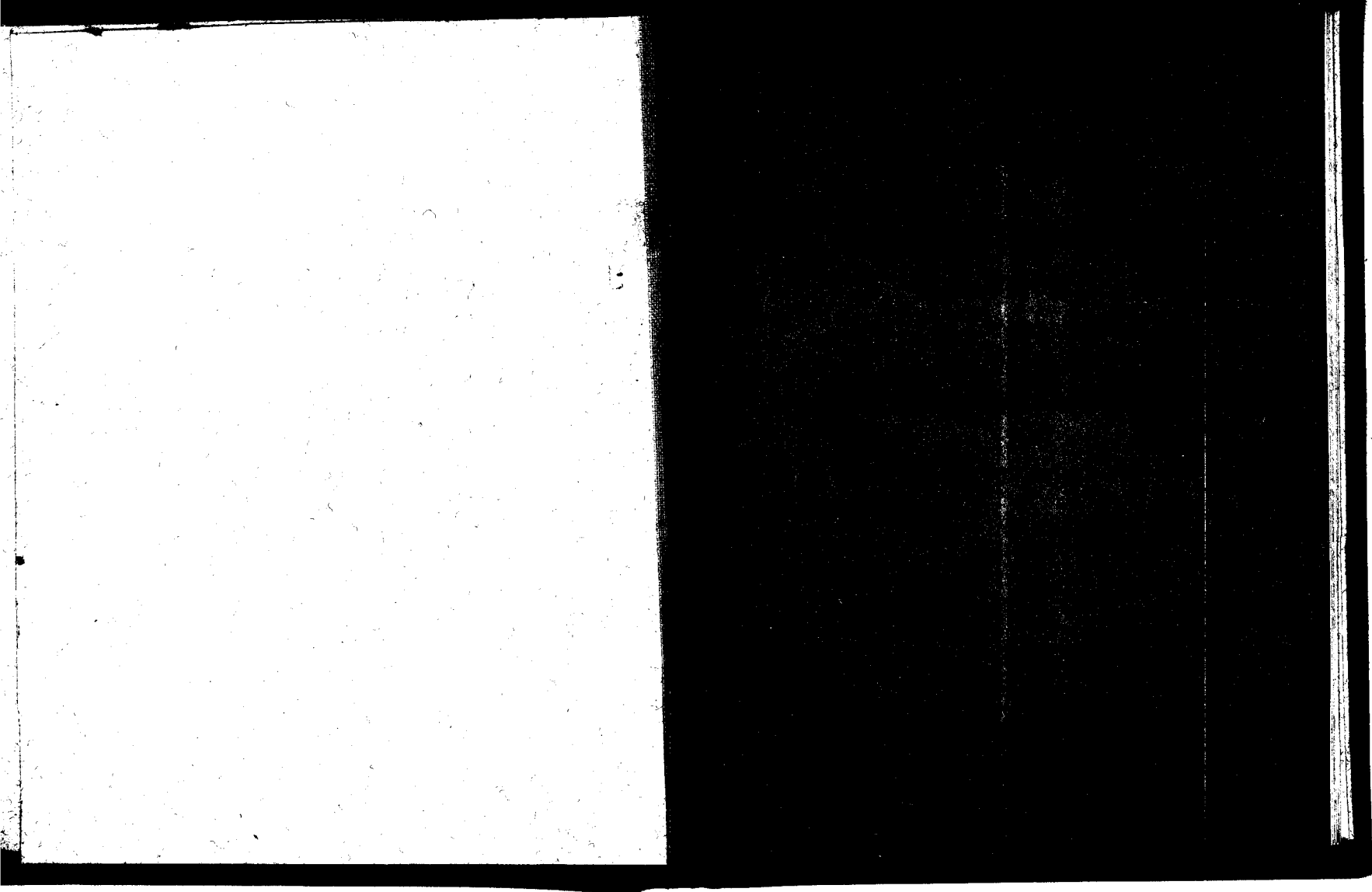


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THE CAUSES OF THE
Revived Disaffection against
the Jews.

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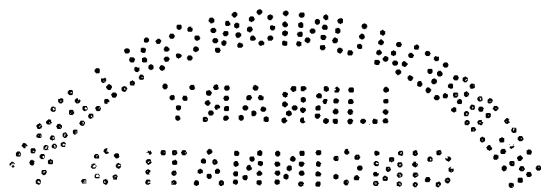
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The Causes of the Revived Disaffection against the Jews.

TO be misunderstood and misconstrued is the fate of both our literature and our people. At the same time the peoples of the earth have constantly been feeding their intellect from these two sources, the book and its living carriers and interpreters, since the days that we have been given the book in hand and commissioned to go forth as teachers.

There was a time, not very far distant, when it was thought that, at least in the civilized parts of the world, Jew-hunting and Jew-hatred, persecutions political or social for our religion or our race's sake were forever gone.

When on my last visit to the Fatherland, I visited a lady of old acquaintance, a Jewish lady, one of the most prominent in the great social work of womanhood of our age, she reminded me of our meeting in Dresden twenty five years since, when in the course of our friendly conversation, I remarked that the time of religious persecution in Germany was not dead forever. "Oh, how



often," she exclaimed with tears in her eyes, "how often have I been thinking of you, since that ghost of *Judenhass* and *Judenhetze* left his grave again in our beloved Germany! At that time I believed you were a prophet of pessimism, a predictor of impossibilities. Alas, that your prophecy has come true! The dead have risen from the grave!"

But what are the causes of this resurrection of what we believed to be a corpse burned in the grave of history?

As in nature no phenomenon is ever born of one cause, so in the political and, in general, the intellectual life of humanity, every movement carries in it a complication of causes. It is difficult, if not impossible for those standing in the movement to recognize all of them, else the number of false political weather prophets would not be so large as it is. If those in Washington, I mean the men in the Signal Office, knew all the component elements of an atmospheric storm movement, no doubt, their predictions in the morning would not so often be stultified before the sun sets over them. When the day is past, they surely are wiser than yesterday. And so it is with the observers of the present in the lives of nations.

What, now, are the most discernible causes of the present disturbances in the world's social atmosphere that have produced that epidemical distemper to which we give the name of *Disaffection against the Jews*?

Religious hatred you will say.

It is not quite two months ago when, while we were commemorating the birth of liberty, Christianity, all over the world, observed with all the pomp and solemnity of a great dramatic performance, a festival, in itself a resurrection of prejudice and animosity against the Jews. Children and adults are told year in, year out, or at least once during the passion days, how we tortured and crucified him, whom they call their Savior.

To discuss the truth or untruth of this fact tonight would be out of place, besides that, for any practical purpose, it is a perfectly idle question whether or not the Jews of Palestine had a share in the execution of Jesus.

It may be a very interesting problem for historical and legal research just to determine how much of the responsibility for this act rested upon the Jewish authorities or people, and how much upon the Roman government and its organs, what were the legal aspects of the case,

and what part political passions took in it. But whatever the result, it cannot influence the present political or social movements for good or for bad.

Suppose a mob or a legal court, nearly nineteen hundred years ago, had committed a rash deed say a judicial murder, what share did we of the nineteenth century have in it?

You all know the story of the Irishman who on a Monday morning going out to his quarry met a peddling Jew, and without the least warning began to pound him. His comrades, wondering at this sudden convulsive rage in one otherwise peaceably inclined, asked him. "What has this poor, inoffensive Jew done you?" "Me," said he, "me, nothing, but he killed my Savior." "Not he," said they, "but his ancestors more than eighteen hundred years ago were the perpetrators." "I do not care when this was done but I heard of it only last night."

There is a deep psychological truth in this as in almost all Irish stories.

No tradition of antiquity, be it ever so horrid, is capable of kindling and feeding the fire of hatred and persecution, unless a spark of immediateness, of freshness, of personal interest can be had to start the fire anew. Read the his-

tories of violence and riot against Jews in the Middle Ages, and you will find that behind the religious fanaticism, and fanning it, stood the palpable interests of political ambition and disappointments, of greed and of lucre, of personal grudge and of offended pride, all of them a combined host of taskmasters lashing the unlettered rabble into cruelty.

Yes, our Irishman may be excused for thrashing the Jew peddler; his impelling force was fresh and new; the rod in his hand was but of last night's growth.

But as a permanent, living factor in the national, political or social life of any civilized modern country, a religious tradition of such antiquity can have as little effect, as the erection and existence of the Herrman monument in the Teutoburger Wald, can produce the renewal of any antagonism between Germany and Italy.

No enlightened people can be guided in its love or hatred by events of an antiquity between which and our time there is a chasm of time and space and culture and political changes wide enough, to be sure, to bury therein all kind of emotion.

Religious hatred, as a sole factor, was at all times and surely is in our own days an impos-

ible cause to account for a movement of such vast extent as we witness, and its existence even is denied by all intelligent men and women as an insinuation that must be disavowed.

And, in fact, were it not for other causes, the religious motive could exercise no untoward influence in an enlightened country like Germany, the homestead of the anti-Semitic epidemic of our days.

But there is another cause, less visible on the surface, and one ostensibly so harmless that one is surprised to find it dragged into the battle of mean passions.

Science, the divine lamp of the miner in the quarry of truth, has unwittingly given an impetus to this recall from the grave and the regalanization of racial hatred.

Never would a Max Muller have dreamt that his and his fellow-workers' ethnological researches would be seized by political leaders for arousing the antagonism of races to take the place of the almost extinct antagonism of religions!

And yet it was done. To hate and persecute the Jew was unfashionable, out of date; but why could we not give passion another name, a name in keeping with our scientific age?

"We are Aryans, and the Jew is the Semite. The Jew is a foreign substance in the Teutonic body and in the bodies of all European nations, the Jew is a festering splinter." This was an excellent parole for summoning the army of hatred. And this army, what an excellent ally to despotism and popular oppression against liberty and popular self-government! What an excellent weapon to fight the Rich- ters and the Laskers, degrade Jew and Gentile alike by identifying the Liberal with the Jew, and the Jew with the Semite!

What of it that Jewish thought and Jewish blood have contributed more than their proportion towards building up and cementing the grand structure of Germany reunited? "Thut nichts, der Jude wird verbrannt," and with him the Liberal.

The alliance was concluded, the parole was given out, and you know how it spread Eastward, where the torch of destruction was put into the hands of the Mujik in order there to discredit the inconvenient clamorers for free thought, free press, and free institutions, for human treatment of human beings; those noble men and women who dare to disturb the slumber of the dear *tatushka*, the Czar of Holy Russia! The Russian

pupil excelled his German teacher. You know how the parole spread in Germany, breaking the heart of an Auerbach and a Lasker and of thousands of others who had been so identified with their country's affairs as almost to forget that there ever was a time when the Jew was not considered a citizen of his country.

You also know how it spread Westward, not as a firebrand, but perhaps as a much more insidious destroyer. A drop of poison has been instilled into the blood of Western nations causing a distemper contagious in its nature, and, there is no use in denying it, the contagion has reached our beloved country, and the poison, too, has been imported, and it works its way into the heart of our community, destroying the social peace which heretofore has been its just pride.

What are the remedies which our friends propose?

One voice tells us, "You Jews are clannish, you must eat and drink with us, and prejudice will disappear."

I, for my part, was never a believer in a friendship built on bacon and cemented with lard. But there are some in our ranks who did entertain the hope that the disregard of our

dietary laws would remove the barriers between Jew and non Jew (I dislike the word Gentile). But the advice, given us at this hour, smells somewhat of Mephistophelian sulphur. Why, just when we wish to sit around the same table with you, in your summer resorts, just at the very season when Nature invites all her sons and daughters for a social, restful chat in her mountains and on her meadows, your hotel-keepers find it profitable to drive us off, because they can do better without us. They speculate on your prejudices, and they thrive on them, it seems.

Another friend, going deeper to the root of the social separation, advises us to intermarry with our Christian neighbors.

I am sure, he who thus advises us, is well married, and need not fear our competition for himself.

But suppose we would adopt his friendly counsel, how long will it last ere the complaints will be heard, that the Jews ruin the market, snatching away the finest heiresses before the eyes of the young Christian to whom nothing will be left but to join the club of the Celibates? Look out, lest you may soon clamor for a law limiting the number of Jewish candidates of Hymeneal bliss,

even louder than the Upper House of the Prussian Diet calls for a restriction of the Jewish numbers in the homes of learning.

But earnestly speaking, is it possible that a teacher of religion could propose an immoral and irreligious measure like this?

If there is any relation in which a union of religious views is essential, it is surely that most intimate community of life which must prevail between husband and wife. I can be a business partner of one utterly opposed to my religious views, as long as there exists mutual confidence in our integrity. I can live on terms of most intimate friendship with one whose religion is not mine, and history shows examples of intimacy between Catholic priests and orthodox Jews even in the ages of fanaticism—examples worth imitating in our enlightened days. But how can marital happiness be established where the holiest interests of the heart clash against each other?

Are you in earnest? Shall we buy social peace at the expense of peace of heart and hearth?

Into what an abyss of immorality would you drag us and yourselves, if we followed your advice!

Would you have a son-in-law whose only recommendation to your friendship is religious

indifference, or which is even worse, religious hypocrisy?

Rather than try this remedy, let us continue to suffer for a while, until humanity will be more enlightened, and the wolf will dwell with the lamb (without marrying it) and not complain that it made his water turbid.

Be not frightened, we have survived fire and sword, we shall also outlive the stinging pins of hotel-keepers and their patrons.

But hatred is, our sages say, a fly that looks out for a sore spot to bite on. Let us beware that we offer no such spot on our body.

No cry of Semite, no cry of Christ-killer, and no disguise, however modern-shaped, of those weapons will do us any permanent harm in this country; no Drumont and no "Original Mr. Jacobs," poison filled as they are, will seriously affect the life blood of our nation, unless we show sore points, open spots for the fly to sit upon.

A spirit of negation, of sneer and of scorn has seized us, brethren, and finds its expression in pulpit, press and private intercourse, which our friends observe with grief, our opponents with eagerness.

The recently departed scholar, Franz Delitzsch,

a defender of the Jews and their literature against the attacks of venomous calumny, years ago already called over to us across the ocean not to offer the fly an open spot. He grieved to see the bile of sarcasm and cheap wit poured out over his most sacred convictions and those of millions. Our friends and our opponents know not or regard not the fact that our own convictions and institutions, our entire religious life, are treated no better; that our own fathers are branded before our eyes with the stamp of superstition and hypocrisy, our ceremonies rebuked with fetish-worship.

What they see is a host of men and women, children of a race once sent forth into the world with the message of religion and humanity, fear of the Lord and love of mankind, turned into scoffers, scorners and skeptics, uprooting the foundations of every religion, dealing with fallacies borrowed from all sides, treating questions with haughty contempt which the true and deep thinker of every race approaches with reverence. What they see is negation and destruction; and the hearts of our sympathizers bleed from the wounds they inflict on humanity, and our opponents point with malicious delight at the sores in our body. Behold! these sources of disaffec-

tion cannot be covered up by occasional flatteries offered on the altar of false popularity-seeking compliments to our Gentile neighbors.

Here is our flag, handed to us thousands of years ago; by it let us stand. Here is our mission of truth and righteousness; let us perform it. Here is our Sabbath; by it let us abide. That is the lesson our friends and foes teach us; that is the lesson our past hands over to us. If this we do, the prophetic words will be verified: "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that will rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their due reward from me, saith the Lord."