GOLDSMID (F.H.).

A few words respecting the enfranchisement of British Jews. 1833.
A FEW WORDS
RESPECTING
THE ENFRANCHISEMENT
OF
BRITISH JEWS;
ADDRESSED TO
THE NEW PARLIAMENT.
BY
FRANCIS HENRY GOLDSMID.

LONDON:
RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.
1833.
A FEW WORDS

RESPECTING THE

ENFRANCHISEMENT OF BRITISH JEWS.

In the year 1830 a Bill was introduced into the House of Commons for admitting the Jews of this kingdom to political privileges, of which they are now entirely deprived; and though, like most other Bills, however beneficial, when for the first time proposed, it was not at once carried, it was yet supported by such a minority,—respectable equally in point of numbers and talents,—as furnished a strong presage of fast-approaching success.

During the last three Sessions, the great question of Reform, by drawing to itself the almost undivided attention of the Legislature, has prevented that measure from being again brought forward; and a delay has been thus occasioned, which has caused great uneasiness to the Jews, and is in itself much to be
regretted, because the redress of wrongs cannot be too speedy; but which will at least afford to the Reformed Parliament an opportunity of marking the commencement of its career by an act of justice.

By such as have taken any interest in this subject it will be remembered, how manifestly difficult it was found, by those who spoke and wrote in opposition to the claims of the Jewish community, to adduce any reason that appeared perfectly satisfactory even to themselves, in support of their resistance. Something indeed they said about their fear lest the interests of Religion should be prejudiced;—as if the interests of Religion could ever be promoted by intolerant laws! But almost all principally rested their case on an assertion, that the Mosaic faith rendered its adherents everywhere indifferent to the interests of their native land, and unfit to exercise civil rights; and that this was proved by the experience of the different countries where the advantage of enfranchisement had been conceded to the Jews.

Now it is above all things necessary, that he who makes deductions from the evidence of facts, if he be desirous to avoid the risk of his own reasoning being turned against him, should be careful tho-
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roughly to ascertain the correctness of the statements from which his inferences are drawn. And this is a rule, of which the advocates of exclusion had in this instance been entirely unmindful. For it chanced, unhappily for their argument, that the result of experience had been exactly the reverse of what they declared it to have been; and that in every place where Judaism had at any time ceased to be made a ground for legal degradation,—in Spain under the Moors during the eleventh and twelfth centuries, and in our own times in France, in Holland, in Denmark, and in the United States of America,—men of that belief had filled important stations, both civil and military, and had proved themselves most useful servants of the State.*

The delay therefore which has occurred in a second time proposing a measure for the relief of British Jews, was certainly not required because sufficient practical proofs were not yet to be found

* Fuller statements on this head will be found in my “Arguments advanced against the Enfranchisement of the Jews considered” (Henry Colburn and Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street); in Mr. Van Oven’s “Appeal to the British Nation on behalf of the Jews” (Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange); and in the Appendix to this pamphlet, Nos. III. IV. V.
of the utility of Jewish enfranchisement.—Nevertheless as this delay has, in consequence of other causes, taken place, it may be well to draw the public attention to some few events which the intervening period has added to the store of facts, showing that the Hebrews always desire to be permitted to discharge the functions of citizens, and are always ready to requite, by exertions for its welfare, the country whose laws grant them the reality, and not the name alone, of freedom of conscience.

In the late French Revolution,—in which, as has truly been said, the King was the revolutionist,—the adherents to the Jewish faith among the citizens of Paris were not slow to join with the rest of the people in paying, with life, the price of Constitutional Liberty. The names of many men of that belief are to be found in the lists of the slain.

In Holland, the Jews (who are there very numerous,) have, as well during the present differences between that country and Belgium, as on former occasions, furnished soldiers for the army and militia, in proportion to their numbers, and indiscriminately with the Christian inhabitants. There are several Jewish officers; Mr. Meyer, brother of the
celebrated jurist of that name, is a Major; and when the late levée en masse was made, Mr. Mendes de Leon was placed in command of a battalion. It has been stated to me by a gentleman, whose information gives him the means of forming at least a probable conjecture on the subject, that he confidently estimates the Jews, now forming part of the Dutch forces, as amounting to upwards of 10,000. But, as they neither compose a separate corps, nor are treated as a peculiar class, it has not been practicable to ascertain whether this estimate be correct. Persons of every belief are in that country so completely amalgamated together, as to all things except their faith,—Jews, Protestants, and Catholics, are so undistinguishably blended in the same ranks,—that, while the whole body has acted throughout the present struggle with bravery and ardour, it is as impossible (if I may borrow the expressions of the eminent writer I have just named,) to obtain an accurate "account of the number of Jews among the troops of Holland, or of their general behaviour compared with the conduct of the Christian officers and soldiers, as it would be to state the proportion between the number and the behaviour of the soldiers of a fair complexion and of
those of a brown complexion in an army*." Can we require a clearer proof, that disabling laws uselessly and hurtfully extend, to the business of life, to the camp and the senate, distinctions which need only exist in matters necessarily connected with religion, in the church and the synagogue?

Three Bills have, in the course of the last few years, been successively passed by the Legislative Assembly of Jamaica, for relieving the Jewish inhabitants of that island from the disqualifications to which they were subject. The two first of these were not ratified by the Crown, in consequence, it appears, of some misapprehension on the part of the English Ministry with respect to the state of the existing law. The third Bill received the Royal assent early in 1831: and such was the anxiety felt in Jamaica to lose no time in carrying this long-expected measure into active operation, that not a month—I believe not a week—elapsed from the time when the tidings of its confirmation were received, before several Jews

* Being desirous to ascertain as exactly as possible the number of Jews in the Dutch army, I applied for that purpose to Mr. J. D. Meyer of Amsterdam, who had previously favoured me with information on similar subjects. The words above cited are extracted from his reply.
were appointed to offices analogous to those of Magistrate and Sheriff in this country. Many more have since been placed in situations of considerable consequence*; nor has there been discovered in them any deficiency either of activity or intelligence.

In Canada, public opinion was until lately so much in advance of the law, that Jews were more than once elected members of the House of Assembly†, at a time when the choice was rendered fruitless by their legal incapacity to take their seats. But their exertions, aided by those of the friends of liberality in that province, at length obtained from its Legislature an Act, which received the Royal assent at the beginning of the last year, and which has freed the Canadian code from the disgrace of intolerance, by raising the Jewish citizens to a complete equality with the other inhabitants of the colony.—

It is a fact well deserving to be mentioned in connexion with this measure of improvement, that its success was owing in no small degree to the efforts of a clergyman of the English Church, the chaplain of the forces at Montreal. From this gentleman's reply to an Address, in which the Jews expressed to

* See Appendix No. I.
† Morning Courier and New York Inquirer, June 30, 1830.
him their lively gratitude for his cooperation*, it appears, that as a divine of the Established Faith, he is fervently anxious for the diffusion of his creed, but that he sees no other way of fitly effecting this than sincere conviction; and that he believes that the road to conviction can only be laid open by kindness and benevolence, and not by disabilities and tests.—I cannot doubt that in this country the Ministers of Religion will act from similar feelings,—rightly persuaded that they alone really obey her dictates, who strive to sweep away, and not to preserve, the remnants of oppression; and that Religion's sanctity is never worse profaned, than when men commit in her name the crimes, and display the spirit, of persecution, imposing punishment upon conscientious belief, in one age by the faggot, and in another, which will not endure such means, by disqualifying laws.

In some places, at least, these things have altogether ceased to be. We have seen that to the catalogue of countries where Jews enjoy an equality of rights with their fellow-citizens,—a catalogue which previously comprised France, Holland, Denmark, and the United States of America,—two dependencies of Great Britain herself, Canada and Jamaica, have

* The Letter and Reply will be found in the Appendix No. II.
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now been added. If we look upon the other side of the picture, and ask which are the States where the penalty of exclusion is still attached to the profession of the Jewish Faith, we shall find the principal to be Russia, Prussia, Turkey, Spain, Portugal, and England.

Is the list a bright list, in which the name of England appears? Are the laws likely to be good laws, which she shares with the most despotic Governments, with the least enlightened nations, of Europe? Will she longer remain a member of this confederacy of intolerance?

It is for her Parliament and her people to answer the inquiry.
APPENDIX.

No. I.

List of Jews appointed to Civil and Military Offices in Jamaica since the Act of 1831, mentioned in page 8.

[The appointments are extracted from the official Gazettes of the Island.]

1831. Oct. 15. Myer Benjamin, Gent., to be a Quartermaster.

Oct. 24. Moses Gomes Silva, Esq., to be a Provost Marshal General.*

Oct. 27. Alexander Bravo, Esq., to be a Magistrate and Assistant Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the Parish of Clarendon.

Nov. 22. Philip Lucas, Esq., to be a Magistrate and Assistant Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the Parish of Kingston.

Dec. 13. Aaron Gomes Dacosta, Gent., to be an Ensign.

Dec. 31. Daniel Jacobs, Gent., to be an Ensign.


* This is analogous to the English office of Sheriff.
1832. March 8. Jacob De Pass, Esq., to be a Magistrate and Assistant Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the Parish of Port Royal.

March 9. Samuel Delisser, Gent., to be an Ensign.

April 27. Isaac Gomes Dacosta, Gent., to be a Quartermaster.

May 1. George Isaacs, Gent., to be a Quartermaster.

May 5. Barnet Isaacs, Gent., to be an Ensign.

July 6. David Lopez, Gent., to be a Lieutenant of Artillery.

July 7. Abraham D’Azevado Maar, Gent., to be a Lieutenant of Artillery.

July 26. Abraham Isaacs, Esq., to be a Magistrate and Assistant Judge of the Court of Common Pleas for the Parish of St. Ann.

Aug. 4. Moses Q. Henriques, Gent., to be an Ensign.

No. II.

Letter of the principal Jews at Montreal to the Reverend Brook Bridges Stevens, Chaplain to His Majesty's Forces in that City.

Dear Sir,—We have been deputed to present to you the accompanying Address from the Israelites residing in this city. In so doing, we cannot avoid expressing our pleasure at thus being chosen to convey to you the expression of esteem and regard which your truly pious conduct has excited in the
minds of those professing the Jewish Faith who reside in Montreal.

We are happy to add to the contents of the Address now presented to you, that since it was signed we have received the truly gratifying intelligence, that our gracious and royal King has, by giving his sanction to the Bill passed by our Provincial Legislature at its last session, placed the Jews in Canada upon a level with his Christian brethren as regards all civil privileges and rights,—an occurrence which marks a new era in the annals of liberality and knowledge.

Permit us, Reverend and dear Sir, to express to you our individual sentiments of friendship, and to hope that you will soon again renew your residence amongst us.

Wishing you and your family a speedy and safe voyage to England, and all future prosperity,

We are, Sir, &c. &c. B. HART.
M. I. HAYS.
ISAAC VALENTINE.
A. P. HART.
E. D. DAVID.

The Rev. Mr. Stevens's Reply.

My justly valued Neighbours and Fellow-citizens!

Tremblingly alive to the woe denounced on me if I be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, I am nevertheless not ashamed to confess how deeply I am affected by the unexpected and unmerited compliment you have now just offered me, enhanced as it is two-fold in value by the delicate secrecy with which it has been prepared. Uncompromising in doctrine as a minister of a peculiar persuasion, it has still been
always my opinion, that sincere proselytes can never be made by any force save the power of argument, any vehemence save the fervor of prayer, any warmth save the glow of love. The scandalous persecutions which your once theocratic and always distinguished nation has received from the hands of men calling themselves the followers of the meek and merciful Jesus, have been a reproach to their character,—an indelible disgrace to their profession; for, to adopt your own judicious and liberal remark, persecution in any form is “a system which the true Christian Faith can never encourage.”

Full well—from my own personal experience can I testify,—full well have ye obeyed the injunction of your captive Prophet; “Seek the peace of the city wherein ye dwell:” for in all the duties of Patriotism, Loyalty and Charity, few have equalled, none have surpassed you. When I think of your late venerable and benevolent Patriarch (D. David);—when I recollect the personal friendship I have invariably experienced at your hands;—when I reflect on your past history, and ponder over your future destiny;—when I consider that your great Progenitor enjoyed the illustrious title of “the Father of the Faithful and the Friend of God,”—that on your triumphant march “the sea fled, and Jordan was driven back;” that the sun stood still in its meridian course to gaze on your victories;—when I remember how faithfully for ages ye preserved entire and uncorrupted “the lively Oracles of God,” I feel an intensity of interest in all your concerns, both temporal and eternal, which may be best expressed in the words of your own plaintive and patriotic Bard,—“If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right-hand forget her cunning.”

My prayers shall be offered that the Almighty may hasten the period when ye “shall no more say, The Lord liveth which
brought up the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt; but, The Lord liveth which brought up and which led the seed of the House of Israel out of the North country, and from all countries whither he had driven them, and they shall dwell in their own land,—that period when "all the ends of the world shall remember themselves and be turned unto the Lord, and all the kindred of the people shall worship before the desire of all nations, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace."

I am, Gentlemen,
Your affectionate and deeply obliged servant,

BROOK BRIDGES STEVENS, M. A.
Chaplain H. M. Forces.

Montreal, June 7, 1832.

No. III.

Letter from Mr. J. D. Meyer of Amsterdam, Author of "Esprit, Origine et Progrès des Institutions judiciaires de l'Europe," containing a List of Jews who have held Civil and Military Offices in Holland.

Amsterdam, March 29, 1830.

"I have received your kind letter of the 26th ult., to which I have to reply, that, at the time of our Revolution, in the year 1798, Mr. Lemon, a physician, and Mr. Brunel, were members of the National Representation. Under the French Government I was a Judge in the Tribunal de Première Instance of Amsterdam, and a member of the Conseil General
de Departement (being at that time the Provincial States). M. C. Asser has been a Justice of the Peace at Amsterdam since the Restoration of the House of Orange. I was a Judge for three years, until 1807, when I resigned. I was Secretary of the Commission which framed the Constitution, and am at this time a Knight of the Belgic Lion. M. Asser, whom I just now named, has been employed since the year 1807 in the office of the Minister of Justice, or what the French call Chef de Division: he is a Referendary at the Council of State (in French, Maître de Requêtes), and a Knight of the Order. So were Mr. M. S. Asser (his father), Mr. Cappadose, and Mr. Davids,—all eminent physicians here and at Rotterdam. Mr. T. Boas has been, since the year 1824, a Justice of the Peace here; and Mr. Joseph Yong, at present residing in Amsterdam, was a member of the High Court of Batavia, and has now a pension from Government. My brother is a lawyer, and major of the militia here. We have a great many lawyers, attorneys-at-law, barristers, and eminent physicians, both here, at the Hague, and at Rotterdam, and a great many Jews are employed in less important offices. Mr. Mendes de Leon is a member of the Common Council of this town; so is Mr. Ezekiel, in Rotterdam; and Mr. Weil, a physician, at Amersfoort. In the army we had Mr. L. S. Boas, a captain, who was drowned in the shipwreck of the Waterloo transport, with five other officers, bound for the Indies. In the colony of Surinam, (to which my friend Mr. Asser and I have caused the emancipation of the Jews to be extended,) Mr. De la Perra and Mr. Saches are members of the Court of Policy.

"It is impossible for me to enumerate all the Jews who hold more or less important offices, much less to give you
their names and the date of their appointment; but I hope this summary notice will be sufficient. I have written several works; and among the other authors I may mention Mr. Housel, at Brussels, who holds a situation in the Bank there; he has published some works, on account of which he has been created a Doctor in Philosophy by the Academy of Louvaine. Mr. Levyssohn, jun., has written a very ingenious and learned Latin dissertation on the state of the Jews under the Roman Emperors, down to the time of Justinian. In general, I may say, that on no account have the Jews to complain of the behaviour towards them by the Government, and especially of the King and his Ministers; nor has Government any reason to complain of the behaviour of the Jews in office, who all of them (I do not know a single exception,) are highly valued and esteemed. For myself, I am quite out of office, having resigned my seat as a Judge, and my appointment as Secretary to the Commission of the Constitution having been only for a temporary purpose; but I have had other very great offers, and have the honour of being highly distinguished by His Majesty whenever I pay my respects at court.”

No. IV.

Extract of a Letter from Mr. Nathanson, of Copenhagen, containing an account of the state of the Jews in Denmark.

“I beg to call your attention to the events which have taken place in Denmark, relative to the Jews, and to the rights and liberties which have been successively granted to them, so far
as they have influenced their mental and moral improvement, and defined more generally their situation in life.

In Denmark, as everywhere else, the Jews were formerly entirely confined to mercantile pursuits, and more particularly to the retail trade; but nothing can better refute the charges brought against the Jews, than the result of the events which have taken place in Denmark in a period of about twenty-five to thirty years.

Until the year 1789, the Jews were all obliged to maintain themselves by trading only; their number at Copenhagen then amounted to about 1,800, and they were in a low degree of civilization, manners, and habits.

It was at this time that Mendelsohn's spirit began to throw a light amongst the Jews, and that Governments also adopted more liberal principles, which disposed them to do something for the Jews. That disposition was manifested more strongly in Denmark than anywhere else; and accordingly, by an ordinance issued in 1789, Jews were permitted to enjoy the privileges of corporations and to exercise all kinds of professions.

At first, however, many obstacles arose to prevent the beneficial effects of these concessions. Prejudices existed on both sides. The Jews feared that professional pursuits were incompatible with a strict adherence to their faith; and the Christians considered the privileges granted to the Jews as an encroachment on their own rights. Four or five years elapsed before these obstacles were removed, and before all classes of Jews participated in the enjoyment of their new privileges.

About the year 1800, the Grammar Schools, as well as the University, were opened to the Jews, of which they have availed themselves numerously and advantageously.
In consequence of these privileges granted by the State, and of a number of adults of both sexes having frequented the Christian Schools, whilst at the same time good elementary Schools were opened by the Jews for the poor, the isolated state of the Jews ceased;—they gained a taste for other pursuits of life besides commerce; took a warm interest in the arts and sciences; and in their new situations displayed more than sufficient merit to deserve being incorporated with the other citizens of the kingdom.

On the 29th of March 1814, a Royal ordinance fixed the permanent condition of the Jews; every civil liberty was then granted them, and they may now choose whatever pursuits in life they please; the law does not exclude them from anything.

The number of Jews now residing in Copenhagen, amounts to about 2,300, of which 1,100 are males. About 60 or 70 have applied themselves to the arts and sciences, and about 200 to various mechanical pursuits. Amongst the former are men of distinguished abilities and talents, who have received places under Government, and several hold official situations abroad.

In the rest of the Danish dominions (excluding Holstein,) there are only 1,600 Jews, who generally maintain themselves in the same way as those in the capital, except that such as live in small towns occupy themselves with farming also.

Having already stated that the Jews are permitted to choose whatever occupation they like, they are, of course, likewise at liberty to hold landed property; but if there are churches belonging to the estate, they have not the *jus patronatus*.
No. V.

Extract from a Letter published by Mr. Benjamin Hart, of Montreal, Lower Canada, containing a List of Jews who have held Offices and Commissions in the United States.

"Mordecai Sheftall, of Savannah, State of Georgia, was during the revolutionary war elected one of the Committee of Common Safety. Moses Sheftall (his son) has been elected, on two occasions, a Member of the Legislature of the same State, and has been a Judge of the County Court. Levy Isaac Delyon, of the same State, a Member of the Legislature. Mordecai Myers, of the same State, is now, and has been for the last five years, a Member of the Legislature. Isaac Minis, of the same State, was a Member of the Legislature. Levy Myers was in 1796 a Member of the Legislature of the State of South Carolina, afterwards appointed Apothecary General of the same State. Myer Moses was in 1810 a Member of the Legislature of the same State. Chapman Levy has several times served as a Member of the Legislature, and is now a Senator of the Senate of that State. Lyon Levy was Treasurer of the same State; and Franklin Moses is now Aid to the Governor of that State. Mordecai Myers, of New York, has represented that great city in the Legislature of that State. Jacob Henry was a Member of the Legislature of the State of North Carolina. Samuel Judah was for several years, and is now, a Member of the Legislature of Indiana.

In 1790, Abraham Cohen was appointed Postmaster for Georgetown, South Carolina, and held the situation until his death. Solomon Cohen was Collector of Taxes for the same State. Moses Myers was Prothonotary of Georgetown; and Myer Moses was one of the Council of Safety for Charlestown,
in the same State. Jacob I. Cohen was Recorder of the City of Richmond, in Virginia. Jacob Cohen is a Member of the Council of the City of Baltimore. Barnet Henry is the United States Consul at Gibraltar: Benjamin Russell, at Riga; and Mordecai M. Noah was the United States Consul at Tunis,—after his return he was appointed Sheriff of the City of New York, and is now Surveyor of that Port (one of the most respectable situations in that State, and involving high responsibilities). Moses Myers, of Norfolk, Virginia, is Collector of the Customs; and John Myers, Deputy Collector. Reuben Etting was Marshal of the State of Maryland.

Persons who are or have been commissioned in the Naval and Military Forces of the United States:—

Colonel David Franks, the Confidential Aid of General Washington till his death, and with whom he served during the Revolutionary War: after the Peace of Independence he was appointed Cashier of the United States Bank in Philadelphia.

Myer Moses, Major and Deputy Quartermaster General; Lieut. Mordecai Myers, Aid to the Governor; Chapman Levy, Captain; Mordecai Myers, Captain; G. Waage, Major; Abraham Massias, Major; Hymon Cohen, Lieutenant; Philip Minis and Abraham Deleon, Surgeons of the Army.

In the Navy:—Uriah Levy, Esq., Lieutenant and Commander; Barnet Henry, Esq. was a Lieutenant; Emmanuel Phillips was Surgeon; and Gratz Etting, Purser."

Besides these, may be named (among others) Mr. Isaacs, who was Member of Congress for the State of Tennessee.