



By Maimonides Junior.

**"WE MODERNS."**

Those who had the occasion to enjoy the version of the late Israel Zangwill's witty and incisive indictment of modern youth, or to study its shafts and purposes in the printed play, will be pleased to notice that "We Moderns," his last play, has been filmed, and is now being shown extensively in London. As a writer in the *Jewish Guardian* points out, it is a compliment, and a profitable one, too, to the author of a novel or play is reduced to that form by the cinema, in which it is to be supposed the work of art and its message will make a wider appeal. Zangwill, in spite of—or because of—his intense seriousness and highmindedness was caviare to the general, and his introduction to the multitude of screen gazers was to be considered a means of reaching the more general public. But a visit to the screen version of "We Moderns," with memories of the original wit and satire in mind, was a disappointment. The film had little in common with the stage comedy, and all that could be said in its favour was that those who like Colleen Moore will like this film. There are the usual exciting incidents introduced, which are intended to draw the shekels to the box-office, but why American producers should go to the trouble of obtaining the rights of the works of great masters, and proceed to hack the plot and situation about until there is not the slightest resemblance left to the original, surpasses the ordinary comprehension. It is a form of sacrilege which seems not to be understood by the modern producers.

**A NOBLE NEWSPAPER PROPRIETOR.**

I learn with interest that the Marquess of Reading has added to his other heavy commercial burdens, the Chairmanship of the United Newspapers (1918), Limited. Mr. Lloyd George has parted with all controlling interest in the newspapers owned by that Company, which has been taken over by a group represented by Lord Reading, who will be Chairman, Sir David Yule and Sir Thomas Catto. The *Daily Chronicle*, which is the chief property of the Company, and its other political publications will be conducted in accordance with the policy of progressive Liberalism. Lord Reading was Liberal M.P. for Reading from 1904 to 1913, when he became Lord Chief Justice of England. Of course the rest of his career is well known. His going to America and his great services there and then his return to England and his acceptance, at the special request of the Prime Minister, of the Vice Royalty of India. Surely the one-time stock exchange broker is a versatile genius, and there is little doubt that he will be as successful in his new sphere as he has invariably been in his old.

**A NEWSPAPER ERROR.**

It is strange that even the best informed newspapers are apt to make mistakes upon occasion. I mention this because writing in the *Jewish Graphic* (London), "The Diarist" says: "It is a curious thing that, inclined as Jews are to trace Jewish blood in prominent people, if there is any likelihood of any existing, there was no knowledge that Houdini, the handcuff king, was a member of the Jewish persuasion until the information came out after his death. As a matter of fact, his patronymic was Weiss, and he was the son of Rabbi Samuel Weiss, of Wisconsin,

and the descendant of a long line of Rabbis."

This is wrong because I distinctly remember mentioning Houdini's Judaism in an article which I wrote for this column weeks before his death. It was the occasion of a dinner in Chicago at which he was present and at which he most proudly announced his connection with our people. Why he assumed an Italian-sounding name like Houdini I am unable to discover, unless it was that it was a compliment to the Prince of Conjurors, the Italian Cinquevalli. Houdini was not alone in being in the front rank of conjurors, illusionists, and card manipulators, as Carl Hertz, the great card trickster, was a Jew, and at the present day one of the foremost of illusionists, Horace Goldin, is a Jew. Several members of the Magicians' Club are Jews, and I believe the club has a Jewish president. Jarrow, the entertaining exponent of the "lemon" trick, is not only a Jew, but he intersperses his amusing small talk from the stage with Judisch.

So securely did Houdini guard the secrets of his escapes from handcuffs and chains that he is supposed never to have divulged them, and his secrets die with him, but his illusions become the property of his brother, Mr. T. F. Weiss. Houdini was also known, in addition to being a great conjuror, to have collected a most valuable library on witchcraft, spiritualism, playbills, programmes, and letters of the European stage. He bought his literary treasures on his own initiative, and as his collection grew he became passionately attached to it. Among the treasures is the original manuscript diary of David Garrick, which will apparently be lost to England, as the entire library, valued at £100,000, is left to the Congressional Library of New York. I wonder what the British Museum or the Garrick Club would have given for this priceless treasure of David Garrick!

**TWO JEWISH PEERS SPIRITUAL.**

It is interesting to note that there will be two representatives of the Jewish Religious Community in Hungary in the Hungarian Upper Chamber or House of Magnates among the Peers Spiritual, according to the decision of the National Assembly of last Tuesday, when Section 4 of the Law constituting the House of Magnates was passed by the Chamber. The Government Bill which has thus been adopted provides for one representative of the Orthodox Jewish Community and one representative of the Reform Jewish Community. The representative of Jewish orthodoxy will be elected by the Committee of a Hundred of the Orthodox Central Organisation, and the representative of the Reform congregations will be elected by the Reform communities direct. The Jewish religious representatives in the Upper Chamber will be appointed for life. The resolution for the adoption of the Section providing for the appointment of the Jewish representatives was moved by Deputy Paul Sander, one of the leaders of the Jewish community in Hungary, and was passed unanimously by the Chamber with acclamation. Count Bethlen, the Premier, speaking on the Bill, said that the Government did not intend to give way to the anti-Semites who wanted to strike out from the Bill the paragraph providing for Jewish representation. Hungarian Jewry, he

said, was entitled, according to the Law, to a place in the House of Magnates at the side of the representatives of the historic churches of the country.

**THE JEWS' UNIVERSITY.**

I have been reading with interest an account of the official opening of the academic year at the Hebrew University which took place at Jerusalem on the 1st inst. Members of the Board of Governors, representatives of Jewish public institutions, professors, and students assembled in the lecture-hall. The proceedings were opened by Dr. Judah L. Magnus, the Chancellor, who, in his address, dwelt on the scope of the activities of the University and its plans for the near future. Dr. Magnes said that for many reasons the Hebrew University had first been established as a purely scientific research centre, and not as a high school with regular lectures and students for the distribution of diplomas. But the time was approaching when it would become necessary to take into consideration also the need of Palestine for a University to provide a high professional training for the growing generations after leaving the secondary schools. Another expansion of activity was being made at the Institute of Jewish Studies: lectures of a general character in history, literature, philosophy, sociology, etc., were to be added. These studies were not only valuable intrinsically, they were important to a better understanding of Judaistic learning. The newly invited lecturers, Dr. David Yellin and Dr. A. Ruppin, then delivered their inaugural lectures, Dr. Yellin on "Hebrew Poetry in Spain," and Dr. Ruppin on "Jewish Sociology."

**A "CHAZAN'S" CLAIM.**

I am watching with great interest the outcome of the claim of the Rev. Isaac de la Penho the *chazan* of the Sephardi Congregation at Montreal who had for one of his ancestors in the 17th Century, one Joseph de la Penho, a wealthy merchant and shipper, of Rotterdam. During a storm at sea, it is said, he saved King William III, and several members of the King's family from drowning, the ship on which they were travelling having been wrecked. As a reward for his courage, de la Penho received from the King, so his descendant declares, a Charter bestowing upon him and his heirs the possession of Labrador. The Royal concession was never acted upon, probably because Labrador was in those days almost a *terra incognita* and nearly as difficult of access as the moon. But the humble Montreal Cantor evidently regards the place as his birthright and means to have it—if he can. It is of interest to state that Labrador embraces an approximate area of 511,000 square miles, virtually about ten times the size of England. It was, until recently, considered a land of "awful desolation," but it is now known to be a well-wooded country with great latent resources in forests, fisheries, and minerals. It has a population of about 14,500, made up of Indians, Esquimaux, and Whites, and is divided politically between the Governments of Canada, Newfoundland, and the Province of Quebec. Among the minerals undeveloped in the country are supposed to be valuable deposits of gold, copper, nickel, and lead. Certain it is that the acquisition of some half-a-million square miles will be more valuable materially than *chazanous*. But what of the spiritual aspect!

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