

MODERN ENGLISH JEWS

In London, November 9th, with exceptional pomp and ceremonies, a new Lord Mayor was inducted to office, and for the third time in the past twenty years this dignitary is a Jew.

Cable dispatches have pointed out the most interesting fact that his election completes the seventh century of the title's existence, and that in the year when history first mentions it – that is in 1189 – there was a most furious and relentless persecution of the Jews in London, and, for that matter, throughout England, when it was thought a specially clever and fitting thing to wring out of the Hebrews the expenses for an expedition to rescue the Holy Sepulchre. The fatuity of those crusades, which so occupied succeeding generations of Europe's strongest manhood, is almost grotesquely apparent when we reflect that, while seven hundred years later the Paynim infidel is still the master of Jerusalem, a Jew holds the office which Richard invented as a part of his general plan of exterminating Moslem and Jew alike. History contains no grimmer sarcasm on race hatreds and religious idiocy.

The triumph of the Jew is quite a recent thing in England, but it is none the less complete. Of course, the barriers remained against his religion long after those reared against his nationality had been swept away. The Christianized Disraelis were able for more than one decade to look over the fence at the Isaacs and Cohens and Levys huddled forlornly outside the pale. It is now barely over thirty years since the first Jew, Baron Lionel Nathan de Rothschild, was allowed to take his seat in the House of Commons. And up to 1830 they were rigorously shut out of not only municipal public life but out of many professional avocations. The Jew, sixty years ago, in England, could not enter the army or navy; he could not be a barrister or solicitor, or even a solicitor's

clerk; he could not even be a schoolmaster or usher at a school. He had no right to vote, even, if any one chose to challenge him.

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To-day there are some fifteen orthodox Hebrews in the House of Commons, and as many more, perhaps, who are wholly or in part of the ancient Hebraic blood. Baron de Worms, Rothschild, Mundella, Goldsmid, Montagu, Jacoby, Samuelson, and many other equally obvious and familiar names appear now on the roll which could not be signed thirty-one years ago save "on my true faith as a Christian." There are numerous other most Christian-looking names which mask Jewish identity.

Commercially the Jew is, of course, at his very strongest in London, but only because London is his largest field. He is scarcely stronger here, relatively, I should think, than in New York, Paris, Berlin, Frankfort, or Vienna. But socially and professionally he has a position in England immeasurably superior to that which he has been able to win elsewhere. He is in the peerage here in his own male right, as well as by proxy through daughters married to nobles like Lord Rosebery. He blossoms luxuriantly all over the baronetage and the list of knights. In science, art, literature, music, politics, the law, the stage, and latterly even in the army, he flourishes like a green-bay tree. In every circle which talent or **[R1207 : page 6]** culture, or even mere liking for these, makes for itself, you find admirable representatives of the race at its best. For here it is at its best.

One proof – a signal proof – of this is that practically no disposition exists to evade or deny the historic descent from Israel. The London Jew is now proud of his race, and of its achievements and astonishing virility, and likes to talk about them with people who are interested.

To the contrary, there has always elsewhere been a certain constraint in touching upon this subject of race, much as if there had been a recent death in the family. This was ten or a dozen years ago as true of London, but that is all changed now.
