

American Jewry.

Specially written for the "S.A. Jewish Chronicle" by Rabbi M. Diamond.

IN TWO PARTS. SECTION I.

Rabbi Morris Diamond has recently arrived in the Union of Africa from Los Angeles, California, where he was engaged in building up a Conservative Congregation. Rabbi Diamond was born in Balta, Russia, and studied in Breslitofsk. In addition to holding *Semichos* from Rabbi Dr. A. Blumenthal, of Chicago, he distinguished himself as a post-graduate of the Conservatorium of Music of Odessa. He cultivated the art of *Chazanuth* and obtained a Medical Certificate for proficiency in *Mohelshaft*. Rabbi Diamond was ordained to the Ministry by the Chief Rabbi of Australasia, Rev. Francis L. Cohen. He served successfully as minister in Australia and New Zealand for a number of years. He is a forceful speaker and fluent linguist, being equally at home with English, Hebrew and Yiddish. He has not received an appointment as yet and seeks affiliation to a congregation in need of a rabbi and spiritual leader.

America has at present a Jewish population numbering some three to four million souls. They are scattered all over the United States—you will hardly find a small town east or west, north or south, in which the Jew cannot be found. Any growing village has seen Jewish settlers, and owes its growth in a large measure to his co-operation. But the bulk of American Jewry prefer the thickly populated cities for their domicile. They are attracted there in the first instance by their friends and relations who live there, and have in nine cases out of ten helped them to leave East European poverty and oppression and come on to the land of freedom and prosperity. The newly arrived find a ready welcome awaiting them; friends, acquaintances, and a congenial social circle. The language question does not disturb them there. They can get along very well with Yiddish, Russian, German or any other language spoken by big numbers of East European Jewry. They soon learn a trade, and find employment. Or they may venture out on their own in business. They are helped on to realize their ambitions by friends. As time goes on, they earn their living; acquire homes, furniture and automobiles, and are very happy and thankful to America and Columbus. Congested and cooped up as is New York, nevertheless hundreds of thousands of these European settlers would not exchange it for any other place in the world. A great number, however, of the emancipated settlers seek larger freedom, greater opportunities and more elbow-room. They comprise the adventurous, enterprising element. They are largely recruited from intellectual classes whom the mailed fist of militarism and autocracy sought to enslave and use for their own ends. They make a strong effort to master the English language, enter the professions, or strike out for larger fields and pastures new. And even if the work of the pioneer dulls refinement, yet it sharpens their wits, develops initiative, stamina, and self-reliance and good business acumen.

It goes without saying that the Jew plays an important part in the development of the country. The spirit of discontent through holding a subordinate position, the ambition to get on and excel spurs the Jew to explore and invent and create new channels of industry and manufacture. He is ever on the alert to turn

every new improvement, every new discovery, to good advantage. He is largely represented in the building trade; there are many Jewish contractors. Many of the finest courts and terraces are the result of Jewish brains and creative ambition. They have acquired their knowledge and skill in the New World. There are many Jewish manufacturers. They have developed the cigar trade into a rich industry and employ countless thousands to provide the American citizen with a tolerable cigar at a very reasonable price. They manufacture footwear. The clothing trade is owned and controlled by them. New York supplies the whole of America with clothing. And it is worked by Jewish hands. The two million odd Jews who live in New York and surrounding cities are no idle fellows. Every one works from early morning till late in the night. The working hours are forty-eight per week, except when it is necessary to work overtime to fulfil an urgent order. For overtime, the worker gets double pay. A skilled worker may earn from forty to sixty dollars per week. Carpenters, plumbers and painters earn even more. Work is more or less steady the whole year round. There are occasional slack periods, owing to over-production. But as soon as the economic equilibrium is restored, wheels revolve, machines thunder, and "hands" are again in full demand.

The lot of the worker is on the whole not an unhappy one. He seldom finds himself on the verge of starvation; his family is in no danger of having to go without bread. Generally speaking, he feeds and clothes his children respectably and gives them a fair education. Schooling in the primary institutions is free of charge. And there are bursaries and privileges for the student of mark, ability and promise.

Stores are open at all hours and that puts a great strain on storekeepers. It also robs the storekeeper of the leisure necessary to keep in touch with the scientific progress and the higher thought. Since he may be interrupted every minute, he cannot possibly concentrate on deep problems. He prefers to read light stuff. The newspapers cater for him sympathetically in this respect, and supply him with sensational material enough, and more than enough, to fill in the blank moments. There are gifted writers, but they must beware not to overburden the minds of their readers, or they may lose their popularity and hold. The intellectual section is treated to translations, which lose heavily in the process. There is no originality; no philosopher of note. Everything is borrowed or influenced by French or German schools. Pure Jewish thought as such has not yet crystallized. There is imitation and the effort to copy.

The theatrical creations are of an entertaining nature only. A single familiar slogan or catchword may often spell the triumph of a play. Repetition does not lead to weariness but to better appreciation. The music is a mixture of jazz, opera and oriental tunes modified and modernized to catch the ear with its quaint weird innovations. The great art has been prostituted to gain and profit. The feature of superficiality is stamped every every detail. There is a plethora of words and meaningless phrases forcibly joined together to the point of repugnance.

The Jew excels in the professions; he is eminent in medicine and law. The best surgeons and the most brilliant jurists are Jews. As educators, they are second to none. They form the backbone of the teaching faculty. And were America to lose their service in this direction, the loss would be serious. There are some eminent Jewish actors and actresses on the American stage, and some of the best dramas have been written by Jews.

The biggest newspapers are edited and controlled by Jews. The films are financed and managed by Jews. In Hollywood, Los Angeles, California, Jewish minds scheme, plan and produce the most modern and most wonderful means of entertainment and recreation. The film as an educative factor has incalculable potentialities. But at present the plea is for enjoyment. Work and eat and eat and work epitomizes the restless push and nervous tension of the American life.

The American Jew is not less loyal to the Stars and Stripes than are his co-religionists to other flags of their adopted countries. He is benevolent, charitable. He responds readily and liberally to every urgent call. And he often sets a fine example to others by his spontaneity and munificence. He helps to maintain the charitable and philanthropic institutions of the general community. But he never calls on other denominations to help his own sick and his own poor. Special funds are raised yearly to alleviate Jewish suffering and poverty. Every city of note has its own home for the aged. Sanitation, wholesome food, care and sympathy are prominent features in these homes. Hospitals for the sick, built by Jewish money, attended by Jewish doctors, provided with kosher foods, are all over the country. There are many sanitoriums to cope with virulent diseases like tuberculosis and syphilis. The sanitorium of Denver (Colorado) and Los Angeles (California), cater for thousands of victims to congested sunless dwellings, fatigued bodies and overwrought nerves. And there are institutions in the East. The moneys are raised by donation and regular yearly contributions. Field secretaries traverse the whole country, advocating the cause of the sick and canvassing for new subscribers. There are everywhere large homes for the incurables. There is no governmental pension aid to the aged in America. The burden falls on the shoulders of the community. The American Jew needs only to be stirred and convinced of the necessity. He seldom refuses to give altogether. Far from altruistic, he is nevertheless not merciless. Millions are raised for local needs and many more millions of dollars flow yearly from the pockets of American Jewry to help to relieve distress in Europe, to establish agricultural settlements in Russia, to build up the Jewish homeland in Palestine. Old associations are still dear. The memory of them is vivid and keen. Distance and time have so far only blunted the edge. East European agony reacts on the settlers in the New World. Hunger in Russia spoils the dinner of the enfranchised emigrant of the ghetto. What time will bring no one can tell. Speculation is unprofitable. Prophecies may be falsified. There is the tendency to fuse and amalgamate to the point of loss of identity. Imported conceptions may find themselves in the melting pot in a generation or two. A new outlook will mould and shape character. Already the dollar is mighty beyond words. Financial success atones for defects and delinquencies. Refinement and culture are mere memories. But America is still in a state of transition. She has not found as yet her soul. The unborn days will unveil the mystery and exhibit the new metal forged in the cosmopolitan foundries of the New World.

(To be concluded.)

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IN AND AROUND THE TOWN.

(Continued from Page 125.)

a sound business career. He was well thought of by Jews and non-Jews by whom he was greatly esteemed for his integrity and straight dealing. The funeral took place on Sunday and the cortege was followed by a large gathering of representatives of institutions, business circles and personal friends. Mr. Lemonsky has left a widow and several children.

GUILD NOTES.

Despite the close atmosphere, there were, I am told, upwards of three hundred members and friends present at the Guild Rooms on Tuesday night, when a very successful "flannel dance" was held. There were many visitors from various up-country Guilds, including several members of the Kimberley Guild Committee. The visitors were welcomed by Councillor S. Bernstein, in a happy little speech. During the evening Miss Bessie Stein gave two songs in her usual charming and effective manner, and these were greatly enjoyed.

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On Sunday, I am told, there is to be a picnic at Melkbosch Strand. Buses will leave the Guild Rooms at 8 a.m., and members are asked to turn up in good time.

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Mr. Sam Rosenberg has returned to Cape Town after a trip overseas, and has been welcomed back by his fellow members of the Guild.

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"EN PASSANT."

Mrs. Jack Brodie (née Stodel) has arrived in Town from Johannesburg. She will stay in the Peninsula for about six weeks.

Rufus, the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Nathan Bloch, celebrated his *barmitzvah* reception on Saturday and read his Portion of the Law at the Roeland Street Synagogue. A reception was held on Sunday at the residence of his grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. M. Bloch, at "Parkside," Hof Street, and was attended by many prominent members of the local community.

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A reception was given on Sunday by Mr. and Mrs. M. Meyerowitz, Salt River, to mark the *barmitzvah* of their eldest son, Louis. There was a large gathering of friends and relations present.

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