

JEWISH ITEMS OF INTEREST.

THE INFLUENCE OF JEWS IN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS.

If any one suppose that the Jews are not a power in Europe even outside of the money market, he is mistaken. In England, though they number only one in eight hundred of the population, Jews recently occupied eight seats in the House of Commons. Though only two per cent. of the population of Germany, they hold in the universities seventy professors' chairs. And of the twenty-three Liberal and Progressive journals in Berlin, all but three are directly or indirectly under Jewish control. There are only 40,000 Jews in Italy, but eight of them are members of the Chamber of Deputies. In France, out of a population of 37,000,000, only 60,000 are Jews; yet, says the London "Spectator," "The Jews sit in the Senate, three in the Chamber, four in the Council of State, and two in the Supreme Council of Public Education. One Cabinet minister, M. David Raynold, is a Jew, and so are no less than ten chiefs of ministerial departments, who are probably more powerful than ministers. Three Prefects are Jews, seven Sub-Prefects, and four Inspectors General of Education. The same community furnishes two Generals of Division, three Generals of Brigade, four Colonels, one Judge of the Court of Cassation (the President) and ten Provincial Judges."

– *Presbyterian Banner*.

The change in the position of the Jew within the last half century is one of most remarkable character. Fifty years ago the Jew was inert and imbecile: now he exercises a greater power than in the days of David and Solomon. The Jews to-day influence more people, control more bullion, and exercise more legislative power than they did when they had their temple, their land, and their sceptre. They have been stationary for eighteen

centuries, and hunted into obscurity: to-day they attract wider attention than ever before in their history. Out of twelve hundred students of law in Berlin, six hundred were Jews. The Berlin and other Councils are ruled by a Jewish majority, and all offices are in the gifts of Jews. The German tradesman sinks to a secondary position alongside his Jew competitor, the best squares are filled with Jew shops, the best estates have passed into their hands. In Germany they have ousted the best families from their patrimonial possessions. This is true of Holland also. The Jew is the world's chief banker to-day. Almost the whole of the liberal press of Germany is in their hands. The two leading papers of Rome were, and possibly still are, edited by Jews. The power of the Jewish press of the continent of Europe is very great in matters political, scientific, and theological. ...As the Jew has entered the civilization of the age and become a part of it, Rabbinical Judaism has necessarily undergone considerable modification. Amongst multitudes of them in Germany, the hope of a Messiah has totally disappeared. A spirit of skepticism has laid hold of the younger generation, so that conviction has disappeared....All idealism is gone, and nothing is considered to be useful and worthy of effort but that which promises material advantage – wealth, honor, power and enjoyment. Of two thousand shops kept by Jews in the city of Paris, not over a hundred are closed on Saturday. Of the seventy thousand Jews in New York City not over twenty-five hundred are attached to the synagogue.

– *Missionary Herald*.

One of the most remarkable facts of the present age is the eagerness with which the New Testament is being read and studied among the Jews. They are not only reading the book, each in the vernacular of the country in which he resides, but many of their number are studying it in Hebrew. It is reported that the two principle Hebrew versions of the work have had circulations

exceeding that accorded to the most noted books of fiction, and a complete Hebrew commentary on the New Testament is one of the latest things to be announced as in course of publication at Leipsic. Nor is this the only Christian literature that has found ready acceptance with them. Such works as Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" and Milton's "Paradise Lost" have been translated into the same old language and meet with ready sale.

All this proves that the Hebrew is far from being the dead language most folks suppose it to be. The fact is, the study of it has been revived among the Jews in the last few years, not so much in this country as in the Old World, and it is considered probable that as many human beings now speak it, either purely or in some jargon form, as spoke it at the time of the Exodus, when the Jews are supposed to have first asserted a claim to nationality. Furthermore, it may be stated as probable that the number of Jews who are reading the New Testament in Hebrew exceeds that of the Christians who are studying the Old Testament in the **[R1407 : page 156]** same language. The Jew is not necessarily reading the New Testament with intent to become **[R1408 : page 156]** a Christian. He does so rather because the story is an important one in the history of the race, even though the divine origin of Christ may not be conceded by him. And, in fact, there is not a vast amount of difference between many of the reformed Jews and some Unitarians in matters of faith, though it may be remarked that the orthodox Hebrews are the most noted for containing among their numbers men who read the New Testament.

Another interesting point in this connection is the fact that not a few students are now disposed to believe that the Hebrew is the parent of a large part of the Saxon, German and other tongues which belong to the same sub-family of languages as they do. The work by Dr. Rodosi, recently published, in which many derivations from that to them are traced, is deserving of more

attention than has yet been accorded to it, being really a remarkable production, though not the only effort made to prove a connection of lineage between the old and the comparatively new. Probably the one thing which chiefly stands in the way of accepting the theory is the fact that it is a discarded one. Up to about two centuries ago it was generally believed that the Hebrew was the parent of all other languages, and the revulsion came when it was discovered that the Latin, Greek, and most other European tongues have a close affinity with the Sanscrit, which was the language of the people who invaded India perhaps not far from the time of the Jewish exodus from Egypt. It is well known to be more difficult to obtain assent to a truth which has been once discarded because mixed with much that is false than if it had not been in such bad company. Yet it may be possible to admit a close connection without conceding all that was unwisely claimed when literary men knew far less than they do now.

There can be no doubt that the Jews are rising to a prominence to which they as a people were strangers through many centuries. They are proving their right to it in commerce, science, literature and art, and now the eyes of the whole world are turned upon them as a consequence of the persecution in Russia. It is at least in harmony with this better recognition by other peoples that they should study the history of the Christian religion as closely interwoven with their own. Hence they do well to read the New Testament, and read it, too, in the language of their forefathers.

– *Chicago Tribune.*
