

JEWISH ADVANCE

Execute the Judgment of Truth and Peace in your Gates. | יְהִי שָׁלוֹם וְרַחֲמֵי שָׁמַיִם בְּשַׁעְרֵיכֶם :

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The Deity to His Children.

"What lack I, O my children?
All things are in my hand;
The vast earth and the awful stars
I hold as grains of sand.

"Do I smell your gums of incense?
Is My ear with chantings fed?
Do I taste your wine of worship,
Do I eat your holy bread?

"For you I gave the Prophets,
For you the Psalmist's lay;
For you the law's stone tables,
The holy book and day.

"Ye change to weary burdens
The helps that should uplift;
Ye love in sign the substance,
The giver in the gift."

—From Whittier's *New Poems*.

For the JEWISH ADVANCE.

ALBERT COHN.

(Continued.)

The interment of their dead has caused the Parisian Israelites great disquietude. They had no legal privilege for that and depended on the good-will of the police. For a long time they had only a *clandestine* cemetery in the house-yard of a certain Matard at Villette; they paid the proprietor a certain sum for each interment. On March 7th, 1780, Jacob Rodriguez Pereira has obtained the sanction of the government to open a cemetery for the Portuguese Israelites. He bought a spot of ground in the neighborhood of Matard's house in *rue de Flanders*, for that purpose. Albert Cohn has found on that spot tombstones, the dates of which have gone as far back as the year 1761.

On May 30th, 1785, an Alsatian Israelite, Cerfbeer by name, has obtained permission to open a cemetery for the German Jews. He bought for that purpose a plot of ground on the *Petit-Montrouge*. The oldest tombstone which was found on that burial place bore the date of 1781. These two cemeteries have been closed since the burial grounds of *Pere-Lachaise* were inaugurated. The cemetery of *Montmartre* was opened on June 15th, 1809, and that of *Montrouge* on March 10th, 1823.

The Jewish community of Paris developed very slowly. She has gone through a very trying epoch during the Reign of Terror. The children of the Jewish schools were compelled to take part in the worship of the Goddess of Reason. Two Israelites of the family of Calmer, one was a son of Liefmann Calmer, and the other it is not ascertained whether a son or a relative of the same, were guillotined. The convocation (or Synhedrion) of the prominent Israelites at Paris in the year 1806, did not contribute in a great measure to impart to the Jewish community a sense of security or to develop their forces. The functionaries of that community were not natives of France, and the *Rabbins* and the *Ha-*

zans remained in a state of sufferage.* As late as the year 1830, only did the Parisian community begin to show signs of activity. In the year 1838, when Albert Cohn arrived in Paris, she had not yet any established organizations and no cohesion.

The first moment of his arrival, Albert Cohn resolved to make himself useful. His offer to officiate in the temple was not accepted, as we have stated before. But after his return from his trip to Italy, he obtained the permission to hold religious meetings for the Jewish pupils of the school and the lyceum. He spent for this purpose several hours in the week for a term of twelve years. From the year 1850, his beneficial influence in the Jewish community in general, began to show itself in the institutions of charity, and in all other matters which have been called into existence. His energy and zeal knew no bounds. Thanks to his application, his intelligence, his zeal, and to his position in the Rothschild house, Albert Cohn became the principal actor in all Jewish matters of public concern at Paris, and the animating spirit of the institutions which have been founded by that community.

IV.

The Committee of Benevolence (*Comite de bienfaisance*) was the centre of Albert Cohn's activity. That committee was at first a sort of a *Chebra*; it was formally established in the year 1809, and was the first institution of the Parisian Jewish community. It was subsequently denominated "The Consistorial Committee on Assistance and Encouragement," and in the year 1852, it was called, "The Committee of Benevolence." Its mission was to help the indigent, to tend to the sick, to bury the dead, and to distribute *Mazoth* for the Passover feast. It has published almost every year an account of the receipts and disbursements, and in the year 1843, it

*The Jewish Consistory has been organized by the decree of March 17th, 1808. They consisted of the General Consistory and of the Consistory of Paris. The former was originally destined to have three rabbins, at the head, forming a *Beth-din*, but for the want of resources it was subsequently compelled to reduce the number to two, and at last to one rabbin.

Here is a list of the rabbins who have presided over the two Consistories, respectively, since their establishment:

THE GENERAL CONSISTORY.

From 1808 to 1809—David Sinzheim, Pres.; Abraham de Cologne, Segre [died 809].
From 1809 to 1812—Sinzheim, Pres. [died Feb. 10, 1812]; de Cologne, Emmanuel Deutz.
From 1812 to 1827—De Cologne, Pres. [left Paris in 1827]; and Deutz.
From 1827 to 1842—Deutz [died Jan. 31, 1842].
From 1842 to 1846—Vacancy.
From 1846 to 1852—Marchand Ennery installed November 30th, 1846; died August 21, 1852.
From 1852 to 1865—Salomon Ullman, installed Sept. 29, 1853; died on May 15th, 1865.
Since 1867 and still in Office—Rabbi Lazare Isidor; installed March 21st, 1867.

THE CONSISTORY OF PARIS.

From 1808 to 1829—Michael Seligman, Rabbin of Paris since the year 1794.
From 1829 to 1846—Marchand Ennery, mentioned above.
From 1847 to 1867—L. Isidor, mentioned above.
Since 1869 and still in Office—Rabbi Zodac Kahn.

has for the first time published with that account, a record of the cases which had come before it. Albert Cohn was nominated treasurer of that committee in the year 1848, and became its president in 1853. On the occasion of his taking the chair, he has donated 20,000 francs as a fund to lend out to laborers desiring to establish themselves in any industrial profession. This fund has existed for several years until it became exhausted.

The Committee of Benevolence has developed extraordinarily under the direction of Albert Cohn. The receipts thereof, which have amounted to about 47,000 francs in the year 1841, have increased to 212,000 in the year 1871. The reports of the services which that committee has performed, gave a perfect insight into the vast importance which she has assumed. The services consisted in dispensing charity in money, in articles of necessity, in rent and in fuel, extraordinary help to occasional applicants, to the poor at the time of the feasts, to prisoners, to lying-in women, help for neglected children, traveling expenses to poor wayfarers, providing clothes for school children and for such as finish their studies, and interments of the poor, subvention to old employees of the Committee, to the hospital, to the nurses, to the free-schools, to schools of the Consistory, and to the *Talmud Torah*, and lastly to the orphan asylum.

Albert Cohn has contributed a great deal toward the creation of several of these services, and toward the extension of the committee's work. Generous as the Parisian Israelites are, they need yet sometimes to be stirred up a little. Albert Cohn was the only person authorized to realize the necessary means for the Committee, not only from the Rothschild family, but also from all others; he therefore watched his opportunities to do so, and at the birth of a child, at a wedding, and at the introduction of a young person into society, he was on hand to plead the cause of the poor. The task was not always easy, but one who speaks in the name of the poor with a heart warmed up by the flame of charity, is strong and invincible.

The Committee of Benevolence is at the head of many other charitable institutions, which are more or less connected with it, and which move, so to say, in its sphere. Albert Cohn had a hand in all these works; there was not a single movement to which his activity has not extended most beneficially.

The first and the greatest of the Parisian charitable institutions is Rothschild's hospital. This institution was established by the Committee of Benevolence, and inaugurated April 1st, 1842. At first it was only a "modest house of assistance," situated in *rue des Trois-Bornes*, and containing only from fifteen to twenty beds. Its annual expenditure

did not amount to over 12,000 francs in the year 1846. On May 26th, 1852, the hospital was transferred to *rue Picpus*, and installed in a new house constructed for the purpose by Baron James de Rothschild. Albert Cohn delivered an oration at that installation. Since that year the hospital became detached from the Committee of Benevolence and had a separate administration, Albert Cohn was the financial secretary of that administration until his death. A great part of the credit for establishing and enlarging the hospital is due to him. In the year 1873, it contained 174 beds, but the number has increased every year since. Beside the original services for which the hospital has been established, departments for sick children, for lying-in women and for wet-nurses, have been added in the year 1865. The section for aged persons belongs to the original services of the hospital.

The Rothschild family have constructed at a later period, a special department to the hospital to serve as a home for the aged poor, with accommodations for fifty persons. Toward the construction of this department, Albert Cohn had donated 10,000 francs. And very recently at last, Mme. de Rothschild has built in the hospital yard a magnificent asylum for persons afflicted with incurable diseases, to the memory of her son Salomon, and of her husband James de Rothschild. Albert Cohn assisted with a joyful heart in the inauguration of this department. He made it a practice to visit it at least once a week, and to talk to the sick, cheering and encouraging their drooping spirits. A ray of light always entered with him into that department.

In the same manner did Albert Cohn devote his time and attention to all the other institutions of the kind. He visited regularly the orphan asylum of Salomon de Rothschild, which was founded in the year 1857 by a legacy of 200,000 francs from Salomon de Rothschild, and by an annual contribution of 5,000 francs by the Rothschild family. This institution was at first situated in *rue des Rosiers*, and subsequently transferred to *rue Lambardie*. The elegant structure to which it has been transferred, was reared at the expense of Mme. James de Rothschild, and inaugurated on June 3d, 1874.

Albert Cohn was president of the "Society for the Patronage of Jewish Apprentices and Laborers of Paris,"* and every one in that city was impressed with the beautiful orations which he has

* This society was established in the year 1860, and she was the ultimate development of the "Society of the Friends of Labor," which had been called into existence by O. Terquem in 1823, and chartered two years later, and which had been reconstructed into "The Society of Young Parisian Israelites for Procuring Places for Apprentices," in the year 1854, with Alphonse de Rothschild as President, and Albert Cohn as Secretary. On April 15th, 1873, the "Society of Patronage" was recognized by a decree of the government as an institution of public usefulness.