vexatious poll-tax levied upon all males above the age of fifteen (see Lebrecht's essay on "The State of the Califate of Bagdad" in Asher's edition of "Benjamin of Tudela," ii. 318 *et seq.*).

The materials for a rebellion being thus at hand, David Alroy raised the banner of revolt against the Seljuk Sultan Muktafi, and called upon the oppressed people of Israel to regard him as their long-expected Messiah. He promised to lead his brethren to the recapture of Jerusalem, after which he would be their king, and they would forever be free. In the adjacent district of Adherbaijan there lived a number of warlike Jews who had their homes among the mountains of Chaftan, and these men Alroy sought to win over to his cause. To his brethren in Mosul, Bagdad, and other towns, he sent letters announcing his divine mission, and summoning them to aid him in waging war upon the Moslems and to shake off their yoke. His intimate knowledge of the magic arts is said to have convinced many Jews of the truth of his pretensions, and Alroy soon found himself with a considerable following, burning to free themselves from Moslem tyranny. He resolved to attack the citadel of his native town, Amadia, and directed his supporters to assemble in that city, with swords and other weapons concealed under their robes, and to give, as a pretext for their presence, their desire to study the Talmud with such a distinguished scholar as himself.

What followed is uncertain, for the sources of the life of Alroy tell each a different tale, and the subsequent events are closely interwoven with a mass of legends that have no historical basis. In all probability, the attack upon the fort at Amadia failed; Alroy and his deluded followers were defeated, and he himself was put to death.

The legends, however, are full of interest, and the version of Benjamin of Tudela, which is set forth as though made up of historical facts, is well worth reproducing.

The news of Alroy's revolt reached the ears of the Sultan, who sent for the would-be Messiah. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" asked the Moslem sovereign, to which Alroy replied, "I am." The Sultan thereupon cast the Jewish pretender into prison in Tabaristan. Three days later, while the Sultan and his council were engaged in considering Alroy's rebellion, the pseudo-Messiah suddenly appeared in their midst, having miraculously made his escape from prison. The Sultan at once ordered Alroy's rearrest; but, by his magic, the rebel made himself invisible and left the palace. Guided by the voice of Alroy the Sultan and his nobles followed him to the banks of a river, where, having made himself visible, the marvelous wizard was seen to cross the water on a shawl, and make his escape with ease. On the same day he returned to Amadia, a journey which ordinarily took ten days, and, appearing to his followers, related to them his wondrous exploits.

Benjamin of Tudela's Version.

The Sultan now threatened to put the Jews of his dominion to the sword if Alroy were not surrendered, and the Jewish authorities in Bagdad endeavored to induce Alroy to abandon his pretensions to the Messiahship for fear of the evil that might befall Israel. From Mosul also an appeal was made to him by Zakkai and Joseph Barihan Alfalah, the leaders of the Jewish community; but all in vain. At length, the governor of Amadia, Saif al-Din, bribed the father-in-law of the daring rebel to slay him, which was done, and the revolt was brought to an end. The Jews of Persia had considerable difficulty in appeasing the wrath of the Sultan, and were obliged to pay a large indemnity.

The death of Alroy did not entirely destroy the belief in his heaven-sent mission for the redemption of his people. Two impostors came to Bagdad and succeeded in perpetrating a huge fraud upon the credulous followers of the pseudo-Messiah. They announced that upon a certain night they were all commanded to commence a flight through the air from Bagdad to Jerusalem, and, in the meantime, the followers of Alroy were to give their property into the charge of these two messengers from their dead leader. The dénouement of this cunning scheme may be imagined; and yet, for many years afterward, a sect of Menahemites, as they were termed, continued to revere the memory of the so-called Messiah of Amadia.

The principal source of the life of Alroy is the "Itinerary" of Benjamin of Tudela (ed. A. Asher, i. 122–127). This version is followed in its main outlines by Solomon ibn Verga, in his "Shebeṭ Yehudah" (ed. Wiener, Hebrew text, p. 50). Ibn Verga states, on the authority of Maimonides (which, however, can not be substantiated), that, when asked for a proof that he was truly the Messiah, Alroy (or David El-David, as Ibn Verga and David Gans in his "Ẓemaḥ David" call him) replied, "Cut off my head and I shall yet live." This was done, and thus the pretender escaped a crueler fate. David Gans, Gedaliah ibn Yaḥya (in his "Shalshelet ha-Ḳabbalah"), who calls him David Almusar, and R. Joseph ben Isaac Sambari (see A. Neubauer, "Mediæval Jew. Chron." i. 123) closely follow Benjamin of Tudela's version. The name Menahem ibn Alruḥi ("the inspired one"), and the concluding episode of the impostors of Bagdad, are derived from the contemporaneous chronicle of the apostate, Samuel ibn Abbas (see Wiener's "'Emeḳ ha-Baka," pp. 168 *et seq.*, xxv. *et seq.*). The name Menahem (*i.e.*, the comforter) was a common Messianic appellation. The name Alroy is probably identical with Alruḥi (see Wiener, *l.c.*; Grätz, "Gesch. d. Juden," pp. 269 *et seq.*, 426; Basnage, "Hist. des Juifs," vii. 9). Lord Beaconsfield's novel, "The Wondrous Tale of Alroy," is purely imaginary, and exalts a man who was probably a vulgar impostor into a high-souled "hero of a dramatic romance," and invests him with a halo of glory.

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M. A.

ALSACE: A German territory which, together with Lorraine, forms a *Reichsland*, or imperial territory. It lies between the River Rhine and the Vosges Mountains. The precise date when Jews settled in this and the neighboring regions can not be definitely fixed. According to some historians there were Jews in Cologne in the fourth century: others date their presence in Mayence from the end of the eighth century. If these statements be true, it is not impossible that Jews resided also in the chief city of Alsace during the period of the Frankish and Carlovingian kings. This was Schoepflin's view in the last century ("Alsatia Illustrata," translated by Ravenez, v. 143); but he furnished no proofs. However, Benjamin of Tudela, in his account of his travels between the years 1160 and 1173, speaks of having met many rich and learned Jews in the towns of Treves, Worms, Speyer, and Strasburg; hence, Jewish communities must have existed there in the second half of the twelfth century. According to J. Euting ("Aeltere Hebräische Inschriften im Elsass," 1887), the oldest of the gravestones unearthed in 1868 in the Rue des Juifs at Strasburg dated from this time.

Traces of Early Settlements.

Another tombstone bore the date of 1223; but most of the remainder are of the fourteenth century.

The second code of laws, promulgated by the prince-bishop of Strasburg about the year 1200, prescribed that the Jews of that city should furnish the episcopal standards ("Urkundenbuch der Stadt Strassburg," i. 481). In 1233 a Jews' quarter existed in the city ("Urkundenb." i. 185), and the term "Jew" was applied to some of the Christian inhabitants either as a sobriquet, or because they were descended from baptized Israelites. Under the emperor Frederick II., there were Jews in Hagenau (Richer de Lenones, ad annum 1236; Boehmer, "Fontes," iii. 58); and, some time later (about 1260), those of Weissenburg were accused of ritual murder, and expelled from the town ("Annales de Colmar"; Boehmer, "Fontes," ii. 4). The author of the anonymous appendix to the "Annales de Colmar" (about 1300) says: "In Alsatia . . . chyrurgici pauci, physici pauciores; Judei pauci; hæretici in locis plurimis abundabant" (In Alsatia there were few surgeons and fewer physicians; Jews also were few, but in most places heretics abounded; "Annales de Colmar," ed. Gérard et Liblin, p. 230). When the bishop of Strasburg, Walter von Geroldseck, quarreled with the citizens, one of his grievances was the maltreatment of the Jews by his rebellious subjects; and in an agreement entered into with his successor the town council engaged not to exact the payment of imposts from the Jews for five years ("Urkundenb." i. 374).

Era of Persecution.

For nearly three quarters of a century the Jews of Alsace were simply tolerated; but in the last decade of the thirteenth century their persecution began. In 1290 the people of Mülhausen rose against the Jewish usurers. One of them, a certain Solman of Neuenburg, was beaten to death by the mob; and King Rudolph I. by proclamation annulled all debts to the Jews, amounting to 200 silver marks—about $20,000 or £4,000 of the present day (Mosmann, "Cartulaire de Mulhouse," i. 88). Two years later (1292) the Jews of Colmar were accused of ritual murder, and a riot ensued (Boehmer, "Fontes," ii. 30). During the following year the people of Rufach, aided perhaps by the avaricious clergy, began to show intolerance toward the Jews of that city, who fled precipitately to Colmar (*ib.* ii. 31). In the "Annales de Colmar" (p. 168) it is recorded that in 1296 a Jew of Sulzmatt, having been accused of theft, was hanged by his feet on a gibbet and remained in this position for eight days, when, according to the account, he succeeded in freeing himself. Another Jew was murdered at Ensisheim in 1299 (*ib.* p. 182).

Persecution, once begun, diminished somewhat at certain intervals, but never ceased entirely. When King Henry VII. of Germany in 1308 delivered the Jews of Rufach and Sulzmatt to John of Dirpheim, bishop of Strasburg, several of them were imprisoned, and others perished at the stake for unknown reasons. A second massacre of the Jews occurred in Rufach in the year 1338, on the anniversary of the conversion of St. Paul; and shortly afterward nearly all the Jews were expelled, at least temporarily, from the bishopric of Upper Alsace ("Alsatia Illustrata," iv. 262).

The period between 1337 and 1338 was particularly unfortunate for the Jews scattered over the neighboring country; and from the meager records of contemporary writers it appears that the movement against them ultimately developed into a general uprising of the peasantry. In May, 1337, Umbehoven, a knight of Dorlisheim, and Zimberlin, a noble of Andlau (according to another authority, a simple innkeeper), collectively taking the name of "König Armleder" (King Leather-arm), placed themselves at the head of a mob of peasants and massacred the Jews of Ensisheim,

Massacres.

Mühlhausen, Rufach, and other towns. They then marched on Colmar and summoned the magistrates of the city to surrender the Jews to them; but the citizens of Strasburg having decided to assist in the defense of the threatened city, the mob dispersed ("Chronique de Kœnigshoven," ed. Hegel, p. 759). At about the same time the Jews of Ribeauville, who in 1331 had been turned over by Louis of Bavaria to the Sieur de Ribeaupierre as surety for a loan of 400 marks in silver (corresponding to $80,000 of the present day), were accused of being poisoners and were massacred ("Alsatia Illustrata," iv. 262).

Isolated cases of murder also occurred at Strasburg. In 1337 a Jew accused of killing a little girl was burned; and the child was buried with great pomp, and honored by the crowd as a martyr (Grandidier, "Nouvelles Œuvres Inédites," v. 344). Still Strasburg practically remained the city of refuge for the Jews of Alsace up to about the middle of the fourteenth century; and as its com-

Strasburg a City of Refuge.

merce and industry developed, the imperial free city adjusted its relations with the Jews in a manner that, though onerous, was at least endurable. In accordance with an agreement made in 1325, the Jews occupied a quarter of their own in the city of Strasburg and had their own cemetery ("Urkundenb." ii. 394). If they could not acquire real estate, they were not compelled to submit their actions at law to any judges other than the mayor—a privilege that assured them a measure of protection, though it was doubtless costly. A certificate of protection (*Schutzbrief*) issued in 1338 to sixteen persons, and valid for five years, cost 1,072 marks, of which 1,000 were payable to the city, 60 to the king, and 12 to the bishop. As compensation for this, the Jews were permitted to engage in money-lending; the rate on loans being fixed for them at 5 or 6 per cent a week, or at 43 per cent per annum ("Chronique de Kœnigshoven," ed. Hegel, append. iv. 977).

The degree of culture among these Jews is shown, at least relatively, by the fragments of their gravestones which have recently been unearthed, and by the fact that Jews of other cities attended the lectures of the rabbis of Strasburg. There is still extant a letter of the mayor of Schlettstadt to the mayor of Strasburg praying the latter to allow some of the Jews of the former place to sojourn in Strasburg, in order that they might take advantage of the teaching of the rabbis there ("Urkundenb." v. 1029).

Then came that horrible "year of terror," which descended upon all Alsace and swept away most of its Jewish communities. A letter of

"Confessions" Under Torture.

Rudolph of Oron, bailiff of Lausanne (Nov. 15, 1348), announced to the mayor of Strasburg that certain Jews of Lausanne had confessed, under torture, that by order of, and in collusion with, their coreligionists of Italy they had poisoned all the wells in the Rhine valley. It was, they said, to avenge the cruelties of King Leather-arm that the Jews spread around this poison, which would not kill them, but would kill the Christians ("Urkundenb." v. 164–210). In December, 1348, the city council of Obernai (Enheim) notified that of Strasburg that they had put to the torture five Jews, arrested at the last large fair at Speyer, and that these had admitted their participation in this crime.

("Urkundenb." v. 177). On Dec. 29, the council of Colmar also announced that a certain Hegmann, one of the Jews under its protection, had, under torture, accused Jacob, the cantor of the synagogue of Strasburg, of having sent him the poison which he put in the wells of Colmar: one of his cousins, a woman named Bela, had similarly poisoned the wells of Ammerschweier. Notwithstanding these accusations, the chief magistrates, influenced no doubt as much by self-interest as by humanity, continued to protect the Jewish community of their city. But a general uprising, instigated by the civic magnates and the neighboring nobles—possibly also by the clergy itself—broke out at Strasburg in February, 1349. The councillor, Peter Swarber, and his two colleagues were deposed, mulcted in heavy fines, and expelled. Afterward the new communal authorities constituted by this revolutionary movement decreed the extermination of all the Strasburg Jews as well as of all Jewish refugees residing temporarily in the city. At this time there were barely 2,000 Jews having settled dwelling-places in the city, which contained, at most, 15,000 or 20,000 inhabitants all told. On St. Valentine's day (February 14), 1349, the Jews in the city were burnt *en masse* on the site of their own cemetery. A small number who had abjured their faith, together with some children, were saved, the latter being snatched from the flames. The number of the victims of this horrible holocaust has been greatly exaggerated by tradition ("Chronique de Kœnigshoven," pp. 761–764). Undoubtedly they owed their fate chiefly to their wealth, as is attested by the chronicler: "Ir gelte vas ouch die sache davon die Juden getoedet wurden" (Their money was the cause of the Jews' death). Other Jews were burnt at Schlettstadt together with a supposed Christian accomplice ("Urkundenb." v. 195). At Colmar and in other towns the Jews were sacrificed without being heard in their own defense; only at Landau, where they were numerous, was an attempt at defense made, and there without success. The imperial authorities did absolutely nothing to protect the *servi cameræ imperialis* (servants of the imperial chamber), as the Jews were then called in the Holy Roman Empire. In April, 1349, Charles IV. of Germany laid claim to the proceeds of all the loans made by the Jews of Strasburg to the Count of Würtemberg. On June 5, 1349, a defensive alliance was formed between the municipal authorities of Strasburg, the bishop of Strasburg, and the Abbot of Murbach, the Count of Würtemberg, and a number of other Alsatian grandees, to repel any attempt to inquire into the massacre. Some months later Charles IV. absolved the people of Speyer from all responsibility for the massacre of February (Letter of Sept. 12, 1349, "Urkundenb." v. 207). These attempts at extermination did not annihilate the Jews of Alsace nor prevent accessions to their number.

Strasburg the Scene of a Holocaust.

The proper names recorded in the authorities cited prove that the greater part of the Jews who dwelt in Alsace during the fourteenth century came from the right bank of the Rhine. In 1356 there were Jews again at Mühlhausen; for Petri ("Mühlhauser Geschüchten," p. 45) gives an account of a Jew in that town who had been apprehended by the lord of Neuenstein, thrust into a sack, and carried to Franche-Comté in order that ransom might be extorted from him.

In granting new franchises to the town of Hagenau, Charles IV. accorded to it the right to receive or to reject at will protected Jews ("Alsatia Illustrata," v. 247); and in 1374 he extended the same privilege to the city of Kaisersberg (*ib.* v. 293). Jews were living at Colmar in 1385. In 1369 Jews were again admitted to Strasburg ("Urkundenb." v. 715). An ordinance (*Judenordnung*) concerning them, dated May 14, 1375, refers to the presence of a dozen families ("Urkundenb." v. 880); another, issued in 1383, directs that they be treated and protected as other citizens ("Urkundenb." vi. 89); and a short time afterward, on the recommendation of the Count of Öttinger, sixteen families were admitted from Ulm, Bretten, Breisach, Wesel, and Mosheim ("Urkundenb." vi. 95). In 1384 the mayor appointed a Jew, Maître Gutleben, as physician, with a salary of three hundred crowns (about $360 nominal) per annum. Although the community was not large, it must have been rich, as in 1385 the Count Palatine Robert alone owed the Jews of Strasburg the sum of 15,400 fl. ($7,700 nominal; see "Urkundenb." vi. 143). Undoubtedly their wealth was a constant source of menace to them; for King Wenceslaus of Germany (Feb. 6, 1386) ordered the municipality to enforce against the Jews sumptuary laws in matters of dress, and to require them to resume the yellow shoes and sugar-loaf hats formerly worn by them ("Urkundenb." vi. 162; see BADGE). The same year the mayor fined them 20,000 fl. ($10,000). In 1387, delegates from the Rhenish cities assembled at Speyer (where in 1385 they had considered the Jewish question) and adopted resolutions inimical to the Jews. On the demand of the delegates from Strasburg it was resolved that neither male nor female Christians be allowed to act as domestic servants or wet-nurses in Jewish families, under penalty of being branded on the forehead ("Urkundenb." vi. 204). During this year King Wenceslaus placed under the ban all Jews of Colmar, Schlettstadt, and Hagenau who refused to pay the taxes he demanded for their protection, and even included three imperial cities that had retained for themselves such Jewish contributions ("Urkundenb." vi. 194). In the month of June a Jew of Italian or French origin (Mamelot der Morschele, der Walch) chanced to enter the cathedral of Strasburg; and though he had done nothing objectionable, he was beaten by the verger, expelled, and threatened with drowning if he should reenter the city ("Urkundenb." vi. 198).

The Jews were a source of considerable revenue to the city treasury. They numbered at that time about twenty families, who paid an annual tax of 727 fl. ($365.50 nominal); and the richest one among them, called in the records "der ryche Sigmund," paid 203 fl. ($101.59; see "Urkundenb." vi. 211).

In the autumn a new and much graver peril threatened the Alsatian Jews. A weaver of Bischheim, named Lauwelin, was accused of having offered his own child to the Jews of Strasburg for a ritual sacrifice, and—doubtless under torture—was convicted of the crime; and as a punishment his eyes were put out ("Urkundenb." vi. 207). By the beginning of the year 1388 the entire Jewish community was expelled and their real estate confiscated—a condition which was maintained until the French Revolution of 1793. In 1392 the scrolls and the tables of the Law belonging to the synagogue were still preserved in Strasburg ("Chronique de Kœnigshoven," pp. 975–986). Colmar was also the scene of acts of violence which did not end so brutally. Wenceslaus annulled all the claims of the Jews of that city against their Christian debtors in 1392 (Mossmann, "Juifs de Colmar," p. 8). In 1397 another story of poisoned wells was circulated in Upper Alsace through a certain Jew of Ribeauville, whose confessions implicated fresh victims (Schreiber, "Freiburger Urkundenb." ii. 108).

The fifteenth century was a period of comparative

calm for the Jews of Alsace. During that period they were the victims of incessant chicanery rather than actual persecution, except in the later decades of the century when acts of violence were renewed (1476–77), at the commencement of the general agitation produced by the Burgundian wars between Louis XI. and Charles the Bold. In 1436 Emperor Sigismund prohibited the citizens of Hagenau from renting or selling houses to the Jews ("Alsatia Illustrata," v. 170). On Oct. 31, 1437, he prohibited the Jews of Colmar from acquiring any real estate in the town or its suburbs, without special permission from the mayor, who seems to have wearied of his protégés; for in 1478 only two families were tolerated within the city. By decree of Emperor Frederick III. the Jews of Schlettstadt were, in turn, expelled from that city Dec. 12, 1479 (J. Gény, "Die Reichsstadt Schlettstadt," p. 206); but he refused to sanction the expulsion of those at Colmar—no doubt because they found influential defenders at his court (Mossmann, *op. cit.* p. 18).

The Fifteenth Century.

The opening of the sixteenth century marked a revival of economic and religious antipathy toward the Jews of Alsace. To the city of Münster, where during the Middle Ages there had been no Jews, Maximilian I. gave permission to admit or reject members of that race; but the citizens decided to exclude from the rights of citizenship all persons who even borrowed money from the Jews ("Alsatia Illustrata," v. 281). At length (Jan. 22, 1510), this ruler granted to the city of Colmar the long-desired right to expel the Jews, so that whenever their business affairs called them to that city they were compelled to pay a toll and to wear the yellow badge on their garments. Maximilian also presented the Jewish synagogue and the cemetery to his secretary, Jean Spiegel of Schlettstadt.

The Sixteenth Century.

Driven from the city, the Jews dwelt in the villages surrounding Colmar and continued to do business with its citizens: they were then prohibited from depositing their wares with Christians. In order to rid himself of his neighbors, the mayor obtained permission from Charles V. to forbid their entrance into the city (April 25, 1541). This did not hinder the imperial chancellery from renewing, on May 24, 1541, at the request of R. Josel of Rosheim, all the privileges enjoyed by the Colmar Jews. R. Josel exercised, though unofficially, the functions of collector of the customs and protector of the Jews of Alsace. These latter were far from being as numerous then as they were one or two centuries later. A detailed census ordered by the regency of Ensisheim showed only 52 families in the whole of Austrian Alsace; and in 1574 they were expelled from the country. Then there began between the city of Colmar and its Jewish inhabitants a struggle for the favor of the imperial chancellery—a struggle marked for its corrupt influence, and which, after continuing for several years, ended in 1549 disadvantageously for the Jews. From that time until its union with France, Colmar became the most important and the most anti-Semitic city of Upper Alsace. So strong was this sentiment in 1622 that the mayor positively refused the bishop of Strasburg, and through him the archduke Leopold of Austria, permission for one of his subjects, a Jewish horse-dealer named Kossmann of Wettolsheim, to enter the city; and it was only in 1691 that Jews were again allowed to set foot in Colmar ("Kaufhauschronik," ed. Waltz, p. 58). In the other cities similar conditions prevailed. In 1517 the mayor of Landau consented to admit ten Jewish families to the city on the payment of 400 fl. ($200) annually; but in 1525 he decided to expel them, and finally did so, although opposed by the Elector Palatine. At Obernai the chief bailiff, Jacques de Morimont, forbade Jews to enter the city except on market-days ("Alsatia Illustrata," v. 270). At Weissenburg an imperial edict declared void the agreements which the city had entered into with the Jews (*ib.* v. 247); while at Schlettstadt, after having greatly restricted the business of the Jews, under an imperial edict issued Feb. 24, 1521, the mayor availed himself of a suit for the recovery of a debt, brought by the Jews against some of the citizens, as a pretext for their total expulsion in 1529 (Gény, *op. cit.* p. 207).

In the seventeenth century a noteworthy immigration of Jews into Alsace began, caused mainly by the Thirty Years' War. They came from the right bank of the Rhine, where the authorities were powerless to control or impede them. At that time military rule superseded civil authority everywhere; and both the chiefs of the various factions and those of the army availed themselves of the keen commercial instinct of the Jews to equip their cavalry and to replenish their commissariats. To the soldiers they were indispensable as agents for the disposal of pillage. From the beginning of the Thirty Years' War Jews settled on the lands of the bishopric of Strasburg, in the county of Hanau-Lichtenberg, on the estate of the lords of Ribeaupierre, and in other cities, especially at Hagenau. Desiring to augment their revenues, the nobles of the vicinity of Lower Alsace sold to the Jews the right to settle in the villages; for there they preferred to dwell. Denizens of the cities in the Middle Ages, the Jews of Alsace, driven by irresistible force to the country districts in the seventeenth century, became a rural class with no taste for agricultural pursuits, and remained such even in the eighteenth century. By the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, Austria ceded her possessions in Alsace to France, and in 1681 Louis XIV. took possession of Strasburg.

The Seventeenth Century.

In the first general census of the "Jewish nation" of Alsace, taken in 1689 by order of Intendant Jacques de la Grange, a total for the whole province of 525 Jewish families is given. These, allowing at least five persons to each family, would represent about 2,600 souls. Of this number, 391 families belonged to Lower Alsace, 134 to Upper Alsace and to the Sundgau. The urban Jewish population was insignificant (Landau had 3 families, Hagenau 19, Weissenburg 8, Buchsweiler 18, Saverne 6, Obernai 3); but in certain small villages the number of families was larger. There were 37 families at Westhofen, 20 at Marmontier, 17 at Bollweiler, and 14 at Hegenheim ("Revue d'Alsace," 1859, p. 564).

From 1697 the increase in population was considerable; in his "Mémoire sur l'Alsace" (p. 229), revised to that date, La Grange gives 3,655 Jews in Alsace, of whom 897 were in Upper and 2,766 in Lower Alsace; and they formed about one-seventieth of the total population of that time. In 1716 there were 1,269 families, numbering over 6,000 individuals, and from that time, owing to the prolonged peace which the province enjoyed in the eighteenth century—doubtless also to the uninterrupted immigration—the growth was astonishingly rapid. The statistics for 1750 show the number of families to have been 2,585; in 1760 it had increased to 3,045, and in 1785 to 3,942 families, aggregating 19,624 individuals. The Jewish population of the cities did not show any material

Statistics in the Eighteenth Century.

increase. In Colmar, Schlettstadt, and Kaisersberg there was not a Jewish inhabitant; Strasburg, with a very bad grace, tolerated the presence of the family of the chief commissary of the army, Cerf-Beer, who had been appointed by Louis XV.; Hagenau had 325 Jews, Rosheim 268, Buchsweiler 297, Ribeauville 285, Landau 145, Weissenburg 165, and Obernai 196. But certain small cities of Upper Alsace had Jewish populations that outnumbered the Christian. At Darmenach there were 340 Jews, at Hegenheim 409, Niederhagenthal 356, Wintzenheim 381, Zillisheim near Mülhausen 332, Bischheim, a suburb of the city of Strasburg, 473 ("Dénombrement Général des Juifs d'Alsace," Colmar, 1785).

This rapid increase in population naturally added to the difficulties of earning a livelihood. With the liberal professions and the larger channels of trade closed to them, what could the Jews do? In the cities they were not considered eligible to membership in the gilds of trades and handicrafts; besides, the greater number of them were scattered over the country. Their own legitimate avenues of trade were cattle-dealing and the selling of second-hand goods. These were insufficient for their support; and they resorted to the lending of money on notes or mortgages, at an unfixed rate of interest often amounting to usury. The most hostile authors agree in depicting the Alsatian Jews of the end of the eighteenth century as poorly fed, clothed in rags, and possessing only a limited capital, which they loaned, and on the interest of which they realized enough to support themselves. The antipathy of the masses to them never died out, though toward the middle of the seventeenth century the humiliating badge that they had been ordered to wear disappeared. A copy of this badge—a small yellow disk, which was attached to their clothes—is found in "Le Cornelius Redivivus" of King Louis XIII., engraved in 1617. If no longer massacred (albeit in 1657 a mob at Dachstein burned several Jews), they suffered none the less from extortions and exactions. They were beset by narrow and tyrannical regulations, even in cities where they were received with more than ordinary toleration. Thus a decree of the Archduke Leopold of Austria (May 22, 1613) regulated everything pertaining to their public and private life, and prohibited them from acquiring real estate. By this decree they could not recover notes of credit against Christians until after they had been recorded by the registrar or provost of the locality. They were prohibited from publicly celebrating their religious rites, from sheltering a strange Jew for more than forty-eight hours, and from employing Christian servants on holidays or Sundays. For the privilege of passing from one town to another they were compelled to pay a special tax (*Judenzoll*). When Alsace came under the dominion of France the condition of the Jews was not ameliorated. At first Louis XIV. or his ministers inclined toward their expulsion (1651); later, by virtue of letters patent issued Sept. 25, 1657, the king took them under his special protection. But that did not prevent the lord-lieutenant, Poncet de la Rivière, from levying upon them, in 1672, an additional tax for royal protection (in addition to that which they paid to the lord of the manor direct), which amounted to 10½ fl. ($5.25) per family. The Jews soon learned how to make themselves useful to the new government as agents and as farmers of the revenues of those who held monopolies of the sale of salt, iron, and other minerals; above all, it was not long before they were considered necessary to provide remounts for the royal cavalry that garrisoned Alsace. After the Peace of Ryswick (1697) the question arose how best to relieve the province of its Jewish population. But the War of the Spanish Succession afforded new opportunities to the Jews to render special services, and on Jan. 31, 1713, Pontchartrain notified the provincial and local authorities that the king did not deem it fit to expel them.

Attitude of Leopold of Austria.

Effect of Peace of Ryswick.

Throughout the eighteenth century the condition of the Jews became more and more precarious. Though, at the close of the preceding century, La Grange had been able to say ("Mémoires," p. 239), "There were very few of them who were in easy circumstances, and none whom one might call rich," this was now even more the case. In the Sundgau the hatred of the farmers, who had been ruined by Jewish usurers, grew apace, and a series of decrees of the Sovereign Council, the parliament of Alsace, served to remind the Jews of the fact that they lived there only through the royal toleration. Thus, in 1726, the Council ordered the destruction of the three synagogues of Wintzenheim, Bischheim, and Hagenthal, which had been built without sovereign authority; in 1733 the king forbade the Jews to bake their bread on Sundays; in 1740 they were forbidden to dwell in the same houses with Christians, even though the Christians consented. All illicit intercourse between a Jew and a Christian woman was punishable by the gallows, or at the least the galleys for life, for the man; the woman being condemned to seclusion and a flogging.

From the date of the French conquest of Alsace, the organizatiou of the Jewish communities of that province became more centralized. Formerly each lord of the manor, where the Jews were sufficiently numerous to warrant it, appointed a chief over the community—a rabbi who was entrusted with the administration of all the religious functions of the community, and who acted also as common judge in all the civil suits between Jews, the latter having the privilege of appeal from the rabbinical tribunal to the superior courts. Over these rabbis the government of Louis XIV. appointed a superior; and on May 21, 1681, nominated Aaron Wormser chief rabbi of the Jews of Upper and Lower Alsace, setting his residence at St. Louis de Brisach, and later at Colmar. At the outset this innovation met with opposition from those most concerned. In 1704, Samuel Lévy, the successor of Wormser, had much to contend with from recalcitrant rabbis and delinquent laymen, and the Sovereign Council authorized him to pronounce excommunication upon them.

Status of the Rabbis.

Little is known of the internal life of the Jewish communities of Alsace during the eighteenth century; and only a very vague idea can be formed of their intellectual and moral condition. One Hirtzel Lévi of Wettolsheim, condemned for armed robbery on false evidence and sentenced to be broken on the wheel at Colmar, Dec. 31, 1754, was exonerated by a decree of the Parliament of Metz, Sept. 24, 1755. The dark side of the Jewish question of that time is shown in the long and significant suit over forged receipts that engaged public attention in Upper Alsace during 1778 and 1779. It appears that the peasants strove to avoid their debts by the aid of forged receipts, made wholesale and sold to them by a number of daring swindlers, most of whom were caught and punished with imprisonment, the pillory, or at the galleys, or with death on the gallows. The disappointment of the peasants, who had been duped

Forged Receipts.

and who had hoped for immediate relief from their debts, only increased their hatred toward their creditors, who were almost as poor as themselves.

The royal edict of January, 1784, which relieved the Jews from certain odious taxes such as the poll-tax, and permitted them to follow agricultural pursuits, came too late to effect a change in their habits, which had been confirmed through centuries of time; nor did it allay the antagonism of their adversaries. The Christian rural population, burdened as it was with debt, found consolation in its traditional contempt for the Jewish minority. Fear of an energetic and well-organized police led the peasants to exercise some self-restraint. But all at once the question of granting equality to all the inhabitants without respect to religion suddenly presented itself. The sovereign power, paralyzed, was in no condition to control popular passion; and from that time it was feared that what had been considered merely the spirit of discord would ultimately develop into a display of physical resentment. From the outset public temperament was indicated in the *cahiers de doléance* (official instructions of the electors to the deputies at the States General as to their wishes and complaints), compiled by the various electoral districts of Alsace. Several districts called for a reduction in the number of Jews. The clergy of the districts of Colmar and Schlettstadt demanded that thenceforth in order to check their "astounding increase" only the oldest son in each Jewish family should be allowed to marry. The nobility of these districts declared that the very existence of the Jews was a public calamity. The bourgeoisie of Belfort and Hüningen wished to deprive the Jews of the right to lend money; that of Colmar and Schlettstadt desired that they at least be prohibited from lending money to Christians; while Strasburg insisted on the confirmation of its ancient anti-Jewish privileges and on the right to expel the family of Cerf-Beer.

When the news of the fall of the Bastile reached the province, disorder broke out everywhere; the castles and convents of Upper Alsace were pillaged; and in the Sundgau the peasants attacked the dwellings of the Jews. Under the leadership of an adventurer, who claimed to be the Duke of Artois, brother of Louis XVI., the peasantry devastated nineteen villages one after the other, demolishing the dwellings and burning the commercial papers and books of their Jewish creditors. Abandoning everything to the pillagers, the unfortunate Jews fled for safety to the republic of Basel and to the bishopric of the same name. Ultimately it became necessary to send a number of troops, under General de Vietinghoff, into the Sundgau and the valley of the Saint Amarin to restore peace, or at least its outward semblance, in those regions. Some philanthropists, who for years had interested themselves in the regeneration of the oppressed Jews, now degraded by a prolonged servitude, worked upon the public opinion of Paris and upon that of the National Assembly, in order to obtain for them civil rights, or at least official recognition of their social standing. In order to comprehend fully the struggle that now engaged the public opinion of Alsace and that of the capital, it must not be forgotten that the number of Jews that had settled elsewhere in France was relatively small, and that the Spanish or Portuguese Jews, the Jews of Bordeaux, of Avignon, and of Paris had generally attained a higher plane in development than the "barbarian Jews" of Alsace. Indeed, public opinion in the capital was more in favor of a reform of this kind because it almost ignored local conditions. But the deputies from the province were unanimous in their opposition to such a measure; and the majority of the inhabitants—Catholics, Lutherans, and Reformed—were in perfect accord with them. Rewbell, a deputy from Upper Alsace, was especially vehement in his defense of "his hard-working and unfortunate compatriots, who were oppressed in a most atrocious manner by a horde of cruel Africans that swarmed over the country"; he even declared that the decree which granted the Jews citizens' rights would be the signal for their destruction in Alsace (session of Sept. 21, 1789). Together with his colleagues he opposed the discussion of the Jewish question, and endeavored to have the matter adjourned. But one month later (Oct. 14, 1789) a deputation of Jews from Alsace and from Metz presented themselves at the bar of the National Assembly and prayed for the redress of their wrongs; and subsequently the Assembly decided that the question of the amalgamation of the Jews with the other citizens be placed on the agenda of the Assembly.

Reforms Opposed.

On Dec. 22, 1789, the Assembly debated the question of admitting to the public service all citizens without distinction of creed; but in spite of the unanimous opposition of the deputies from Alsace, the majority voted the admission of non-Catholics only, with the rider that it was not thereby intended to prejudge any matter concerning the Jews (session of Dec. 25, 1789). The opposition to the Hebrew race was not restricted to the floor of the Assembly; for innumerable pamphlets were published, most of which opposed the plan of amalgamation. Captain de Foissac, in command of the garrison of Pfalzburg, was the first to answer a brochure by the Abbé Grégoire. M. de Hell, deputy from the districts of Hagenau and Weissenburg, was the author of a tirade against the Jews; and his colleague Pflieger, deputy from Belfort and Hüningen, issued "an opinion" opposing the granting of civil rights to the Jews. Notwithstanding this agitation, a new petition from the French Jews, Jan. 28, 1790, reopened the discussion in the Assembly and met with some measure of success. A majority (374 yeas, 224 nays) supported the claims of the Portuguese Jews who had settled in France, and those of Avignon; but Francis Joseph Schwendt, a deputy from Strasburg, insisted on restricting the debate so as to exclude all reference to the Jews of Alsace. This, he claimed, was absolutely necessary for the reestablishment of the public peace and to guarantee the safety of the 26,000 German Jews. The Assembly, unwilling to oppose the public opinion of an entire province, postponed the settlement of this important problem, which was brought before them insistently on Feb. 26 and March 23. In the month of February, the Society of the Friends of the Constitution, founded at Strasburg, encouraged the sympathizers to raise their voices in favor of equality in Alsace itself. On the 17th of the same month, François-Xavier Levrault proposed that the society refute the charges made by Captain de Foissac; on the 20th they admitted to their society the first Jew member, Marx Beer, son of the rich banker, Cerf-Beer; and on the 27th M. Brunck of Frundeck, who had been appointed to consider the question of the civil status of the Jews, presented his report. This report was received with marked approbation; and the society ordered its publication in French and German. Thereupon there was intense excitement throughout the city. One hundred and fifty citizens petitioned that the primary assemblies be convened in order to discuss the question publicly. The petition was read to the General Council, and the permission prayed for granted. Ultimately, by an almost unanimous vote, the citizens of Strasburg

Partial Redress.

declared themselves opposed to the granting of civil rights to the Jews. On April 8 an address, signed by all the municipal officers and by thousands of the better classes of the citizens in Strasburg, was presented to the National Assembly: it declared that the signers did not wish to have any Jewish citizens within the city walls. The Assembly considered this address on April 13; and a few days later another from Colmar brought tidings of similar sentiments in the Upper Rhine region. In view of the constant agitation kept up by a flood of counter-revolutionary literature distributed over the disturbed districts by the emigrants and the contumacious clergy, a considerable time elapsed before the Constitutional Committee dared to propose any definite solution of the problem.

While theories were being discussed in Paris, the ill-treatment of the Jews in Alsace had not entirely ceased. In the new department of the Upper Rhine especially the local authorities frequently refused permission to Jews to establish themselves in the community, or prohibited them from collecting the promissory notes of the Christians. At Oberhagenthal, for example, the Jews were compelled to request the executive of the department to send troops, whom they offered to pay, to protect them against the exactions of the municipality (Procès-verbaux du Directoire du Haut-Rhin, March, 1791). In Hegenheim a Christian woman was compelled to do penance in the Catholic church for having kindled a fire on the Sabbath for a Jew (March 4, 1791). The mayor of Issenheim thrust into prison such of the Jews under his administration as did not send him the tongues of the oxen which they killed (May 31, 1791). Worse things happened in the department of the Lower Rhine. In December, 1790, the mayor of Obernai cast a young Jewish girl into prison and kept her there until after her delivery, in order that her child might forcibly be baptized in the Catholic church, although the father of the child, who was a Jew, had previously declared his intention of marrying the woman (see Ezekiel Landau's "Noda' bi-Yehudah," on Eben 'Ezer, 2d ed., No. 27).

The prolonged discussions on the civil constitution of the clergy led to the shelving of the Jewish question during the summer of 1791; but on Sept. 27, Adrien Duport proposed that the Jews of France be accorded the rights of active citizens. Rewbell and Victor de Broglie, two deputies from the Upper Rhine, opposed the proposition. The former insisted that, although the Assembly had no desire to shield Jewish usurers—who, he said, held notes to the amount of twelve or fifteen millions of francs against debtors whose personal estate never exceeded three millions in value—it would be held responsible for all the troubles which its vote might excite in Alsace. The Assembly desired to complete its humane work, but all that the old and the new representatives of Alsace, united in the conference, could obtain, was the decree of Sept. 28, which required the Jews to make a formal renunciation of the jurisdiction of their rabbis and to submit completely to the civil laws. "Few among them," wrote Schwendt to his constituents on the same day, "will wish to take this oath"; and on Oct. 8 he wrote: "Nothing remains of the Jewish nation in France; and Judaism is now nothing more than the name of a distinct religion: those who are unwilling to yield this will not enjoy any of the rights of French citizens." Henceforward it became necessary to respect the laws; but the wrath of the reactionaries manifested itself violently in many pamphlets, as, for example, in "Les Pourquois du Peuple à ses Représentants"—an interrogatory addressed by the electors to their representatives. The Liberals themselves were somewhat disturbed by this movement, which they considered premature and altogether too radical. The Jews seem to have had the majority on their side; but, either from fear of the future or from ignorance, they were quite indifferent to the signal victory which had been gained for them. However, here and there, they expressed their satisfaction, as at Bischheim, on Oct. 20, during the festival of the Constitution, when the rabbi and the priest fraternized before the national altar; and at a banquet given by a wealthy Israelite the patriotic inhabitants of all beliefs were united. Strasburg, in particular, held aloof for a long time; and it was only on Feb. 21, 1792, that the Jews of the vicinity were admitted to the city, to take the oath of allegiance prescribed by the decree of the Legislative Assembly, Nov. 13, 1791.

More Efforts for Redress.

It must be acknowledged that, as regards a very large number of the Jews of Alsace, the prolonged distrust of them was not altogether unjustifiable. Many of them engaged in questionable transactions in government bonds, such as assignats, promissory notes issued by the Revolutionary government, and in the surreptitious exportation of specie prohibited by law. Some became the agents in ordinary for the sale of the antirevolutionary pamphlets issued by the Cardinal de Rohan, and were the transmitters of the correspondence of those French citizens who had emigrated for political reasons; others instigated the emigration of young peasants harassed by the fractious priesthood. But there were also among them a number of patriots who were lavish in their gifts to the volunteers, and who to aid in similar contributions deprived themselves of their jewels, and even offered to the fatherland the candelabra of their synagogues. Soon they were treated with as much disfavor by the Radicals, who had come into power, as previously by the Liberals. When the Legislative Assembly called for 300,000 men, certain of the communes, such for instance as that of Wintzenheim, supplied the greater part of its quota from among the Jewish minority. It may be mentioned that while many of the numerous volunteers furnished by the Jews found means to evade military service, several rose to the rank of officer and took part in the battles of the Upper Rhine during the wars of the Republic.

Causes of Oppression.

In other places, as at Voegtlinshoffen, the Christians again sacked the dwellings and synagogues of the Jews (April, 1792). In February, 1793, a representative, named Couturier, who had been sent into the Lower Rhine district to investigate conditions there, declared in his report that he suspected most of the Jews of being "the agents of the English"; and in June, 1793, other representatives informed the Assembly that "the Jewish faith was abhorred in Alsace," because its votaries practised only usury and refused to work.

The Jacobin Club of Strasburg, successor of the "Society of the Friends of the Constitution" that had defended the Jews so zealously some years before, demanded on Oct. 17, 1793, the expulsion of all the Jews from the city, and on Nov. 19, Representative Baudot seriously proposed to devote himself to their regeneration by means of the guillotine. When the new revolutionary tribunal of the Lower Rhine began its circuit in the department (November, 1793), a number of Jews were guillotined; while others were sentenced to transportation to Madagascar for stock-jobbing, or for violations of the law regulating the

The Jacobin Club.

rates of interest. On Nov. 22 the Directory Council of the district of Strasburg decreed in an arbitrary manner the abolition of the rite of circumcision and of permission to wear a beard; and it ordered the public burning of all books written in the Hebrew language. On Dec. 1 a commissioner of the court, named Martin, ordered the arrest of all rabbis, cantors, and synagogue officials of the district of Bari. When the Reign of Terror spread to Alsace there was scarcely a Jew of any means who was not mulcted in heavy fines, and imprisoned (May, 1794) with other suspects, under the pretext of being guilty of stock-jobbing, selfishness, or fanaticism (R. Reuss, "Seligmann Alexander, ou les Tribulations d'un Israélite Strasbourgeois pendant la Terreur").

In June, 1794, the Jacobin municipality of Saverne ordered, under very heavy penalty, the destruction of all the Jewish gravestones in the city, declaring them to be "manifestations of fanaticism." Meanwhile, although the Jews were denounced by the national agents as parasites, only one Jew suffered death as a victim of the Reign of Terror in the department of the Lower Rhine, in 1794. So far as can be ascertained, none suffered execution in the province of the Upper Rhine. But persecution continued till the fall of Robespierre, and on July 22, 1794, a decree of the people's representatives, Hentz and Goujon, ordered the arrest of all the priests, rabbis, and cantors in the districts of Schlettstadt and Altkirch, and their imprisoument in the citadel of Besançon, where they were detained till August.

Reign of Terror.

The lot of the Jews was not altered immediately after the downfall of Robespierre. Public opinion was still hostile to them in Alsace, and in November, 1794, the Constitutional Committee of the Convention had to order the authorities of Strasburg to protect their Jewish citizens, against whom the keen business competition that existed in the city had been charged, and who had greatly increased in number during the war. It is stated that there were at one time as many as 8,000 Jews in Strasburg, the total population being 45,000.

When the rural districts had quieted down, the Jews gradually dispersed, but did not largely apply themselves to agriculture. Those who remained in the cities, when not occupied in money-lending, were engaged in some sort of brokerage. According to the report of Laumond, prefect of the Lower Rhine for the year X., there were at that time, in this department alone, 587 pedlers. In the meantime the government strove to get the Jews to take up the more regular and the more productive occupations, but without marked success. The secretary general of the administration of the Lower Rhine, named Bottin, in his annual report for 1799, refers in detail to Hirtzel Bloch, a Jew of Diebolsheim, as an example worthy of imitation, of one who had applied himself with energy and success to agricultural work.

In the first years of the Empire, the general situation was not materially changed. Considerable fortunes had been accumulated by Jews who had speculated in assignats; others applied themselves to banking and to wholesale trading. The intellectual development of a minority among them attained to the same level as that of the general population. Adepts in the liberal arts appeared with the new generation that had been emancipated by the Revolution; and public offices were no longer denied to worthy Jews. Napoleon determined to hasten the development of this new element. To this end he sought to condemn in an official manner, and by an authority that he deemed more powerful than the civil law, all regrettable practises of the Jewish race. The first step toward this was his decree of May 30, 1806, summoning a convention of the Jewish notables, among whom were many Alsatians, such as Rabbi David Sintzheim, who took an important part in the discussions. At the instance of Napoleon this convention, presided over by M. Molé, councilor of state, discussed and approved a series of propositions in practical morals, which were to combine the law of Moses with the Code Napoleon. Action on these propositions was taken later by a second assembly of a more ecclesiastical character, designated as the Great Sanhedrin of France, which was convened in February, 1807, by order of the emperor. The Jewish religion was then officially established in Alsace. It was to be governed by two consistories, one at Strasburg and the other at Colmar; and a synagogue, built at Strasburg in 1809, took the place of the private houses of worship that had existed up to that time.

Under the Empire.

The Great Sanhedrin.

From this period the history of the Jews of Alsace is merged in that of the Jews of France. The antagonism of a large part of the rural population still manifested itself from time to time, and almost in an official manner, either in orders of the Councils General of the departments of the Upper and Lower Rhine or in certain decrees of the royal tribunal of Colmar; but in the Chamber of Deputies, members spoke no more against them; and for the first time, thanks to the restricted suffrage under Louis Philippe, a Jew, Colonel Cerf-Beer, was elected to represent one of the electoral districts of the Lower Rhine. The progress of public instruction, the diffusion of liberal ideas, and the efforts of the Jews themselves—who established an industrial school at Mülhausen and a school of arts and trades at Strasburg—gradually improved the conditions of the various Jewish communities of the country, especially in the higher spheres of provincial society. A speech delivered by Crémieux at Saverne in 1844 led to the abolition of the oath, *more Judaico*, required until then by the courts of Alsace. Alsatian Jews in larger numbers took part in the municipal and departmental councils of the localities in which they dwelt; they became members of the faculties of the colleges and lyceums; and were appointed to chairs in the Academy of Strasburg. They distinguished themselves at the bar, in the world of art and letters, and in medicine. At certain epochs of great political commotion more or less violent awakenings of the former antipathies toward the Jews took place. To this may be attributed the disturbances which occurred in February, 1848, at Altkirch, and in some other localities of the department of the Upper Rhine as well as at Brumath and at Marmoutier in the Lower Rhine—disturbances that had to be suppressed by troops. It was from the same cause that in January, 1852, after the *coup d'état*, trouble arose at Roestlach, in the canton of Ferrette. Again, at the time of the war in Italy in 1859, anti-Jewish manifestations occurred at Rixheim and at Ottrott. Other instances of a similar nature, and of comparatively modern date, could be named with little difficulty. Nevertheless one can not deny the great progress that has been made by the Jews throughout Alsace in the course of the nineteenth century, nor the gradual disappearance of the religious and social antipathy in which the Jews at one time were held. The prevalence of juster notions is probably due to the fact that the fear, entertained during the Revolution, that in a brief period of time the Jewish population, by reason of its rapid natural increase, would gain the upper hand over the Christian population, has long since been dis-

General Progress.

pelled by fact. Just the reverse has taken place. In 1790, out of a population of about 600,000 in Alsace, there were from 20,000 to 23,000 Jews —more than one-thirtieth of the total. In 1871, more than eighty years later, the Jews numbered 30,000 in a total population of 1,200,000, or about one-fortieth of the whole. Moreover, through the removal of the Jews into the towns, the rural districts were relieved of a large part of the population, that could not live by other means than usury: such localities lost one-half of their Jewish inhabitants. Bergheim is an example of this. In 1784 this district had 327 Jews; in 1890 it had only 129. The population of Darmenach decreased from 340 to 232, and that of Hegenheim from 409 to 230.

Statistics.

The annexation of Alsace by Germany in 1871 led to the migration of a large number of Jews from the region to France (where anti-Semitism was then entirely unknown), to Switzerland, and even to America. In spite of the immigration of the German Jews in considerable numbers, the whole of Alsace-Lorraine, as late as 1890, contained but 34,615 Jews in a population of 1,560,000, or about one forty-fourth of the whole. Of this number Lower Alsace contained 17,810, Upper Alsace 9,760, and Lorraine only 7,075. The district of the city of Strasburg contained 4,023 Jews, that of Mülhausen 3,642, and that of Colmar 2,859, while the country district about Strasburg contained 2,606, and Hagenau 2,479; but there are several districts of the Upper Rhine that contain no more than 500 to 600 Jews each, and the larger number of those of Lorraine have only 600 or 700 Jews. In 1900 in Strasburg, of the total population of 136,000, the Jews numbered about 4,000.

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R. R.

AL-SAMERI: The man who made the golden calf in the wilderness. See SAMERI.

ALSARI, JACOB: Teacher of Hebrew and grammarian, who for eighteen years lectured in Hebrew in Zerkowo, Prussian Poland, near the Russian frontier. His son Joseph, born in Zerkowo in 1805, claims to have translated the family name into German, and acquired a reputation as Julius Fürst. Jacob Alsari wrote "Dore Ma'alah" on Angelology and on accents. He was also the author of a religious poem and notes to the Targumim. None of these works has been published. The name is said to be originally Arabic.

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P. WI.

ALSARI, JOSEPH. See FÜRST, JULIUS.

ALSHECH (Arab. "the Elder"?), **MOSES:** Rabbi in Safed, Palestine, in the second half of the sixteenth century, and son of Ḥayyim Alshech. He was a disciple of R. Joseph Caro, author of the "Shulḥan 'Aruk"; and his own disciples included the cabalist R. Ḥayyim Vidal. Although Alshech belonged to the circle of the cabalists who lived at Safed, his works very rarely betray any traces of the Cabala. He is celebrated as a teacher, preacher, and casuist.

Little is known of his life. In his works he avoids mention of himself, telling only of his course of study; thus in the preface to his commentary on the Pentateuch he says:

"I never aimed at things too high or beyond me. From my earliest days the study of the Talmud was my chief occupation, and I assiduously attended the yeshibah [college] where I made myself familiar with the discussions of Abaye and Raba. The night I devoted to research and the day to Halakah. In the morning I read the Talmud and in the afternoon the Poseḳim (casuists). Only on Fridays could I find time for the reading of Scripture and Midrash in preparation for my lectures on the Sidra of the week and similar topics, which I delivered every Sabbath before large audiences, eager to listen to my instruction."

These lectures were afterward published as "Commentaries" (perushim) on the books of the Holy Scriptures, and Alshech gives a remarkable reason for their publication. He says: "Many of those who had listened to my lectures repeated them partly or wholly in their own names. These offenses will be prevented by the publication of my own work." These lectures, though somewhat lengthy for our taste, were not tedious to his audience. The author repeatedly declares that in their printed form (as "Commentaries") he greatly curtailed them by omitting everything which was not absolutely necessary, or which he had already mentioned in another place.

His Lectures.

Like Abravanel and some other commentators, Alshech headed each section of his comments with a number of questions which he anticipated on the part of the reader; he then proceeded to give a summary of his view, and concluded with answering all the questions seriatim. His Commentaries abound in references to Talmud, Midrash, and Zohar, but contain scanty references to other commentaries, such as the works of Abravanel, R. Levi b. Gerson, or Maimonides. His explanations are all of a homiletical character; his sole object being to find in each sentence or in each word of the Scriptures a moral lesson, a support for trust in God, encouragement to patient endurance, and a proof of the vanity of all earthly goods as compared with the everlasting bliss to be acquired in the future life. He frequently and earnestly appeals to his brethren, exhorting them to repent, and to abandon, or at least restrict, the pursuit of all worldly pleasures, and thus accelerate the approach of the Messianic era. Alshech possessed an easy and fluent style; his expositions are mostly of an allegorical character, but very rarely approach mysticism. In his commentary on the Song of Solomon, he calls *peshaṭ* (literal explanation) and *sod* (mystical interpretation) the two opposite extremes, while he declares his own method of introducing allegorical exposition to be the safe mean between these extremes.