

*A tragedy of
anti-Semitism.*

“Why do human beings hurt one another so?” is the unanswerable question that closes Dr. Max Nordau’s

four-act tragedy, “A Question of Honor,” which was published in German nine years ago under the title “Doctor Kohn,” and is now translated by Miss Mary J. Safford and issued to the English-reading public by Messrs. John W. Luce & Co. With too little action and variety for successful stage production, the piece is a moving picture of that form of race-hatred known as anti-Semitism. Of Jewish extraction himself, the author has written feelingly and with first-hand knowledge of that whereof he speaks. The plot of the play is briefly this: Dr. Kohn, a Jew, — a talented *Privatdocent* (not quite accurately translated “private tutor”), more Gentile than Jew in his faith, or want of faith, and in all his habits and associations, — falls in love with a girl of ostensibly Teutonic parentage, but really half-Jewish herself

through her father, a Hebrew who has renounced his race and religion and changed his name. All might have gone smoothly, on the surface at least, had the lover been willing to embrace Christianity; but he honorably refused to profess a faith that had never commended itself to his acceptance, or to disown a name and an origin that he felt it no shame to avow. The heroine remains true to him, even though all her relatives except her father turn against her. The hero, insulted beyond endurance by her brother, demands satisfaction, and falls on the duelling field, after firing his pistol into the air. Thoroughly German in its details of university life and of social and family intercourse, the play is manifestly a hard one to turn into idiomatic English that shall not violate "local color"; and though the translator has done well, in a few places she might have done better. For instance, Frau Moser, surprised by something her husband has done, exclaims, "I do not recognize you," meaning of course, "that was not like you." The play is excellent reading, and offers food for thought.
