

JEWISH ADVANCE

J. MANZ - CO - CHICAGO.

Execute the Judgment of Truth and Peace in your Gates. | יְהוָה וּמִשְׁפַּט שְׁלוֹם שְׁפָטוּ בְּשַׁעְרֵיכֶם :

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Summer Dreaming.

Winding through the shady grove,
In joy its ripples dancing;
Where 'twixt the maple's darkling leaves
The sun's bright rays are dancing.

Tuned with the hum of summer bees,
Low music makes thy gushing,
As o'er their pebbly rock-strewn way
Thy waters swift are rushing.

"Where goest thou, brooklet? tell me where:
Tell me where is thy ending?"
"I never stop, but onward e'er
To the sea my way am wending."

Still lingering, murmuring in mine ear,
Its silvery voice was seeming:
While in the bright warm summer's sun
I on the bank lay dreaming.

A. DANARELD, in *Waverly Mag.*

For the JEWISH ADVANCE.

ALBERT COHN.

(Continued.)

XII.

The first Jewish colony which has settled in Northern Africa, was brought from Judea by Ptolemy I. from his expedition against Jerusalem in the year 320 B. C.* The Jews lived mostly in the provinces of Leontopolis, Cyrenaia and Lybia. Since that time there has been a constant increase of Jewish emigration from Asia into Africa. They sought safety in that continent from the persecution of the Syrians, Romans, and of the Arabians, after the triumph of Mahomed. At a subsequent period the Jews of Spain also sought a refuge in the African provinces from the persecutions of the Visigoths, and latterly of the Inquisition. It was especially the great persecution of the Jews in Spain, in the year 1391, and their being banished from that country in the year 1492, which have brought large numbers of Spanish exiles into Africa, who settled in the districts which are known at the present time as Morocco, Algeria, Tunis, and the principalities of Tripoli.

In the earlier times the Jews were very prosperous in Africa. Their influence must have been very great in the first centuries of the present era, since Tertulien, St. Cyprien, St. Augustin, and other fathers of the Church found it necessary to write special epistles against that influence. There were flourishing Jewish schools in Cairnan, Fez, and other cities. Great Jewish Rabbins, like Huziel, Hanannel, Nissim and others; Jewish physicians, as Isaac-ben-Soleiman and Dunash-ben-Tamim were natives of Africa. The names of Maimonies and Alphasi are associated with that country. Rabbi Isaac-ben-Sheshet (ר"י"ש) and Rabbi Simeon-ben-Zemah Duran, whose decisions in rabbinical law are considered of the highest authority, even at the present time, were natives of Algeria.

Since the rise of the Mahomedan religion, however, the African Jews were

* According to some historians, there were Jews in Africa at the time of Alexander the Great, and even at an earlier period.

severely oppressed by the Arabs and the Turks. They had to pay territorial and head taxes; certain articles of apparel they were not permitted to wear; they were prohibited to ride on horseback, to pass by a mosque with their shoes on. The princes have constantly pressed them for money. From the year 1500 to 1543, they have suffered continually by the Spanish expeditions against Oran, Bougiah, Tunis and Tripoli. In the year 1669 they were expunged from Oran by the Spaniards, and could not return thither until the latter had yielded that place, in the year 1792. The Jews of Morocco suffered similar trials. Notwithstanding all this, they have rendered great services to the State. The African kings were often compelled to send Jews as ambassadors, or to entrust them with negotiations in foreign countries.

The Jews of Algeria have at last been reduced to a fearful state at the beginning of the present century. Notwithstanding the financial resources which they had at their command, and which the Sultan knew well how to turn to his advantage, regardless of their great services to the State as merchants and as artisans*; they had to suffer almost daily the most cruel outrages. Thus writes a witness of their sufferings:

"The disdain of the masses weighs heavily upon them. They are forbidden to wear red on their garments. Instead of a turban they must wear a black shawl. Coming by a mosque they must carry their shoes in their hands, and bow down or simply creep on the ground until they pass the place. At the fountains, when coming to draw water, the rear place is assigned them. They are prohibited to ride horses, or even to enter the city mounted on an ass. A sanguinary jurisdiction threatens them at any moment with the worst outrages. Should the *Dey* desire to take possession of the property of a Jew, he has only to pick up the least quarrel with him; this consigns the Jew to execution, and his property is confiscated for the *Dey*. A delinquency for which a slave is punished with the bastinado, the Jew is burned for it at the stake, or hanged."

From such a horrible situation did the French conquest of Algeria extricate the Jews.

The Jews of Algeria have been mixed up in various manners with the expeditions of France in that country. The origin of the conflict which broke out in the open warfare of France against the *Dey* of Algiers (in 1830), was an old debt which had been due to France for provisions by two Algerian Jews—Bus-

* They have exercised all sorts of trades. There were among them masons, carpenters, tinsmiths, embroiderers, gilders, jewelers, armorers. Baron Baude writes (Vol. I. *Extraits de l'Algérie*) of them: "Their children frequent our schools, speak our language and adapt our manners. They are devoted business clerks, public notaries, and clerks of the administration. They are already initiated in our legislation, and poor people choose them as their attorneys."

nach and Baeri. During the war the Jews had rendered great services to both the Algerian and the French armies. The Jew, Durand, has played an important part in the negotiation between Abd-el-Kader and the French, which culminated in the convention of Tafta, in the year 1837. He has often come to the French headquarters, during the war, to deliver to the troops provisions which Abd-el-Kader had sold them; and even at the conclusion of peace, he has delivered to them 2,000 oxen. Another Jew, Busnach by name, was employed in the negotiation with Bey Ahmet, of Constantine, and he has been awarded the title of Knight of the *Legion D'honneur* for his valuable services. A Jew of Tunis, Bajo by name, has also taken part in that negotiation. Other Jews have also rendered valuable services, sometimes as guides for French generals, and oftener still by blunting the atrocities of the war, and alleviating the sufferings of the soldiers. In 1843, Oran, which had been left almost without any garrison, was attacked by the Arabs. The Jews then courageously took part in the defence, and two of them, J. M. Cohen Seali and Guernon, have distinguished themselves in their sallies against the assailants. In 1845, M. Nahon, of Oran, served on the staff of General de La Rue, as interpreter. Another interpreter, Isaac Levy, died on the battle field, in the engagement of Djemea Razouat. All the officers of Colonel de Montagnac fell in that engagement. Isaac Levy placed himself at the head of thirty men that were left. "Surrender Jew!" called Abd-el-Kader's Arabs to him. "I am a Frenchman," replied Levy. "We die rather than surrender." Another Jew, Leon Ayas, was honorably mentioned for his bravery in the report of the engagement of October 18th of the same year (1855), by the commander-in-chief de Mostaganem. So also are the names of the Narbonis, the Nahons, the Mascluf-Calfrons, and a host of other Jews, known for the great services they have rendered to the French troops.

The opposition journals of France have not rendered the credit due to the Jews. On the contrary, they have reproached the Government for having employed them in its service. Marshal Clausel, who has conducted the unfortunate expedition against Constantine in 1836, has espoused these sentiments, and has treated the Jews very rudely, so that Duran and three others were compelled to bring complaints against him at the Chamber of Deputies. The impartial judgment, however, has taken into consideration the delicate position in which the Jews found themselves during the war, and how useful they have been to the French expedition. The sympathy of the Jews was naturally on the side of those who brought them lib-

erty. The Arab knew this perfectly well, and made the Jews expiate every defeat they have suffered. Hundreds of Jewish families became the victims of resentment at the hands of the conquered Arab. At the approach of the French troops to any place, the Jews had to flee in order not to be massacred by the population. When, in 1837, the French troops attacked Constantine, the Arabs left the city, and the Jews were compelled to remain, under the penalty of death. About 2,000 of them were enlisted in the Arabian army. Ben Aissa, the lieutenant of Bey Ahmet, made them work at repairing the breaches of the fortress under the fire of the French cannons. In the same year, Abd-el-Kader having recaptured Moscara, all the Jewish inhabitants of that place were compelled to escape to Oran and to Tlemcen, and they became so impoverished that Baron James de Rothschild, of Paris, was obliged to send 10,000fr. for their assistance. In 1841, the French, having taken Tlemcen and Moscara, Abd-el-Kader compelled a large number of Jewish residents of those cities to follow him into the interior of the country. Many others were simply massacred by the Arabs, and their property was pillaged. Pursued by the French troops, the Emir was compelled to set his Jewish captives free. Those, unfortunate, were met by a company composed of French and subjected Arabian soldiers, who took them for enemies, and butchered large numbers of them. In April, 1842, about 4,000 of these poor captives arrived at Oran, dying with hunger and fatigue. The Jews had to pay, with their blood, for their sympathies with the French, and yet they have shown at every occasion their gratitude to the nation which has delivered them from oppression. In the first periods of that cruel war they filed a petition to serve as Algerian militia.* In 1837, they petitioned that the Duc of Nemours be appointed vice-roi of Algeria. They learned the French language rapidly, and were anxious to send their children to the schools established by the French Government. An Algerian Rabbi, Abraham Belays, honored the royal family of France by the dedication of his poems and other works.

At the time of the French conquest, the number of Israelites in Algeria was not large. According to the estimation of Baron Baude, after the census of 1838 and '39, there were, in Algeria, 6,065 souls; in Oran, 5,637; in Bone, 421; in Bouziah, 10; in Mostaganem, 698, and in Constantine, 3,038—total, 15,867.

Mr. Joseph Cohen estimated their number, in the year 1845, to 10,962 souls. But this estimat was undoubtedly very incomplete. It certainly did not comprise the singular Jewish tribes which lived on terms of equality with the Arabs in the provinces of Constantine; the Kabiles on the Mazania, the