall make satisfaction to the Jews, without usury, for the money or consideration contained in the charters and writings which was paid by the Jews to the Christians, for the said feoffments or grants. And also upon condition, that if the said Christians cannot make immediate satisfaction for the same, it may be lawful for the said Jews to make over the said tenements to other Christians, until the consideration paid by them can, without usury, be raised out of the rents and profits of the said estate, according to its true value by a reasonable assessment; saving, however, to such Christians their subsistence; and so as that the Jew may from thence receive the money or consideration by the hands of some Christian, and not of any Jew, as aforesaid.

“ And if a Jew should hereafter happen to receive from any Christian a feoffment of any fee or tenement, contrary to this present statute, the said Jew shall absolutely forfeit the said tenement or fee, and the same shall be taken into, and safely kept in our hands; and the Christians or their heirs may recover the said lands or tenements out of our hands; but upon condition that they pay to us the whole money which they

receive from the said Jews for such a feoffment. Or if they have not sufficient wherewithal to do this, they shall then pay yearly to us and our heirs, at our exchequer, the true yearly value of those tenements or fees, according to a just and reasonable assessment, until we have had full satisfaction of the said money or consideration.

“And with regard to the nurses of Jewish children, and the bakers, brewers, and cooks of the Jews, as they and the Christians are different in their faith and worship, we provide and enact, that no Christian, man or woman, shall presume to serve them in any of these capacities.

“And because the Jews have long since been accustomed to receive, by the hands of Christians, certain rents something like fee-farm rents, out of the lands and tenements of Christians, which likewise have been called fees, we will and ordain that the statute relating to them heretofore by us made, shall remain in full force, nor shall any way be derogated from by this present act; therefore we command and strictly charge you, that you cause the said provision, ordinance, or statute, to be publicly proclaimed, and duly observed and obeyed, throughout your whole bailiwick.

“ In testimony whereof we have caused to be issued these our letters patent. Witness self at Westminster, 24th day of July, and of our reign this 54th year.”\*

\* Compare John Elijah Blunt's "History of the Jews."

## CHAPTER XXI.

Prince Edward's crusade—The Jews again mortgaged to Earl Richard—The principal synagogue converted to Christianity—The blasphemous pretext—The last act of Henry towards the Jews a most barbarous one—Jewish converts and their asylum.

ONE would have fancied that such a statute as was just given, would have been the Crown's crowning act of violence towards the poor Jews ; and since they had suffered so much of murder, plunder, and robbery both from the king and his subjects, a little respite, at least, would have been granted to them. But various as their oppressions were, so were they also incessant. Soon after the above decree was proclaimed, Prince Edward proceeded to the Holy Land,—

“that grave of immense treasures and innumerable lives ”

His expenses were heavy ; the Jews were therefore taxed at six thousand marks. Now it was high time after all their endurances, to be completely drained of their silver and gold, as they really were ; they were therefore unable to raise the demanded sum with the promptitude with which it was required. Earl Richard came forward again, and advanced the money on the security of the Jews. But they seemed to have been mortgaged to him in the present instance for one year only ; for the next year they were again very heavily taxed. Several individuals were assigned over to Prince Edward, who had to pay one thousand pounds.

The Christians of that reign seem to have cultivated an unaccountable covetousness for everything Jewish, not only their money, but also their public buildings, and particularly their synagogues. We are thus informed, that this year another synagogue in London—the principal one—was taken away from the Jewish congregation, and given to the Friars Penitents, who were sadly in want of a church. Unfortunately for the poor Jews, the Friars' dark hole



of a chapel was standing close to that magnificent synagogue, upon which those "locusts," as Tovey calls them, set their avaricious and malicious affection, and did not rest till they got the king to sanction their robbery.

The pretext they fixed upon was of a most blasphemous nature. They complained, that in consequence of the great noise the Jews made in their synagogue during their worship, they, the Friars, were not able to make the body of Christ quietly. The king thought the reason was a cogent one, and without any further consideration, ordered the Jewish place of worship to be turned into a den of thieves. But the king was so gracious as to permit the Jews to build for themselves another synagogue in some other convenient place, if they chose. No doubt, expecting to get another church for his Christian subjects.

Henry III. must have been tormented with the torturous apprehension—as was the tyrannical Herod—that the Jews anticipated his death with great complacency.\*

\* That savage tyrant, Herod, when he was taken ill in Jericho, which dreadful illness terminated his life, apprehending the approach of his dissolution, and remembering the

Henry began to grow infirm, and did not expect to enjoy this world much longer: he determined nevertheless not to allow the Jews to be glad on that account. The cruelties, therefore, which he inflicted upon them in his last days, were of so barbarous a nature as to excite the commiseration of their most venomous foes. He called upon his unfortunate Jewish subjects to reckon up all their accounts with him, and pay him in the balance without delay. All arrears of his arbitrary tallages were to be settled in the short term of four months, but half of the aggregate sum was to be paid in seventeen days. Should any one be unable to pay, or give adequate security, he was forthwith to be imprisoned, and the privilege of bail denied him, except by body for body.

And if any of their sureties should fail to pay in their whole quota on the appointed days, any sums formerly paid in part were to be forfeited,

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many cruelties which he inflicted on the poor Jews, he had every reason to believe that joy instead of mourning would succeed his death. He ordered, therefore, his sister and brother-in-law to seize the principal men of the city of Jericho, and to put them to the sword the moment of his decease, in order that mourning should be a *sine quâ non*.

and their persons, goods and chattels to be at the king's mercy.

Numbers of them upon this occasion were imprisoned in the Tower of London, and other places. Nothing but weeping and lamentation were to be seen and heard in every corner of every street. Dr. Tovey states—"Even the friars, who had so lately taken possession of their synagogue, as it is said, pitied them ; nor were the Caurcini and the Caturcensian brokers (though their rivals in extortion), without compassion ; for nothing could be more rigorous and unmerciful than the king's proceedings at this time."

It must not be omitted to be mentioned that at the end of Henry's reign, there were great numbers of Jewish converts.

Before the Jewish institution was established, many were doubtless deterred from embracing Christianity, in consequence of the distressing prospect they had before their eyes, of being deprived of all they possessed, and without any means of support.

The provision thus made for the Christian Jews induced many a one to make public confession of his faith. On one of the rolls of that

reign, about five hundred names of Jewish converts are registered. But as all institutions, if not diligently looked after, become in process of time abused, so was that one, in an especial manner. The revenues were swallowed up by a few of the officers of that house, and the majority of the poor converts were subject to sheer starvation.

Henry, therefore, thought it would be a meritorious thing on his part—especially as he expected ere long to be called before an awful tribunal to give an account of his stewardship—to afford fresh encouragement to that asylum, and institute a strict investigation as to what became of the revenues assigned to that establishment; and he also enacted, that for the future, none should receive any support from the house, except those who were really in want of it. The regulations of the house and chapel were also revised and improved. The king's commissioners, for that purpose, were the Mayor of London, and John de St. Dennis, warden of the asylum. It has been stated already which may be repeated, institutions of that kind should be established in every town in England where the Jews reside, which would be the means of

making many avow their secret belief in the truth of the Christian religion.

It is a most gratuitous assertion on the part of Dr. Jost, that only the impoverished Jews, and such as had to fear any punishment by reason of some transgressions against the laws of the country, took refuge in that house. The Jewish historian has no authority for such a statement except his prejudices. There are records existing which prove the contrary.\*

\* "Es scheint jedoch, dass nur arme Juden, und wohl meist solche, die gesetzliche strafen zu fürchten hatten, zu diesem Hause ihre Zufucht nahmen."—"Geschichte der Israeliten." Vol. vii. p. 147.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Summary of Henry's extortions from the Jews—Brief respite afforded to the Hebrews by the death of Henry III.—Edward's first act deceitful—Edward soon began to rule the Jews with cruel vigour—Complaints against the Jews—The Pope's usurers—Statutum de Judaismo.

A MELANCHOLY monotony pervaded the whole of the reign of Henry III.

The principal feature in Henry's disposition was uncontrollable avarice, which has been the cause of the many cruel persecutions, to which the poor unfortunate Jews were exposed.

We may just recapitulate, in a few words, the sums extracted from the Jews in the preceding reign. In the years 1230 and 1231, 15,000 marks; in 1233, 18,000 marks; in 1236, 1,800

marks. The amount of taxation in 1237, not mentioned. In 1239, a third part of their goods ; in 1241, 20,000 marks ; in 1244, 20,000 marks ; in 1245, 60,000 marks, which tax the king received with his own hands ; in 1246, 40,000 marks ; in 1247, 5,525 marks ; in 1249, 10,000 marks ; in 1250, a great part of their goods was taken away ; in 1251, 5,000 marks of silver, and 40 of gold ; in 1252, 3,500 marks ; in 1253, 5,000 marks ; in 1259, 5,000 marks ; in 1269, 1,000*l.* ; in 1271, 6,000 marks ; besides many more, of which we have no records, and also besides the vast sums occasionally extorted from numbers of individuals.\*

“Death,” using the words of a quaint writer, “as inexorable as himself, seized him, and gave

\* “In Claus. 39. H. 3, pars. 2, dors. 16. 17, there is a large catalogue of the lands, houses, rents, mortgages, real and personal estate, and debts of Abraham, a Jew, in several counties, amounting to a vast sum, taking up nearly two membrances, which were imbreviated and confiscated to the king’s use. And a proclamation by the king, that no Jew should be suffered to depart out of the realm of England.”  
—Prynne.

Lord Coke states that “the Crown received from the Jews, in the short space of seven years, viz., from the 17th of December, in the fiftieth year of Henry III., until Shrove Tuesday, the second of Edward I., the sum of £420,000 15*s.* 4*d.*”

the Jews some respite from these afflictions, but the king leaving behind him but a very indifferent character either as a man, or a prince."

For nearly two years after, the government of this country remained in the hands of the Archbishop of York, and the Earls of Cornwall and Chester, Edward being abroad, engaged in the holy war, as it was called; during which time the Jews seem to have been left pretty much unnoticed, and consequently, we may conclude, in peace. Edward's return, however, brings them again prominently before our view, and under more distressing circumstances than ever.

The first public act of his reign which had reference to the Jews, was in conformity with the example set by his ancestors: he held out to them hopes of safety and protection. Shortly after the death of the late king, proclamations of peace and security were issued, extending to the Jews as well as to the nation in general. It was, however, quickly evident that, as far as regarded the former, there was no peace for them.

Edward knew well that his father's and mother's unenviable unpopularity with his subjects,



and the incessant civil wars which distracted the kingdom during the preceding reign, owed their existence to his royal parents' insatiable demands for money from the English barons. Edward, though equally in want of large sums of money, determined, however, to obtain those sums from the Jews alone, and not ask anything from his Christian subjects—an expedient whereby he expected to gain popularity, as well as the supplies he wanted. Accordingly the king, soon after his coronation, began to regulate the Jewish affairs after his father's model. Steps were, in a short time, taken to facilitate the levying of taxes upon them. New officers of their Exchequer were appointed; directions were given to enforce the regulations, by which they were obliged to confine themselves within particular towns and cities; and orders were forwarded to the sheriffs of the different places where they resided, to examine the registers of their debts and possessions, and make a faithful return of their estates and effects. As soon as the necessary information upon these orders was received from the sheriffs, a new tallage was imposed upon the Jews. The children began to be taxed as well as the parents, which

made the tallage enormous ; and authority was given to enforce the payment, together with that of all arrears due on former assessments, by measures of the greatest severity. The collectors were directed to levy the sums which were demanded upon the goods and chattels of those who hesitated to contribute their proportion ; and if the amount could not by this means be obtained—which, as a matter of course, proved those impoverished Jews to be useless, since everything, indeed, was taken from them—the king thought best to change the punishment from imprisonment to transportation. Accordingly, the sheriffs were empowered to punish the refractory (that is) those who had not money enough, with banishment from the kingdom ; to imprison all such as common thieves, who should be found in the country after three days from the time they were, under those orders, directed to leave it ; and the lands, houses, and effects of those who should be banished, were to be forthwith taken possession of and sold. The persons who were appointed to carry these directions into effect were, an Irish bishop—Bishop-elect of Waterford—and two friars ; and they appear to have executed

the office entrusted to them with such relentless severity, that the king's mind was moved to pity, and in many cases he gave orders to release particular individuals amongst the Jews from a part of the demands made upon them.

The complaints which had been made towards the end of the last reign, of the injuries which were experienced by the people in general, from the laws and proceedings respecting the Jews, it seems were now again brought forward. And the extent to which the Jews were permitted to take interest by the canon law, in order to fill the coffers of the king, was, it appears, also the subject of increased remonstrance. It must be borne in mind that the Gentiles were by far the greater usurers than the Jews, but the former could practise the foul profession with impunity, by stating that they laboured for the Pope; for instance, in the thirty-sixth year of the preceding reign, Henry ordered that the Causini should be prosecuted with the utmost rigour of the law for their usuries; but they pleaded that they were the servants of the Pope, and employed by him, and were therefore not only left alone, but were even countenanced in that nefarious traffic.

In the third year of his reign, the king, in order to please his Christian subjects, was pleased to pass the statute which is known by the name of the "Statutum de Judaismo." This statute acknowledged that the king and his ancestors had had great profit from the Jews, yet that many mischiefs and disinheritances of honest men had happened by their usuries; and it therefore enacted, that from thenceforth no Jew should practise usury,—that no distress for any Jew's debt should be so grievous as not to leave the debtor the moiety of his lands and chattels for his subsistence; that no Jew should have power to sell or alien any house, rents, or tenements, without the king's leave, but that they might purchase houses in cities as heretofore, and take leases of land to farm for ten years; and that they should be at liberty to carry on mercantile transactions in the cities where they resided; provided, however, that they should not, by reason of such dealings, be talliable with the other inhabitants of the cities, seeing that they were only talliable to the king, as his own bondsmen; and it directed that they should reside only in such cities and boroughs as were the king's own; and that all Jews

above the age of seven years should wear a badge, in the form of two tables of yellow taffety,\* upon their upper garments ; and that all above twelve years of age should pay to the

\* It is not at all unlikely that some royal merchant arrived in this country to dispose of a certain quantity of yellow taffety, which, perhaps, not proving saleable, the merchant procured the interest of the king or that of his counsellors, and thus yellow taffety became the Jewish badge. C. White, in his "Three Years in Constantinople," relates a circumstance which gives colour to the above suggestion. He says : " Sometimes French ambassadors carry their powers of protection to strange lengths, and apply them to singular purposes. It is related that one La Rose, first valet-de-chambre to M. d'Argental, in 1690, was persuaded by some one in Paris to lay out his savings in wigs, as a good speculation to take to Turkey. Finding, upon reaching Constantinople, that his stock remained on hand, and that he had been duped, he fell into low spirits, and had nigh died of despondency. The ambassador seeing this, bethought himself of applying to the grand vizir, to see if he could not devise some plan for getting rid of the cargo. ' Nothing can be easier (more easy),' replied the sultan's alter ego ; ' leave the affair to me.' On the following day, a firman was issued, and read in the Jewish synagogues, commanding all Jews to wear wigs.

" Terrible was the confusion and running to and fro among the unfortunate Israelites of Balat and Khass Kouy. Few knew the meaning of wigs ; none knew where to find them. This having quickly reached La Rose's ears, he joyously delivered his store to a broker, who disposed of the whole in

king at Easter the sum of three-pence. Lord Coke recommended that statute as very worthy to be read. It was drawn up in French, and the following is an English translation of the same:—

“Whereas, the king having observed, that in times past, many honest men have lost their inheritances by the usury of the Jews, and that many sins have from thence arisen, notwithstanding Judaism is, and has been very profitable to him and his ancestors, yet nevertheless he ordains and establishes for the honour of God, and the common benefit of the people, that no Jew hereafter shall in any manner practise usury ; and that no usurious contracts already made, since the feast of St. Edward’s last past, shall stand good, excepting bonds relating to the capital sum. Provided also, that all those who are indebted to the Jews, upon pledges moveable, shall redeem them before Easter next, under pain of forfeiture. And if any Jew shall practise usury against the intent of this statute,

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a few hours, and the speculator reaped a rich harvest. He was, however, directed by his master not to renew the venture.

“This was not the only strange proceeding on the part of M. d’Argental ; indeed, he carried his vagaries so far, that he was eventually put under restraint by his own secretaries.’

the king promises neither to give him assistance by himself or officers to recover his debts ; but, on the contrary, will punish him for his trespass, and assist the Christians against him in the recovery of their pledges.

“ And it is further enacted, that no distress for any Jew’s debt shall hereafter be so grievous as not to leave Christians the moiety of their lands and chattels for a subsistence : and that no distress shall be made by any such Jew, upon the heir of his debtor named in the bond, or any other person in possession of the debtor’s lands, before such debt shall be proved in court. And if the sheriff or other bailiff is commanded by the king to give possession to any Jew, of lands or chattels to the value of his debt, the chattels shall first be appraised by the oaths of honest men, and delivered to the Jew or Jewess to the value of the debt. And if the chattels be not found sufficient to answer it, then the lands shall be extended by the same oath, according to their separate values, before seisin is given of them to the Jew or Jewess ; to the intent, that when the debt is certainly known to be discharged, the Christian may have his land again, saving to the Christian, nevertheless, the moiety of his lands

and chattels, and the chief house for his sustenance as before expressed.

“ And if anything stolen be found in the possession of a Jew, let him have his summons if he regularly may have it ; if not, he shall answer in such a manner as a Christian would be obliged to do without claiming any privilege. Likewise all Jews shall be resident in such cities and boroughs as are the king’s own, where the common chest of their indentures is wont to be kept. And every one of them that is past seven years shall wear a badge, in form of two tables, of yellow taffety, six fingers long and three fingers broad, upon his garment ; and every one that is past twelve years shall also pay annually to the king, at Easter, the sum of three-pence, both male and female.

“ And no Jew shall have power to alienate in fee, either to Jew or Christian, any houses, rents, or tenements, which they already purchased, or dispose of them in any manner, or acquit any Christian of his debt, without the king’s special license, till he hath otherwise ordained.

“ And because holy Church wills and permits that they should live, and be protected, the king takes them into his protection, and commands



that they should live guarded and defended by his sheriffs, bailiffs,, and other liege people. And that none shall do them harm, either in their persons or goods, moveable or immoveable, or sue, implead, or challenge them in any courts but the king's courts, wheresoever they are.

“ And that none of them shall be obedient, respondent, or pay any rent to any but the king or his bailiffs, in his name, excepting for their houses which they now hold, rendering rent ; saving likewise the rights of holy Church.

“ And the king also grants, that they may practice merchandize, or live by their labour, and for those purposes freely converse with Christians. Excepting that on no pretence whatever they shall be levant or couchant, amongst them: nor on account of their merchandize, be in scots, lots, or talliage, with the other inhabitants of those cities or boroughs where they remain ; seeing they are talliable to the king as his own vassals, and not otherwise.

“ Moreover the king grants them free liberty to purchase houses, and curtilages, in the cities and boroughs where they reside : provided they are held in chief of the king, saving to the lords their due and accustomed service.

“ And further the king grants, that such as are unskilful in merchandize, and cannot labour, may take lands to farm, for any term not exceeding ten years : provided no homage, fealty, or any such kind of service or advowson to holy Church, be belonging to them. Provided also that this power to farm lands shall continue in force for fifteen years, from the making of this act, and no longer.”\*

The provisions of this act were rigorously enforced ; writs were at different periods issued to compel the Jews to reside in the towns prescribed for them, to levy the sum of three-pence a-head on all who were above the age of twelve years, and to oblige all who were more than seven years old, to wear the badge directed by this statute.

\* It appears that Edward had already contemplated the total banishment of the Jews in 1290, for fifteen years after that statute was enacted, the Jews were altogether expelled.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Jews begin to speak their mind about the Christian Religion—The Proclamation in consequence—The Jews consider their character defamed when called Christian—New enactment—Edward's zeal in promoting Christianity amongst the Jews—Patronises the convert's House—Belager a Jewish convert—Edward wants money—The Jews accused of clipping the coin—The charge of clipping the coin examined.

THE Jews were a long time silent as regards the merits of the Christian religion, but they could contain themselves no longer. They began openly to abuse Christianity, and stated publicly that it could not be a religion given by a merciful God, since it allowed such inhumanity.

The King, therefore, with an appearance of pious zeal, which was either prompted by the dictates of his own conscience, or adopted in

deference to the spirit of the times, commanded steps to be taken to make the Jews—apparently at least—respect the Christian faith. The first means adopted with a view to this object were, as might have been expected in that age, of a compulsory nature. In the seventh year of this reign, the King issued a proclamation, directing that any Jew who was heard openly to revile the divinity of Christ, should be forthwith put to death; and if convicted of being a common blasphemer, should be punished according to the law in such cases.

The Jews insisted, however, that they should not be called by the name of Christian, considering such an epithet, when applied to them, a defamation of character. Accordingly we find, that when a Jewish woman was once called a Christian, and affirmed to have been baptized, her husband joined with her in an action for scandal and defamation, and appealed to the king for justice.

The king actually sent a formal writ concerning it to his justices, commanding them to try the matter by an inquisition of Christians and Jews, and obtain for the parties redress, if slandered. To this circumstance may the origin of

the new enactment be ascribed, viz., that Jewish females should also wear distinguishing badges.

For by an edict subsequently issued by the king, the direction with respect to the wearing of badges was extended to Jewesses as well as to Jews; and orders were at the same time given to see that no Christian served any Jew in any menial capacity. In addition to these regulations, which were solely of a temporal nature, measures were also taken with respect to the Jews, which had reference to the promotion of their spiritual welfare. For about the same time, certain friars of the order of the Dominicans undertook to preach to the Jews, and vouched to convince them of the truth of the Christian faith, if the Jews could only be prevailed upon to listen to their preaching. They therefore petitioned the king to force all the Jews to attend to their (sermons) preaching.

To forward their pious intentions, the king issued writs to the sheriffs and bailiffs of the different towns where the Jews resided, commanding that the Jews should be compelled to attend such places as the friars should appoint, and be forced to listen to the lectures which were delivered, with attention, and without disturbance.

The king on his part conceded a portion of the advantages to which he had heretofore been entitled, from the power he possessed over the property of the converted Jews. Letters-patent were published, declaring that for the future seven years, any Jew, who might become a Christian, should retain the moiety of his property to his own use ; the other half was secured to the House of Converts, founded by the late king, to be applied (together with the deodands which were granted at the same time) towards the support of that establishment. We do not find, on record, many benefits that resulted from the measure thus taken, to induce the Jews to investigate attentively the claims of the Christian doctrines ; and it would seem that but few were prevailed upon to surmount the stumbling-blocks thrown in the way of their conversion, and to make the sacrifice which was still incurred by the convert to the Christian creed.

The Jewish Converts' Institution was also much patronised by the king. The warden of the house was commanded to elect an able presbyter to act as his coadjutor, and who was to reside in the house, together with a few other ministers, in order regularly to attend to all the

regulations of the house. The king also ordered, that if any of the converts residing in the house were qualified to act as assistant chaplains, they should be preferred to all others, in the presbyters' election. And if any of the convert inmates appeared likely to become scholars, they should be sent to efficient schools, and properly educated. And if any be more fit for business, learn a trade; but have their board and lodgings in the institution. Should the literary converts, however, be promoted to the church, they were to cease to participate in the benefits offered by the house. The king also ordered that if after all the expenses of the house were discharged, there should still remain some balance in the hand of the collector or treasurer, the whole of that surplus should be applied to the repairing and beautifying of the chapel belonging to that institution.

But, as it was said before, we are not favoured with many records of the conversion of the Jews in this reign: yet those we have registered are of a very satisfactory nature. We read of a certain Oxford Jew, Belager by name, who became a Christian, and from the schedule of his goods, which was seized for the king, in consequence of

his conversion, we have every reason to believe that Belager was a man of learning, for his moveable goods consisted chiefly of books. His conversion was, therefore, owing to powerful conviction, as is generally the case with a Jew, when he is led to make a public confession of his faith in Christ.\*

Whilst it is pleasing to register the concessions which were thus made on the part of the Crown in favour of the Jewish converts, it is no less painful to have to record that the Jews in general still continued to be subjected to tallages of very heavy amounts, the payment of which was enforced by seizure of their goods, and by banishment. The king's exchequer being completely exhausted, Edward stood greatly in need of money in consequence of his Welsh war: the rearing of the two castles in Wales—viz., that of Caernarvon, as also that of Conway—must also have amounted to a vast expenditure. Then the question arose, where was all the money to be got? Answer—By orders which were at various

\* By this it is not meant to insinuate that there are no impostors amongst the baptized Jews. It is a painful truth that the human nature of the Jews is as deceitful and as desperately wicked as that of the Gentiles.



times issued to open and examine the chests in which the Jewish properties and possessions were enrolled ; and great part of their effects were taken, and the sums which other persons were indebted to them were levied and appropriated by the king. Accusations were, moreover, at different periods made against them, of various descriptions of crimes.

The principal offence with which they were now charged, was the clipping and falsifying the coin of the realm ; and many, on account of this calumny, were condemned to suffer death, and were executed. In the seventh year of this reign no less than two hundred and ninety-four Jews were put to death for this imputed crime, and all they possessed taken to the use of the the king. To what extent the Jews were really guilty of this latter offence for which they suffered, or whether they were guilty at all, it is impossible now to determine.

It is probable, however, that many a reader may decide at once that this charge must have been true ; for Edward I., who is called the English Justinian, for the excellency of the laws enacted by him, caused them to be tried for this offence. Some may perhaps suppose, that under

a sovereign, who is to this day celebrated on account of the laws enacted in his reign, those Jews had all regular trials, and were justly convicted on the evidence. We candidly confess, that those were the opinions we entertained at the first reading of this accusation, which induced us to examine the subject most attentively ; and the following is the result of the examination of this subject :—It is true that where there are good laws enacted, we naturally look for an upright administration of them ; but it is possible for a prince to enact good laws for the government of his people, and yet to be misled by his ministers, to conduct his government without the least regard to law and justice ; and there are few reigns in which greater acts of oppression, cruelty, and injustice were committed, than in the reign of Edward I.,\* although the brilliancy of his exploits, and the greatness of his abilities, have thrown an unmerited gloss over his administration. Does not history declare that the very fountains of justice were polluted, and that long complaints were made of the corruption and venality of the judges in Edward's reign ? Kings are ever entitled to profound respect, and it is

\* "Henry's Britain." Vol. vii., p. 75.

the liberal policy of the present age ever to give them the credit of uprightness of intention, and to consider every investigation, as an investigation of the acts of their ministers. We shall, therefore, consider it in this light, and speak of actions as the actions of the ministers of state; and surely the actions of the administration in Edward's reign are very reprehensible. Their conduct towards the Welsh bards, will ever be considered, by those who are not dazzled by successful cruelty, as disgraceful acts, which would have tarnished the splendour of this reign had it been a thousand times more splendid; but in their conduct towards the Jews, they acted the part of most grievous oppressors. What evidence was produced against them? We read that they were suspected of the crime, as were also the Flemings. It would, therefore, have been the part of a good and active government to have set its officers to seek for the guilty, whether English, Flemish, or Jews. Does this appear to have been done? By no means. Mark, we do not deny, but there might have been Jews as well as Flemings and English concerned in these malpractices. The Jews are men, and subject to like temptations and like crimes

as the rest of mankind ; and as they dealt in money, and had better opportunities than others, the probability that some of them were not entirely innocent is strengthened ; but the suddenness of the inquisition, the great number of those executed and the conduct of the government and the people at large to those whom they did not execute, convince us that the Jews had not fair play, but that by far the majority of them were unjustly convicted. It is curious to observe in the page of the English historian, first the statement that “the king’s finances were exhausted,” and the same page ends with an account of the vast sums raised by the seizure of the Jews’ houses and effects, and the fines imposed upon those who escaped death, and the goldsmiths who were involved in the suspicion of being concerned with them.”\*

The only circumstance mentioned by the historian which seems to glance at the crimination of any of them is, that great sums of clipped money were found in their houses. Here seems to be something like evidence. We must therefore pay attention to it. If he had said that there had been found in their houses great

\* Hume and Smollett.

quantities of gold-dust of the same standard with the current coin, it would have amounted to circumstantial evidence, which, if strongly corroborated with other proofs, might induce an impartial jury to convict a prisoner ; but no such thing is mentioned ; it is only said that great sums of clipped money were found in their houses. Now this, so far from being evidence against them, was evidence in their favour, if rightly considered : but what signified evidence in favour of a Jew, when he was accused upon a general rumour ? His judge and jury composed of those who hated him and his nation, and who would rejoice and exult in his conviction and sufferings. Who was there to plead his cause ? Is there the least ground to suppose that they had even a single chance of being acquitted ? The very evidence which is considered as a proof of their guilt should have produced their acquittal ; for if they had been concerned in clipping the coin, they would have hoarded unclipped money in order to clip it, and put the clipped money in circulation. And again they dealt in money, and hoarded money ; if, therefore, the money which was in circulation was clipped and depreciated in value, what could they deal in—what

could they hoard but clipped money? Once more the Flemings were mentioned as being implicated with the Jews in the suspicion of being guilty of this crime; and in the account we are now considering, we find that the goldsmiths were charged with being their accomplices, although they (being Christians) were only fined, and not hanged for it. We think there can be little doubt, but that the latter were the principal criminals, for if a goldsmith were not restrained by the detestation of such a crime, but would become *particeps criminis*, and subject himself to the punishment of the law, would he admit an accomplice to render his detection the more probable? would he permit an accomplice to run away with the main part of the plunder? Surely he would do all the business himself.\*

Unjust, however, as was the condemnation of the Jews for that imputed crime, the poor Jews seemed convinced that anything would be believed against them, be the story ever so incredible. Sums to a large amount were therefore subsequently extorted from them by the common people, through threats of accusing them of the above crime. To such lengths was

\* See "Witherby's Dialogues."

this system of extortion carried on, that the king found it necessary to issue a proclamation, declaring that from thenceforth, no Jew should be held answerable for any offence heretofore committed. This act of evident justice was, however, accompanied by a condition which throws a degree of doubt upon the real motive by which it was suggested. In order to bring himself within the security of the proclamation, the person accused was bound to pay a fine to the king.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Edward's illness and vow—All the Jews imprisoned—A curious inscription discovered—The Jews purchase their liberty—The enmity against the Jews' epidemic—Edward decrees the final banishment of the Jews from this country—The decree—The King's wants intense—Magnificent display at the nuptials of his daughters—cause and effect—A list of Queen Eleanora's plate—The cruelty practised against the poor exiles, by the populace—The villany of a master mariner—The number of the exiles.

IN the fourteenth year of this reign, the king was taken dangerously ill. On his bed of sickness he made a vow, if his health should recover, to undertake another crusade. Accordingly, when he recovered, he took the cross, but appointed no time for his departure. In fact, he could not conveniently leave his dominions; he therefore compromised his vow, by directing his zealous fury against the Jews of Guienne, whom he first



plundered, and then banished. Alas ! for his boasted laws and the splendour of his victories. It is a truth, an incontrovertible truth, that " there is no reign, from the Conqueror inclusive, blotted with greater violence than his. They were cruelties glossed over by ambition and thirst of empire, which were pursued at the expense of justice, humanity, and every other virtue."\*

The next act relating to the Jews occurred in the sixteenth year of this reign, when the king was yet on the continent. In that year it is stated that the Jews were, on the same night, apprehended throughout England, and thrown into prison, and were only released upon payment to the king of the sum of twenty thousand pounds of silver as a ransom. The celebrated John Selden adduces the following curious evidence of that event :—

יום יא מי דיו  
תפוסים כל יהודים  
בארץ האי שנת  
מ"ז לפ' לאלף  
שישי אני אשר  
חקקתי †

\* Witherby.

† The inscription, as given by Selden, and copied by Tovey, is very unlike Hebrew. Dr. Jost's improvement is ingenious;

That is "On the 11th day of May, were all the Jews in the countries of this island imprisoned: in the year of the world, 5047, [A.D. 1217.] I, Asher, inscribed this." The inscription was discovered by Patricius Junius in an old vault at Winchester.]

Some historians relate that the Jews were subjected to this violence, in consequence of a promise made by the commons to the king, of a fifth of their moveables, provided he would banish the Jews from the island. When the Jews became acquainted with the reason of their imprisonment, they caused an intimation to be conveyed to the king, that they would pay a larger sum than the amount of the fifth part promised by the commons, if they might be released from their dungeons, and allowed to remain in England. This offer had the desired effect, and they were again restored to liberty, upon payment of the above-mentioned sum. Whether this statement of the circumstances

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but according to his reading, the imprisonment took place in November. whilst Stow and Prynne state that May was the month. The above reading is proposed, therefore, as the most likely to be correct; one could easily mistake ʿ for 7, especially when scratched on a wall.

under which the Jews were imprisoned be correct or not, it seems certain that from about this time, the clamour against them became daily more violent. It is not improbable that the edict, by which the exactions practised upon the Jews by the people were prevented, had rendered them, with many, still greater objects of hatred. It appears, however, that the clergy and gentry joined with the nation, in general, in desiring the expulsion of the Jews ; and it is to be inferred that they were induced to entertain this wish, in a great measure, from the heavy debts they owed to the Jews, and expecting to be relieved of the payment, by the banishment of the creditors ; which gave birth to all the monstrous accusations brought against them, which were still loudly repeated against the Jews, not only of their being continually clipping and depreciating the coin of the country, but also being the cause of much hardship through their usurious dealings. But, though this may have been, in truth, the principal, as in fact, the only avowed reason for desiring that the Jews should be driven out of England, yet there can be little doubt that the evils which have been, in a former chapter, pointed out as resulting to the nation, in gene-

ral, from the power continually exercised over the property, persons, and rights of the Jews, had some effect in increasing the wish to be relieved from the presence of that people.

Edward's conduct towards the Jews, in his continental dominions, has already been noticed: he first fleeced them for the benefit of the state, and then banished them, to render heaven propitious to his government. This measure served greatly to raise his popularity, and upon his entry into London, he was received with every mark of joy and goodwill by the clergy and people. Before this feeling could subside, he was induced to consent to the decree for the final banishment of the Jews from England, which his great grandfather, Henry II., was instigated to do, but was not prevailed upon.

In return for this favour, he received from the commons the grant of a fifteenth part of their goods, and the clergy, at the same time, made a gift to him of the tenth part of their moveables. A very inadequate sum, when compared with the debts they owed to the Jews. The above-mentioned decree commanded that the Jews, together with their wives and children, should

depart from the realm within a certain time—namely, before the feast of All-Saints. As a matter of grace, on the part of the king, they were permitted to take with them a part of their moveables, and sufficient money to defray the expenses of their journey. Their houses and other possessions were seized by the king, and appropriated to his own use. The king wanted vast sums of money this year.

Three of his elder daughters were married in the same year that the Jews were banished. The king's seizing all the Jewish property will readily account for the magnificence displayed at the nuptials of these princesses.

Agnes Strickland, in her second volume of "The Lives of the Queens of England," expatiates not a little on the effect, but leaves the cause altogether unmentioned, viz.—that of Edward's banishing the Jews. She says, "A list of the plate used in the queen's household, will prove that the Court of Eleanora had attained a considerable degree of luxury. The plate was the work of Ade, the king's goldsmith, and the description of the rich vessels of the goldsmith's company has been brought to light

by modern research.\* Thirty four pitchers of gold and silver, calculated to hold water or wine; ten gold chalices, of the value of 140*l.*, to 292*l.* each; ten cups of silver gilt, or silver white, some with stands of the same, or enamelled, more than 118*l.* each; also cups of jasper, plates and dishes of silver, gold salts, alms bowls, silver hanapers or baskets; cups of benison, with holy sentences wrought thereon; enamelled silver jugs, adorned with effigies of the king, in a surcoat and hood, and with two effigies of Queen Eleanora. A pair of knives with silver sheaths enamelled, with a fork of crystal and a silver fork, handled with ebony and ivory. In the list of royal valuables, were likewise combs and looking-glasses of silver gilt, and a bodkin of silver, in a leather case; five serpents' tongues, set in a standard of silver; a royal crown, set with rubies, emeralds, and great pearls; another with Indian pearls; and one great crown of gold, ornamented with emeralds, sapphires of the East, rubies, and large Oriental pearls." There need be no hesitation in saying that a great part of the articles displayed were

\* By Mr. Herbert, city librarian, in his "History of City Companies."

Jewish. The coincidence of their banishment with the above display, warrants such a supposition.

Notwithstanding the harshness and severity of this decree, it seems not to have been sufficient to excite any commiseration on the part of the people. Many were still unwilling to allow the Jews to depart in quiet, but sought to take the last opportunity remaining to them to give vent to their unchristian hatred and enmity against the unfortunate people, and to despoil them of the small portion of their wealth which remained to them. The principal Jews were forced to provide themselves with letters of safe-conduct from the king; and it became necessary, for their protection, to issue orders to the officers and magistrates of the towns through which they passed, to guard them against the violence of the populace. One instance of the barbarities to which they were subjected, deserves to be particularly noticed, as it affords a just example of the sentiments entertained by the people towards the Jews. It is thus related by Hollinshed, and copied by Lord Coke, and many other writers since. "A sort of the richest of them," he says, "being

shipped with their treasure, in a mighty tall ship which they had hired, when the same was under sail, and got down the Thames, towards the mouth of the river, towards Quinborough, the master mariner bethought him of a wile, and caused his men to cast anchor, and so rode at the same, till the ship, by ebbing of the stream, remained on the dry sand. The master herewith enticed the Jews to walk out with him on land, for recreation ; and at length, when he understood the tide to be coming in, he got him back to the ship, whither he was drawn by a cord.

“The Jews made not so much haste as he did, because they were not aware of the danger ; but when they perceived how the matter stood, they cried to him for help, howbeit he told them that they ought to cry rather unto Moses, by whose conduct their fathers passed through the Red Sea ; and, therefore, if they would call to him for help, he was able enough to help them out of these raging floods, which now came in upon them. They cried indeed, but no succour appeared, and so they were swallowed up in the water. The master returned with the ship, and told the king how he had used the matter, and



had both thanks and rewards, as some have written. But others affirm, (and more truly as should seem,) that divers of the mariners, which dealt so wickedly against the Jews, were hanged for their wicked practice ; and so received a just reward of their fraudulent and mischievous dealing."

By the time appointed, all the Jews who had survived the various massacres had left England ; the numbers have been estimated by some at 15,060, by others, at 16,511.

## CHAPTER XXV.

The account of Hebrew historians—Ben Virga—Rabbi G'daliah—Sir Walter Scott borrowed a leaf from Rabbi G'daliah—The reason of so little information from Jewish sources—Dr. Jost's inaccuracies—The Jewish chronicle—The circumstances which attended the last act of violence—Retrospective view—Picture of the exiles—England expelled the most brilliant star of the Reformation—De Lyra was an English Jew—Luther's forerunner.

THE following few particulars are to be met with in the histories of the Jews themselves respecting their changes, chances, troubles, and sufferings in this country. Ben Virga, in his chronicle "Shayvet Y'hudah," states: "A.M. 5018, in the island which is now called England, a great and mighty destruction occurred in all the congregations, great and powerful in wisdom, knowledge, and honour, which were in those days. And especially that great city called

London, which contained about two thousand Jewish householders; all of them were possessed of wisdom and wealth. It was there that Rabbi Abraham Aben Ezra, composed his epistle which he called 'The epistle of the Sabbath.' The cause of their destruction was, that they [*i. e.* the Jews] should change their creed; and when they insisted on the sanctification of God's name, they [*i. e.* the Gentiles] accused them of counterfeiting the coin. This calumny was brought before the king; the king examined and investigated the matter, and found that the false accusers invented that calumny against the Jews; and they escaped. After, a time, the Nazarenes resumed their calumnies, and sought for persons to witness against the Jews, and they found such persons as they desired, who stated how they saw a Jew clipping a coin; and though the king knew that it was all false, but on account of the murmuring of the populace, he wished to throw off their displeasure, and fearing lest the nation should rise with a sword in their hand, as was generally the case with them, and there would be no one to deliver, he commanded and banished them [the Jews], and this expulsion took place A. M. 5020."

It is not at all unlikely that Ben Virga's account is the true one, as far as the facts of the case are concerned. There seems certainly to be a disagreement in the dates.

Rabbi G'daliah mixed up several incidents together, and also added a little of the marvellous out of his own vivid imagination, which gives his narrative altogether the air of romance, which is the following :—

“A.M. 5020. A priest in England consented to be circumcised in order to be married to a Jewess, with whom he was desperately enamoured. The affair became known to the citizens, who were desirous of burning them. But the king chose to execute the revenge in a different way, and decreed that within three months, they should change their religion: those who circumcised the priest were burned, and many of the Jews changed their religion. And they [*i. e.* the Gentiles] took all their children from six years old and downwards, and carried them to the end of the realm, that they might forget the customs of their fathers, the Jews. The king died, and his son reigned in his stead, and presently there came upon his kingdom pestilence and famine, and his counsellors said to

him, that it was because of the Jews [*i. e.* baptised ones], who do not sincerely believe, that that calamity came upon them. And he [the king] made two tents by the banks of the sea ; upon one he painted the figure of Moses, our Rabbi—may peace be upon him—and also his name ; and upon the other he painted their Messiah : and he told them that they were permitted to become Jews, and none of them should be forced to do anything. But in order that he might ascertain who was a Jew [by creed], he wished that those who were desirous of becoming Jews should go into the tent of Moses our Rabbi—may peace be upon him—who took upon themselves to do so. Now many of them entered into the tent of Moses, our Rabbi—may peace be upon him—and after they were gathered there, they were murdered, and cast into the sea, and thus all of them perished and were extirpated.”

Did Rabbi G'daliah write since the days of Sir Walter Scott, one might be inclined to think that the Jewish historian borrowed a leaf from one of the volumes of the Scotch novelist, only suppressing the names of Brian de Bois-Guilbert and Rebecca ;” but as Sir Walter flourished

when the Hebrew writer was long since dead and gone, we are at liberty to conjecture *vice versa*.

The reason why we are not favoured with more information on their history in this country, by themselves, has already been hinted at in the introductory chapter. It is certain that the Jews had many valuable libraries in this country, which were taken from them before they were driven out of it, and were bestowed on the universities and monasteries. However, this consideration belongs properly to the subsequent period of Jewish history in this country, which shall be fully treated in the ensuing chapters. Dr. Jost is by no means correct when he says, "There is no trace of (Jewish) schools in England; no Rabbi of that country occupies a place in the annals of Jewish scholars; there was no time for study, and no ambition stimulated and encouraged those who were eager for the acquirement of knowledge."\* Not only is this statement

\* "Von Schulen ist keine Spur in England, daher auch nicht von Gelehrten: kein dortiger Rabbiner hat einen Platz in den Jüdischen Jahrbüchern der Gelehrten. Zum Studiren, war keine Zeit, und keine ehre lockte und starkte den Wissbegierigen."—"Geschichte der Israeliten." Vol. vii. p. 165.

at variance with Rabbi Solomon Ben Virga's, but also with his own. He himself says, with reference to the English Jews, "The learned amongst them prosecuted the medical sciences, yet more as an art; and they were, through their acquaintance with some secret means of cures, so celebrated, that the divines were interrupted in their wonderful cures," &c. Indeed there are many statements in this historian's productions, which must be received with a considerable degree of caution.

There is, however, a current opinion amongst the modern English Jews, that especially "the sayings of the wise men of Norwich and of York, are quoted in some of the additions made by the expounders of the Talmud."

We cannot vouch for the correctness of that opinion. We addressed once a letter on this subject to the editor of the "Jewish Chronicle," hoping to elicit from his numerous well-educated readers, information on the above. The learned editor seems to have mistaken the purport of the letter to him, and therefore gave an answer not at all to the purpose. It is the following, and given in a note:—"With every deference due

to Dr. Jost, and his research displayed in his History of the Jews, we are bound in this instance to support Mr. Moses Samuel's opinion, that we had great men living in England eight hundred years ago. Although the Rev. Mr. Margoliouth might have read through the Talmud again carefully (no easy task!) he must have overlooked the passage in Josephoth [Tosephoth, we suppose] (not having a Talmud at hand, we must defer the quotation of 'chapter and verse' to our next number), where the 'wise men of Norwich' are mentioned. Mr. Samuel's opinion is also supported by the authority (no small one, even if compared with Dr. Jost and the Rev. Mr. Margoliouth) of the 'Chain of Tradition' which places Rabbi Meyer of England in the same category with Jarchi, Rabenu Tam, and Maimonides."

That the Jews had learned men in this country we know full well, and the editor of the "Jewish Chronicle" might have known this by the quotation from Ben Virga. It is the especial mention of the wise men of Norwich and of York, that we were anxious to know something about. Upwards of five years have passed away,



and the promised "quotation of chapter and verse" has not been given yet.

To return, however, to the immediate subject. Thus was this unfortunate race, after nearly two centuries of almost continual persecution, driven from this country and robbed of their possessions. In the circumstances that attended this last act of violence, we see displayed a continuance of the same oppression and cruelty which the treatment they had experienced, both from the monarch and the people, had ever evinced. If, as was pretended, their banishment was sought as a relief from the grievances which their usurious dealings inflicted upon the nation, we cannot find in this circumstance any necessity for their extirpation, or any justification for the rapacity, that caused their estates to be confiscated to the crown, or for the malice that dictated the cruelties to which, on that occasion, they were exposed from the populace. The sums which were advanced to the king by the commons and by the clergy, as the price of their expulsion, were more than made up to them by the robbery they practised upon the unfortunate exiles before their leaving the shores of this

country. And the desire that the nation seems to have entertained for their removal may, without error, be traced principally to *this* source.

In taking a retrospective view of the facts that were stated in the preceding pages, it must be acknowledged that a spirit of relentless cruelty pervaded the whole nation; and we cannot but feel that the exactions and barbarities which were recorded, mark an indelible stain upon this period of English history. They are blots in the characters of the successive monarchs, and are painfully indicative of the cupidity, ferocity, and ignorance of the people. On the other hand, we must admit that the conduct of the Jews themselves under their continued sufferings and oppressions, whilst it furnishes a fresh example of the characteristic perseverance with which they brave all dangers and difficulties in pursuit of riches, affords at the same time a further proof of the resignation, fortitude, and self-devotion for which that nation has been ever distinguished. Behold them proceeding to leave the British Isle in the beginning of winter; see their tender infants clinging to their mothers, who are scarcely able to support them; see them lying down when unable to proceed,

stripped of all their comforts, insulted by those who are called Christians ; and when they arrive at the sea-shore, behold numbers of them, in their embarkation, drowned by the mere wanton barbarity of the English, and the rest stripped of the poor pittance they were permitted to retain. Oh ! the reflections are too much for the Hebrew. He would rather not think of the past, but look at the present improved state both of the persecuted and persecutors, which shall be the pleasing theme of the succeeding volumes.

It must not be omitted to be mentioned, that in banishing the Jews from this country the English expelled one of the most brilliant stars of the Reformation, who was a Christian Jew, an Englishman by birth, and educated in the University of Oxford, the well-known Nicolaus de Lyra, who wrote a Commentary on the Old and New Testament ; and being deeply versed in the ancient tongues, and well read in all the works of the learned rabbies, he selected their best opinions, and expounded the holy Scriptures in a manner far above the taste of that age—in which he showed a greater acquaintance with the principles of interpretation than any of his predecessors. He was, indeed, a

most useful forerunner to Luther, who made ample use of his commentaries, in which De Lyra frequently reprehended the reigning abuses of the Church of Rome—a fact which led Pflug, Bishop of Naumberg, to say,

“ Si Lyra non lyrasset,  
Lutherus non saltasset.”

Other have it thus :

“ Nisi Lyra lyrasset,  
Totus mundus delirasset.”\*

Wickliffe has also profited much by De Lyra's writings ; he used them frequently when translating the Bible. Indeed, his writings were formerly very famous. Pope, in giving a catalogue of Bay's library, in his “ Dunciad,” finds

“ De Lyra there a dreadful front extend.”

It appears that, soon after the banishment of the Jews from this country, De Lyra embraced Christianity in Paris. The French biographers have a particular talent for Frenchifying any learned man who passes through the towns and streets of France. Accordingly, L'Acrocat, in

\* See the “ Fundamental Principles of Modern Judaism Investigated.” Page 241. “ Geschichte der hebräischen Sprache und Schrift.” Page 105.

his biographical dictionary, made a Frenchman of him. But that is disproved by the title-page of one of De Lyra's own works,\* in which he gives England as his native country.

\* Brathering's 8vo. edition of Lyra's "Disputations against the Jews."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

Another retrospective view of the banishment of the Jews—  
Many Jews preferred to give up the profession of their religion than the abandonment of their homes—The banishment of the Jews from Spain—No infamous Inquisition disgraced this Country—Warbeck and his son Peter, *alias* Peterkin—Edward IV.—Richard III.—Henry VII.—Dutchess of Burgundy—James IV. of Scotland—Deputation of Asiatic Jews to examin the pedigree of Oliver Cromwell—Francis Raguenet's blunders—The raging of the Thames—A Jewish tradition—The banishment of the Jews keenly felt by Edward's successors—The crime of usury not peculiar to the Jews—Henry VII. and the philosopher's stone.

It will be necessary, once more, before we take leave of the first volume of the history under review, to take another retrospective glance of the banishment of the Jews from this country ; so as to enable the reader to form a connecting

link between their inhospitable expulsion, and hospitable readmission, by the people of England. The remarkable coincidence between the banishment of the Jews and the gorgeous display at the nuptials of the three eldest daughters of the impoverished Edward I. has been already pointed out. Rigorous and diligent research into the archives of extant documents, published and unpublished, leaves but little doubt that many of the devoted and persecuted of the children of Israel, resident in this country at that time, preferred to give up the profession of their religion than the abandonment of their homes and their comforts. The Jews in Spain were more learned, more noble-minded, more zealous for their creed ; and yet when the fatal crisis arrived, that they were obliged to bid a permanent farewell to their long-cherished homes, no less a congregation than ninety thousand professed Roman Catholicism,—the religion which hated them, and which was detested by them.

The reason, however, for the comparatively non-existence of instances of relapses to Judaism, is the absence of that nefarious tribunal, the Inquisition ;—that persecuting merciless court tended to make the Nuovo-Christianos of Spain

cling more tenaciously than ever to their secret unbelief of Christianity, and perpetuated the same infidelity in the minds of their descendants. No such tribunal disgraced this country, and the total absence of such an iniquitous court in this realm had the effect of amalgamating, by degrees, the Anglo-Jewish Nuovo-Christians with the Anglo-Saxon and Anglo-Norman Christians in this country.

Nevertheless, we meet now and then with instances, evidencing that England was not altogether without those Nuovo-Christians. One instance is a particularly striking one, and forms a most romantic chapter in the annals of Great Britain :—

Warbeck, who was a great favourite—and the gossips of the time reported that his wife was a greater favourite—with Edward IV., was one of those Jewish Christians. This Warbeck was often with his royal patron, but Mrs. Warbeck oftener; for of this prince we are told that—

“ Edward, to each voluptuous vice a slave,  
Cruel, intemperate, vain, suspicious, brave.”

Warbeck was presented by his wife with a son. The king condescended to stand godfather for young Warbeck, (?) and name him Peter. It



need hardly be added, that the young royal protégé was brought up in a manner suiting a courtier. Many traced in Peter's face a striking similarity, and almost family likeness, to the features of the ill-fated young princes, Edward V., and Richard, Duke of York. However, when Edward was no more, and Warbeck shrewdly observing the treachery of the Duke of Gloucester, alias Richard III., the royal favourite thought it proper quietly to withdraw from court altogether. But when Warbeck observed, moreover, the cruel death inflicted upon Lord Hastings, and the ignominious punishment awarded to Jane Shore, and the infamous murder perpetrated on the sons of his royal patron, he prudently quitted England altogether, and went to reside at Tournay, in Fleming. So that amidst the confusion of the civil discord and war which agitated and rent this country, and deluged it with blood, Warbeck and Peterkin were obliterated from the memories of the statesmen of the time; and it was not till the time of Henry VII. that their names appear on the stage of Great Britain's history. Peterkin returned to England under the assumed name of Richard, Duke of York, and claimed the throne of England as

his birthright, and for a time succeeded in shaking the pillars of the kingdom, and made Henry VII. tremble on his throne. He was honoured by the Duchess of Burgundy by the cognomen of the "White Rose of England;" and James IV. of Scotland gave him in marriage his relative, the beautiful and virtuous Lady Catherine Gordon, daughter of the Earl of Huntly. The rest of the acts of Peterkin Warbeck, the wars which he waged, and the death which he died, are amply recorded in the books of the chronicles of the kings of England. It is to be regretted, however, that Henry VII. did not favour the public of his day with all the evidences which were adduced at Peterkin's trial. We might perhaps have learned from that singular incident a great deal about the British Nuovo-Christians of that period; but, using the words of Lord Bacon, "Henry's showing things by pieces, dark lights so muffled the story," that we are left in a great measure in the clouds about it.

The Jews themselves in many parts of Europe and Asia were of opinion that many of their brethren in England of the middle ages, chose rather to part with their Judaism, than with their place of sojourning.

Francis Raguenet in his "Histoire d'Oliver Cromwell," records that soon after the Protector assumed the reigns of the English government, the Jews of Asia conceived the preposterous idea, that Cromwell might prove the promised Messiah, and they therefore commissioned a deputation, headed by a celebrated Rabbi, Jacob Ben Uziel by name, to proceed to England, and search diligently for the ancestors of the *soi-disant* Protector. When the wise men of the East came to England, they first sought the face of the governor, to ask permission, under pretence, to view the libraries at Cambridge, with a view, as they stated, to purchase them. Cromwell thus gave them permission to proceed thither. The commissioners, however, did not stay long at Cambridge. After a cursory inspection of the Oriental lore, they proceeded to Huntingdonshire, and set about tracing the pedigree of their fancied deliverer. But the deputation were gifted with more zeal than discretion, which betrayed the real object they had in view, and were therefore ordered to quit this country with the least possible delay.

It is perfectly absurd to suppose that the Jews seriously thought Oliver Cromwell to have

been the Messiah ; if Francis Raguenet only remembered what he wrote in his "Histoire de l'Ancien Testament" he would never have committed so great a blunder. The common and illiterate ignoramuses might have thought so, and may be excusable, but such a statement made by a man of letters, sounds very ugly. Nevertheless, that commission of inquiry proves that the Jews were of opinion that many of their nation became amalgamated with the Anglo-Normans.

Amongst the many traditions current amongst the Jewish people at home and abroad, respecting their ante-expulsion brethren, there is one of a curious character. It is to the following effect, that the spot in the river Thames, where many of the poor exiles were drowned by the perfidy of a master mariner, is under the influence of ceaseless rage, and however calm and serene the river is elsewhere, that place is furiously boisterous. It is moreover affirmed that this relentless agitation is situated under the London Bridge. There are even at the present day, some old fashioned Hebrew families, who implicitly credit the outrageous rage of the Thames. A small boat is now and then discovered by a Hebrew

observer, filled with young and old credulous Jews, steering towards the supposed spot, in order to see and hear the noisy sympathy of the mighty waters. As there is no end of traditions on the subject, we must not tarry to narrate any more of them, but confine ourselves to a few facts with reference to England without the Jews.

Though Edward I. personally profited considerably from the banishment of the Jews, as has already been demonstrated, his successors felt the absence of the golden Hebrew sources most keenly. Edward was well compared to the silly woman in the fable, who killed her goose in order to get all the golden eggs at once.

Dr. d'Lossiers Tovey, a writer of great research, and who has been frequently quoted in the progress of this work, observes, "Errors both in faith and practice, seem to have been as frequent amongst Christians; in succeeding generations, as they were before; and the several statutes made to prevent usury, after the Jews had left the kingdom, prove it to be a crime no ways peculiar to those of the circumcision. The extremities to which some of the English monarchs were driven, by reason of the lack of the filthy lucre, shows how

much the English Crown lost by the absence of that enterprising people the Jews. "Who can imagine," says the same author, "that if the Jews had continued in the kingdom, Henry VII. would ever have been driven to supply his extravagancies by the beggarly shift of Alchymy and sophistications of his coin!"

Few and far between are the traces of the old Hebrews in this realm. The antiquarians and archæologists have now and then brought to light some fragments belonging to some monuments of the ante-expulsion Jews, which, though comparatively trifling in themselves, are still endowed with interest to the reader of Jewish history. It is difficult now to point out clearly, the ancient Hebrew houses, both public and private, for though Edward ordered a strict inventory to be made of all the Jewish estates, with the design, as he promised, to convert them all to pious purposes, yet nothing was more remote from his royal intentions. The inventory was indeed made, and an auction too, but the proceeds were converted to anything but pious purposes. The English Justinian squandered away the money in a most abominable manner, without a single penny having been applied to those pious

uses of which the devout king talked. Whole rolls full of patents, relative to Jewish estates, are still to be seen in the Tower, which estates together with their rents in fee, pensions and mortgages, were all seized by the king. Besides those Jewish records on parchment, there are some in stone, viz, a few Christian churches, which were formerly Jewish synagogues. Also some streets and walks, which are distinguished by the names of Jewry, Jew's way, Jew's walk, Jewin street, Jew's wall, Jew's mount, &c. &c., which are to be found in London, Cambridge, Canterbury, Oxford, Leicester, Suffolk, York, &c. &c.

It would appear that prior to their banishment from this country, the Jews possessed several valuable libraries. Peck, in his "Antiquities of Stamford," mentions one, of considerable extent, to have existed in that place, which was ultimately removed, to a neighbouring convent. Anthony Wood, in his "Antiquities of Oxford," states that the Jewish books in that city, were purchased by the scholars. Most of the Hebrew books were bought by the famous Roger Bacon, who, in a short note written in one of the books, gratefully acknowledged, that they were of great

service to him in his studies. After his decease, they came into the possession of the Franciscan Friars of Oxford.

As long as that order existed there, the monks made good use of those books, but the decline of the order was followed by the decay of the library. "The books,"—using the words of that quaint writer—"were delivered up as a patri-mony for the moths and worms, as were several works of Roger Bacon himself." The British Museum and Bodleian libraries have among their myriads of volumes, a few Hebrew works penned by Hebrew hands, in this country, during the thirteenth century. In the former there are the works of the celebrated Abraham Aben Ezra, also a beautiful MS. of the Prophets written on parchment, and has the following inscription, "The writing of the hand of Rabbi Tam." In the latter is a MS. work entitled "Sephær Hashoham," a Hebrew vocabulary, written by Rabbi Moses Hannasee, of England.

There used to be a tradition amongst the common people of this country, that the Jews buried a great many of their valuables, either in the hope of a speedy return, or to prevent them falling into the hands of their rapacious perse-



cutors, which is not at all unlikely. The poor exiles knew too well that while passing through the country places laden with property, on their way to the Cinque ports, they would expose themselves to the ravenous avarice of their murderous foes. The common classes of this country, used therefore to dig in those localities, in the neighbourhood of which, the Jews once resided. Mr. Burton, the historian of Leicestershire, espoused the same opinion. That writer mentions a circumstance in corroboration of his theory. In the year 1607, was discovered, under a large stone, at Heigham, Leicestershire, a treasure of silver coin, all of the time of Henry III., as well as a fair ruby and agate, set in gold, and a cornelian seal, set in silver, having an Arabic prayer on it. Mr. Burton thinks that some of the ante-expulsion Jews buried the treasure there.

Nearly two hundred years ago, whilst a fisherman was dragging a small brook in Suffolk, he found a curious spherical vessel, standing on three small cloven feet, resembling in shape the accompanying sketch.



It has a Hebrew inscription on its circumference, which decides that the relique was a Jewish one, and that of the olden time. The inscription indicates moreover that the vessel contained the offerings made for Jerusalem.

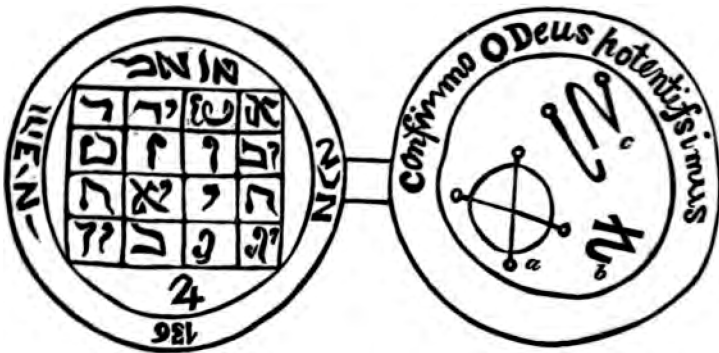
The following is a literal English translation of the original inscription:—"The offerer is Joseph, son of the saint \* Rabbi Yechiaïl—may the memory of the righteous saint be blessed,—who answered and questioned the congregation as he thought proper, that he might see the face

\* An expression used, by Jewish writers, for a martyr.

of Ariel,\* with the written law of Yekuthiaïl,† and may the righteous act‡ deliver from death.”

There can be no doubt that many more such articles were cast away, and which, if they were found, would throw a great deal of light on the early history of the Jews in this country. It is well known what the poor Jews have done at York—that before they committed suicide, they destroyed and buried all their valuables.

It may not be out of place to notice a curious medal, which was found at York in the year 1829,



A

B

\* Jerusalem. Isaiah xxxix. 1.

† Another name for Moses, according to the rabbies.

‡ Alms-giving. Dr. Tovey, by the assistance of a Mr. Gagnier, has succeeded in making nonsense of the inscription.

on the removal of Layerthorpe old bridge, of which the foregoing is a fac-simile.

It bears on side A a square of sixteen compartments, each filled with one or two Hebrew letters, all of which amount to the numerical value of 136, the sum total of which is put between the inner and outer peripheries, underneath the square. On the top of the square are the words *AYL AB, God the Father*. Beneath the square is the astronomical sign of Jupiter. Between the two peripheries to the right of the square, is the word *ABBA, Father*, and to the left of the square, the word *YAHPHIAYL*, which may be rendered into English, *the mighty word of God*.

Side B, the reverse of the medal, bears the sign which expresses the name of the planet Jupiter, according to its power, which is the small circle, crossed by two lines diagonally, marked by a small *a*, also the astronomical sign of Jupiter marked by a small *b*, and the sign marked by a small *c* is an invocation for benefits, through the influence of Jupiter. The inscription between the peripheries is the following appeal in Latin, "Confirmo O Deus potentissimus!" for an answer to the petition made. This medal

affords an insight into the mind of the English Jews during the dark ages. It informs us that though Moses and the Prophets strictly prohibited the use of charms, or placing any confidence in the signs of heaven, the Jews were nevertheless addicted to those practices, as many are at the present day, where the light of true religion, and of civilization, have not as yet dispelled the darkness of heathenism and ignorance.\*

\* Dr. Loewe tried hard to prove that the medal was not Jewish, but he failed in producing conviction on minds well conversant with Judaism of the 19th century.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

England was never destitute of some Jews—The words of sacred story must be true—*Domus Conversorum*—Edward III. and John de Castell, a Jewish convert—William Pierce, a converted Jew, and Richard II.—Henry IV. and Elizabeth, a converted Jewess—The effect of the Reformation—Queen Elizabeth's physician—Jews encouraged to take up their abode in England—John Foxe baptizes a Jew—His sermon entitled "Gospel Olive"—Jews begin to direct attention to England—A certain Rabbi Reuben, of Constantinople, addressed a Letter to Queen Elizabeth—Mr. Hugh Broughton's letter to the Virgin Queen—His letter to James I.—His Petition to the same—Rabbi Reuben's letter consigned to the care of the Lords of the Privy Council—Mr. Broughton's letter to their Lordships—Sir Francis Drake and the Jew whom Shakespeare drew—Paul Mario Sechi—Simono Cenede—Sixtus V.—Henrietta, Queen Consort of England visits the Portuguese synagogue at Amsterdam.

THE Church of England never was, either in

her darkened or enlightened state, without converted Jews, so that properly speaking, Great Britain was never totally destitute of some of the scattered sheep of the House of Israel, for the words of sacred story cannot be proved to be untrue in the smallest particular:—"For, lo," says the God of Abraham, "I will command, and I will sift the house of Israel among ALL nations, like as corn is sifted in a sieve."\*

Accordingly when the Jewish congregations were commanded to quit this realm in 1290, those who were admitted into the Christian Church, as was already shown, were permitted to remain. The *Domus Conversorum*, or the House of Converts, which was erected for the poorer classes of Jewish converts, was for a long period well supported; and though the general banishment of the Jews ultimately diminished the number of new converts in this kingdom, still some there were. There is no consecutive chronicle of them during that period, but detached accounts are now and then met with, which warrant the affirmation. For instance, in the thirtieth year of Edward III. we read of one John de Castell who was admitted

\* Amos ix. v. 9.

into the House of Converts by the following writ:—"The king to his beloved chaplain, Henry de Ingleby, the guardian to our House of Converts, in our city, London, sends greeting, because we wish that John of Castell—a convert from the Jewish religion, who lately came into our kingdom of England—may have such support in our said house, from our alms, as others of the same sort have had in the same house before this time. We command you to admit the same John into our house, and that you cause him to have from that house the prescribed allowance for one convert. The king being witness at Westminster on the first of July."

This monarch, however, most unjustly applied the converts' house to the use of the Master of the Rolls.\* We read also of a Jew, William Pierce by name, who was converted to Christianity in the fifth year of Richard II. In the following reign of Henry IV. we read of a Jewess, Elizabeth, the daughter of a Rabbi Moses, as having embraced Christianity. The celebrated Jewish convert, Emanuel Tremellius, having heard that a pious protestant, Edward VI., was

\* See Newcourt's "Repertorium." Vol. i. pp. 339. 338. Fol. London, 1708.



seated on the throne of England, came to reside in this country. He lived on terms of great intimacy with Archbishop Cranmer and Parker, and was appointed Professor of Hebrew in the University of Cambridge, but thought it prudent to take his departure, on the death of that monarch.

However, with the re-establishment of the Reformation in Great Britain, the prejudices against the Jews began to disappear, and even unconverted Jews ventured to take up their abode in this kingdom. Queen Elizabeth herself preferred to trust her health in the hands of a Jewish physician, Rodrigo Lopez, by name, which circumstance might have, and has, encouraged some to sojourn under her Majesty's sway. Rodrigo Lopez' end is well known: he was an object of jealousy to the members of the court. He was accused by Essex and others of designing to poison the queen. And though the charge could not be brought home to the accused—for the witnesses must have been bribed—he was delivered up to the fury of his persecutors, and died. We read in the annals of that reign, that John Foxe, the martyrologist, baptized a Jew, on which occasion he

preached a sermon, entitled the "Gospel Olive," and the following remark is found in the introductory observations to that discourse :—" I do from the bottom of my heart rejoice in the behalf of this person, for whose cause we are now met here together ; who being transported from the uttermost parts of Barbary into England, and conversant among us, by the space of *six whole years.*"

The individual who drew the attention of Queen Elizabeth, of King James I., of their respective privy councils, and of the bishops and clergy of this country towards the Jews, was the extraordinary Mr. Hugh Broughton. Strange to say, a writer almost unknown at present to Biblical students. Lightfoot, who edited Broughton's works in 1662, entitled them as follows :—" The works of the great Albionen Divine, renowned in many nations for rare skill in Salem's and Athen's tongues, and familiar acquaintance with all Rabbinical learning, Mr. Hugh Broughton collected into one volume, [Fol. pp. 1500] and digested into four tomes." In this extraordinary work, a series of letters are found, both in Hebrew and English ; in the former language addressed by a Rabbi, Abraham Reuben, of Constan-

tinople, and in the latter language by Hugh Broughton, to Queen Elizabeth : asking for Hebrew Missionaries, and a translation of the New Testament. The original letter of Rabbi Reuben would probably find very few readers, and may therefore be omitted without any loss of interest.\*—But Broughton's epistle which accompanies the Hebrew one possesses a degree of merit and interest, and is withal so appropriate to the subject under treatment, that it is deemed not irrelevant to the History of the Jews in England, and is therefore transcribed here. A mere reference to Broughton's folio will not suffice, as the work is too rare to be met with easily. Agnes Strickland, notwithstanding the extensive

\* It is not all improbable that Queen Elizabeth was an efficient Hebrew scholar ; a Hebrew letter addressed by Anna Maria Schurman to the Honourable Mrs. Dorothea Moore, in the year of 1638, intimates as much. The circumstance of a Jew addressing a Hebrew letter to a British Queen is not singular. When the author visited Safet, one of the four holy cities of Palestine, he saw and copied a Hebrew petition, which was lying for signature, and had already upwards of three hundred names attached to it, which was intended to be forwarded to Victoria, by the grace of God Queen of Great Britain and Ireland, Defender of the Faith. See "A Pilgrimage to the Land of my Fathers." Vol. ii. pp. 262—7. 426.

research she displayed in her great work, the "Queens of England," seems never to have lighted upon the following correspondence :—

"An Epistle of an Ebrew willing to learn Christianity, sent by him to London, and thence by the Archbishop of Canterbury's advice to Basil, thence returned with some further Speech upon it, unto the Queen of England's Most Excellent Majesty.—BY HUGH BROUGHTON.

"Romans ix. 4.—Which are the Israelites, to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory of the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God and the promises."

"To the mighty Princess Elizabeth, by the Grace of God, Queen of England, France, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, &c. From the seas of Elisa (sovereign lady), and from the city builded by the son of Bretan Helena, there came to your highnesse kingdom, an epistle from a learned Hebrew, full of eloquence and rabbick skill, judged to contain sparks of matter, which with due nourishment might give occasion to kindle far the light of the Gospel, winning such favour of mighty states, that it might turn to the good of all Christendom. The

Jew seemeth by his epistle to be of great authority, not only among the Jews which are at Constantina the chieftest of the world ; that he carrying them after him, the rest over the East will soon follow ; but also with the greatest there ; of whose affection nothing may be spoken, until it please himself to open his mind. He writeth in the tongue that was first used in the world, in which all the prophets' books are written. And divinity graduates must know (or be thought to know and see with other men's eyes), and by English universities they are bound to know ; neither may plead ignorance : but as they are highest in your Majesty's preferment, so the care to answer toucheth them principally.

“ His epistle penned with exquisite care sheweth in his first entrance skill, putting all to the triall ; either to overmatch Christians by Judaisme, for all their grounds ; if they grant his and passe them over as not dashing at Faith, or if it be taught by modesty and dexterity, how both Talmuds wilfully disturb the Bible, that the light of Christ should not shine to them, being in Satan's darknesse, he cannot by learning longer resist, but by all Turk's judgment, upon

his own grounds of Scripture authority he shall be utterly overthrown ; he continueth sundry points in learned reverence : first commending matters of England, next requesting some petitions of instruction. Our divinity is, in his speech, highly esteemed as standing upon the clear power of God's hand, and removing weeds, such as I think he blameth in Greeks : for as the Jewes, so they have overwhelmed all the Scripture as with nettles ; which being uncut, the truth cannot be seen. Then he thinketh that M. hath great occasion to rejoyce, for that a great number that he hath brought to the knowledge of God, for which help he also, the Jew himselfe, stretcheth forth his hand and caught an overfull, while he standeth behind the door, looking through the lattice, and knocking at the gates of understanding. After this he slideth to the commendation of your highnesse leger at the city of Constanstine, for his great care to settle him in Christianity. And after this preparation he floweth most plentifully into your Majestie's commendation ; that by your special tendering have divines so ready in the golden candlestick of the law, for the generals to bring them into few heads, and for particulars, the bowles, knobs and flowers. Others he com-

mendeth, as may appear in his epistle, and after he cometh to requests ; wherein first he sheweth a fervent desire and most hearty affection to have M. sent to teach all the synagogues in Constantia, promising that he shall be received as an angell. But first he would have the sum of all the Scriptures plentifully handled, and endeth his epistle with a learned sonnet. This letter was brought to my lord's grace to Croydon, where he should be best at leisure. But his grace seeing an English endorsement, and saying he could read no further, bad the bringers send it to me.

“ Others also counted ready in the tongue of Divinity, could or would say little to it. Hereupon it returned towards the East, not with small hazard, yet by God's goodnesse it came safe to me to Basil : I durst not return the letter, being of so weighty importance, to abide new danger. But I printed an answer to my lord's grace, shewing the principall effect ; thinking that his grace would have sent for a whole copy, or have written that in this so weighty a businesse to do good to all the world, no shadow of negligence or delay should appear ; but because that is not done, I have printed the whole epistle to your Majesty ; whom the case

should chiefly touch, and will shew according to my leisure, more than others had therein my poor opinion of proceeding, if your highnesse give me leave. My care is greater for his G. dealings in as great matters about the Bible, laboured in ten whole years upon your M. word, and crossed after all that labour, and charges of so great time, by his G. will and authority. I shewed his G. how, upon Dan. xi. 38, unskillfulnesse allowed by his skill, betrayed God's name and whole religion to Satan; yet these three Greek translations, if they had been known in England, might have given light unto a sure truth, besides the most steadfast certainty of the Ebrew term. So Polychronius the Greek might for all Daniel. Then his G. yielded with high promises. Such a new difference as a great fell. That the Jews may end, whose epistle followeth."

It does not appear what view Queen Elizabeth took of Mr. Broughton's suggestion; but it plainly seems that James, when Sixth of Scotland, promised that in the event of his being First of England, that he would espouse Broughton's cause in a princely manner; and to this agree the following documents—



“ TO THE KING’S MAJESTIE.

“ Cum tot sustineas et tanta negotia solus  
 . . . . in publica commoda pecem,  
 Si longo sermone morer tua tempora Cæsar.”

“ I may say to the king, as Horace to Augustus, and affect brevity, which he sheweth meet for speech to a king. A Thracian Jew wrote from the city of our Constantine unto the land of his mother, to have from that soil his city spiritually builded. I printed his epistle, and sent answer that when the king of Scotland should rule all the Island, I should conveniently perform Ebrew building, having most sad\* promise for means to fill the world with books of our faith in the Chananean tongue, when the king came to the other sceptre. And though the noble getleman of whom M. James Melvin from him wrote assurance, delayed; I made all Ebrew instruments, and uttered books, upon my charges, in Ebrew, Greek, and other tongues, unto thirty-six thousand, to fill the world quickly with clear opening of matter mistaken whereby we gave Jews occasion to reject the Gospel.† . .

\* This word used to have the signification of serious.

† An account of a dispute which Mr. Broughton had with a Jew of Amsterdam is omitted, being irrelevant to the subject under review.

“And I would go forward with Ebrew and Greek writing, to be turned by others into all Europe’s tongues for the light of Christendom, if the king do think good to perform that whereof M. James Melvin wrote extreme asseveration. And I heartily wish, and humbly desire, so much to be performed, as the Judge Eternal knoweth due in faith, and a means to lighten the east from the west. Liberality of a prince soon [great without band in smaller occasions] would find in this king greater approbation. The king may appoint pay of promise from ecclesiastical revenues, and if any bishop can open the bible in Ebrew and Greek and deal the bishop’s errors better than my slenderness, I would gladly give him place ; and I am sure he will be an honour to the bishops and nation over the world. But if neither the bishops can deal with the east in Ebrew and Greek, and in story and Talmudiques, cannot contrive both testaments into sure news, the king will take order that others do it ?

“Your Majesty’s most humble,

“HUGH BROUGHTON.”

The next document of historical interest is the following :—

*“ A Petition to the King, to hasten allowance for  
Ebrew Institution of Ebrewes.*

“ Your Majesty, Gracious King, being moved the last winter by a letter, for allowance to open the New Testament in Ebrew by Talmudiques, to satisfy Jewes desire, and Turk’s expectation, said readily, as Sir Thomas Overbury told, you would give five hundred pounds annuity that way, that I left Dr. Bilson\* and your bishops all. Because my age, fleeth, I humbly request so much, soon to be performed, and I will bestow every sicle upon Moses’ tabernacle, and after the first payment, never meddle with your B. B. If Bancroft† can keep himself so silent as doth D. Bilson, who is a thousand times oftener reading in Ebrew and Greek than he. But if Bancroft’s wit, as Phæton, cannot rule his high seat, your Highness cannot be offended if the thunderbolt of a pen strike all his wits out of his brain.

“ I shewed in my former Ebrew books quietnesse for all Christians, and so I would go forwards ; but if Bancroft joyn with Jewes,‡ I will

\* Bishop of Winchester, in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I.

† Archbishop of Canterbury in those reigns.

‡ From this it would appear that there were then a handful of Jews then in England, perhaps brought over by the translators of the Bible.

soon tell your L. L. of him : and yet go forward with Ebrews, to satisfy, as hitherto, the best learned in the world ; and to my power, increase the honour of your kingdom, to the glory of God, and blessing of your family.

Your Majestie's most humble Subject,  
HUGH BROUGHTON."

Poor Broughton however had many enemies to deal with ; and his irritable temper did by no means allay their opposition towards him, but on the contrary rendered himself obnoxious to the hatred and malice of "the powers that be," at that time. He was accused, no doubt by the instigation of some Jews, of having forged the epistle of Rabbi Reuben, and it was some time before that document was taken into the custody of the Lords of the Privy Council ; when done, Broughton accompanied it with a most furious and indignant letter, of which the following is an extract :—

"A communication of Rabbi Reuben's original seeking Hebrew Gospel from Albion, to be kept for posterity by the L. L. care.

"A monument against a son of Belial, who hindered the proceeding of a most glorious cause, to call the curse of Jews and Gentiles to light upon him.

“I mentioned R. H. in a Commentary upon the Apocalypse, a libeller in the depth of Atheism, who libelled that the Jew’s epistle, which some of your Lordships saw sent from Bizantian Rome, or Constantius Town, to London, and had sent it thence from Basil to me. He libelled that I feigned the matter. Hereupon I have complained to God and the world in many the highest degrees.

“The very Jew praised God, that from the end of the earth he heard the praises of the Eternal, and said : From Essay (Isaiah) he looked to hear that, from the ends of the earth. How honourable and how thankful English have been. I can tell, that all they gave me was so liquid, that I could pour it into mine eye, and see never a whit the worse. All foreign towns of my stay, yea Popish, would in my faith have given consent to dye with them.

“The highest slander that ever could be in the world was this, that I should forge a Jew’s letter seeking Hebrew Gospel from us. They had triumphed that Christ and Princes would not presently kill such an Athean villain. The false accuser by Moses, must be placed, and after conviction the judges, not giving right. But judges are not to take notice of the party

without accusation and proof. The libeller hath hindered (now fifteen years) advantage to have cleared the Gospel in Ebrew from Albion over all, and hath stirred many to rave against Ebrew Institutions, instead of thanks, as many say, 'the Jews' time is not yet come.' And some vow their children to my course of Hebrew, and requested all my Hebrew library, that when I am dead, they may mark my hand how I marked Thalmudiques. An hundred years hence this matter may come into speed. And because the libeller must be confuted by the very original of the Jew's epistle, I have sent your Lordships that, to be kept in the king's librarie for ever, pasted on Arabique book, that the few leaves being alone should not be wasted

"I doubt not but your Lordships, in an honour given to your country, in so high an argument, will see that Jews' original be kept as may the best records.

"Your Lordships'

"HUGH BROUGHTON."\*

\* Ben Johnson has managed to introduce that extraordinary man several times into his plays; once in his "Volpone," in the second scene, when the fox delivers a medical lecture, to the great amusement of Politic and Peregrine, the former remarks—

Such documents could have had no other effect upon the English hierarchy but to blunt

“Is not his language rare?”

To which the latter replies—

“But, Alchemy,

I never heard the like, or Broughton’s books.”

In the “Alchemist” Ben puts the following words into the mouth of Face respecting a female companion :—

“Y’are very right, sir, she is a most rare scholar,  
And is gone mad with studying Broughton’s works ;  
If you but name a word touching the Hebrew,  
She falls into her fit, and will discourse  
So learnedly of genealogies,  
As you would run mad, too, to hear her, sir.”

Very few persons will be disposed to take Broughton’s part, by reason of the strong language he chose when speaking evil of the dignitaries of his time ; but an impartial reader will not withhold his sympathy, whilst giving vent to his just censure. Broughton had many things to ruffle his temper, and taking into consideration the *Puritan* style of his time, some slight extenuation will be made in his favour. He considered himself entitled, and justly so, to be associated with the translators of the Bible, who were then engaged in preparing the version, which has ever since been the “authorized” one ; but his services were slighted. He communicated many interpretations to the translators, which, using his own words, “they thrust into the margin,” where the *varia lectiones* are to be found to the present day. This, and a variety of others, irritating and vexing circumstances, must, in some measure, allay the censorious disposition of such an one who is not in a similar dilemma.

the keenness of their antipathy towards the Jewish people, and perhaps even to reconcile both parties to a friendly intercourse. The restoration and conversion of the Jews began to agitate the royal mind. Sir Henry Finch, the great lawyer of the day, published a work, entitled, "The World's Great Restauration ; or, Calling of the Jews." There is a letter extant, which was written by a co-temporary, viz., by the learned Mede, which furnishes an idea of that work, as well as the sensation it caused in the Court of James I. As Mr. Mede's letter was, till very lately, hid from the public eye, it is deemed proper to give it here, as interesting to the history of the Jews of Britain, and here it is :—

"MR. JOSEPH MEDE TO MR. STUTEVILLE.

"April 7, 1621.

"I have seen Sir Henry Finch, who has published 'The World's Great Restauration or Calling of the Jews, and with them of all the Nations and Kingdoms of the Earth, to the faith of Christ.' I cannot see but for the main of the discourse I might assent unto him. God forgive me if it be a sin, but I have thought so many a day. But the thing which touches his Majesty in this point which I will write out for you *verbatim*—'The Jews and all Israel shall return



to their land and antient seats, conquer their foes, have their soil more fruitfull than ever. They shall erect a glorious church in the land of Judah itself, and bear rule far and near. We need not be afraid to aver and maintain that one day they shall come to Jerusalem again; be kings and chief monarchs of the earth, sway and govern all, for the glory of Christ that shall shine amongst them.' And this is it Lactantius saith, lib. vii., chap. 15. *'The Roman name (I will speak it because it must one day be) shall be taken from the earth, and the empire shall return to Asia; and again shall the East bear dominion and the West be in subjection.'* In another place, 'Ashur and Egypt, all these large and vast countries shall be converted to Christ; the chief sway and sovereignty remaining with the Jews.' All nations shall honour them.

"The king says he shall be a pure king, and he is so auld that he cannot tell how to do his homage at Jerusalem."

Nor did Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice impede the progress of kind feeling towards the Jews, which—as is presumed—began to take root in the Englishman's heart. The true story must then have been known to the great mass of spec-

tators and auditors, who saw and heard the play performed ; and pity for the poor Jews, instead of cruel contempt, must have inspired the breasts of the noble-minded Britons. As Shylock has been so long exhibited on the English stage, he must be considered as a naturalized Englishman, and therefore deserves a page in a History of the Jews in this country. Many admirers of Avon's immortal bard may be unacquainted with the real history of this Shakespearian creation. It is thought, therefore, quite to the point to give it here.

The accomplished biographer, Gregorio Letti, of Sixtus V., records the following episode, as an instance of that Pope's strict administration of justice.

In the year 1587, Paul Mario Sechi, a respectable and rich Roman merchant, gained information that the Admiral Francis Drake had conquered St. Domingo, where he made great booty. This news he communicated to a Jewish merchant, Simono Cenede, by name, to whom this event, either actually or feignedly, seemed incredible. The Hebrew merchant disputed the truth of the report in the most determined manner, and in the warmth of the debate he said, "I bet a pound of my flesh that the report is

untrue." "And I lay a thousand scudi against it," rejoined Paul Mario Sechi, and in a haughty and unrelenting temper, caused a bond to be drawn up, signed by two witnessess, a Jew and a Christian, to the effect, that in case the report should prove untrue, then the Christian merchant, Signor Paul Mario Sechi, is bound to pay to the Jewish merchant the sum of one thousand scudi ; and on the other hand, if the truth of this news be confirmed, the Christian merchant, Signor Paul Mario Sechi, is justified and empowered to cut with his own hand, with a well-sharpened knife, a pound of the Jew's fair flesh, of that part of the body it might please him. The truth of Sir Francis Drake's achievement was, before many days elapsed, established on the most indubitable grounds, and the Christian merchant insisted upon the fulfilment of his bond. In vain did Simono Cenede offer the Christian merchant one thousand scudi in lieu of that which he staked. Paul Mario Sechi was immoveable and relentless. He swore that nothing would satisfy him but the literal fulfilment of the bond, and had almost chosen a part which, says Gregorio Leti, "decency forbids to mention, but will easily be guessed." In the anguish of his soul, the Jew ran to the Governor,

and the Governor communicated this unprecedented affair to the Pope, and the latter undertook the part of Shakespeare's Portia, and condemned both parties to the galleys, from which they were obliged to release themselves by paying the fine of two thousand scudi each to the hospital of the Sixtine bridge.

A German writer, who noticed this strange episode, remarks, "That Shakespeare had in mind this event, which had but recently taken place, and which is so closely connected with a national event, in which the greatest man of the age acts the hero, no one will doubt; but I am at liberty to question that malice or hatred towards the Jews actuated our poet in the permutation of the characters. It were indeed a heavy crime, to place the highly gifted poet in an equal category with a wretched pack of barking bloodhounds. Nay, a more sublime end he had in view. It needs no particular illustration, that were this event represented on the stage, as it really occurred, it would have failed in all its dramatic effect. It is true that a Christian entertained such a cruelty, but its possibility can only be credited in a Jew. And how welcome must it have been to the well-known irony of our poet, to exclaim to his

audience in this representation : Lo ! that which you shudder at, that which you could only believe as possible of a Jew, a Christian thought to do."

So abated were the feelings of dislike towards the Jews, during the reign of Charles I., that when Henrietta, Queen Consort of England, was in Amsterdam in 1642, she visited there the Portuguese synagogue, in company of the Prince of Orange, to whom the celebrated Rabbi, Menasseh ben Israel, delivered a complimentary address. Lindo, in his "Jewish Calendar," chronicles the event to have taken place on the 22nd of May.

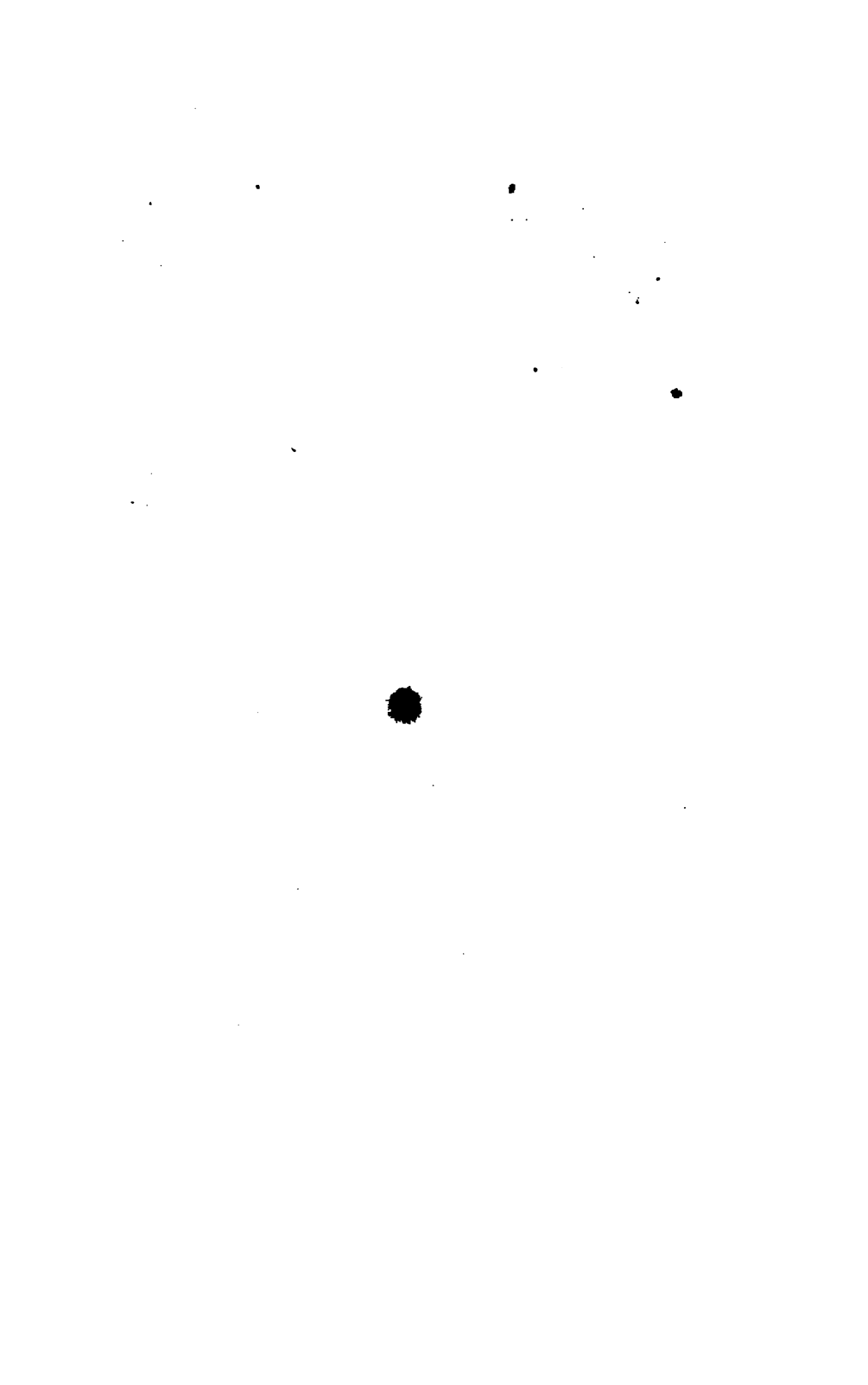
There can be but little doubt, that had not England been convulsed by civil war, during the reign of that unfortunate Monarch, the Jews would have made a national attempt to return to this kingdom. But as it was, they prudently postponed the effort for a more convenient season.

END OF VOLUME THE FIRST.

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