

**JUDITH
TRACHTENBERG:
A NOVEL**

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Judith Trachtenberg: A Novel by Karl Emil Franzos & C. T. Lewis & Mrs. L. P. Lewis

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TRACHTENBERG:
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★ Mr. Samuel Oppenheim

JUDITH TRACHTENBERG

A Novel

BY KARL EMIL FRANZOS
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TRANSLATED BY
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JUDITH TRACHTENBERG.

CHAPTER I.

ABOUT sixty years ago, during the reign of the Emperor Francis the First, there lived in a small town in Eastern Galicia an excellent man, who had been greatly favored by fortune. His name was Nathaniel Trachtenberg; his occupation was that of a chandler. He had inherited from his father a modest business, which he had increased by his energy and perseverance, by adding to it the manufacture of wax candles, and by the admirable quality of his goods. Possibly, also, by the wise moderation he used in demanding payment, which had secured nearly all the noble families of the country as his patrons.

His intellectual progress kept pace with his increase of riches. Richly endowed by nature, he acquired, by his intercourse with those of superior position and by the numerous journeys he made to the West for business purposes, a higher degree of culture than was usual with his co-religionists of that period. He spoke and wrote German fluently; he read the Vienna papers regularly, and even occasionally a poet, such as Schiller or Lessing.

But, no matter how widely his opinions might vary from those of his less-cultivated co-religionists as to the aims and purposes of life, he bound himself closely to them in matters of dress and style of living, and not only conformed to every command of the Law, but carried out every injunction of the rabbis with punctilious exactitude.

"You do not know the atmosphere we breathe," he was accustomed to say to his progressive Jewish friends in Breslau and Vienna. "It does not matter as to my opinion of the sinfulness of carrying a stick on the Sabbath, but it is important to prove to them by the example of a man they respect that one may read German books, talk with Christians in correct German, and still be a pious Jew. Therefore it would be a sin if my *talar* were replaced by a German coat. Do you suppose, either, it would bring me closer to the gentry? No, indeed. They would only regard it as an impotent attempt to raise myself to their level. So we better-educated Jews must remain as we are for the present, at least, as regards externals." This was the result of serious conviction, he always added; and how serious, he proved by the method of education which he pursued with his two children, his wife having died while she was still quite young.

There was a boy, Raphael, and a girl, Judith. The latter gave promise of great beauty. Both received a careful education, in accordance with the requirements of the age, from a tutor, one Herr Bergheimer, who had been brought from Mayence by Trachten-

berg. But their religious training was cared for by the father himself. "I will not say," he once told the tutor, "whether or not I consider it a misfortune to have been born a Jew. I have my own ideas on the subject, which might shock your simple faith. Whether good or ill, it is our fate, and must be borne with equanimity. Therefore I wish my children educated with the most profound reverence for Judaism. The humiliations which will come to them because of their nation I can neither prevent nor modify, so I wish they should have the comfort of feeling in their struggles in life that they are suffering for something which is dear to them and is worth the pain."

With this feeling he strove to stifle in their minds every germ of hatred towards Christians, and at the same time he early accustomed them to the idea that, sooner or later, they must run the gantlet because of their creed, and even because of the cast of their features.

"They must learn to endure," he would say, with a sad smile. And so he allowed Raphael and Judith to associate with Christian children belonging to families who, for private reasons, were glad to pay some attention to the wealthy Jewish fabricant.

Trachtenberg thought this intercourse of small consequence, never dreaming it might exercise an influence over the character of his children quite the opposite of that he would like. And it could not but make an impression on the youthful minds growing up on a borderland where the musty air of the Ghetto mingled with

another air no whit purer, compounded, as it was, of the incense of a fanatical creed and the pestilential gases of decaying Polish aristocracy.

Separated from the Jewish children of the town by mode of life, manner of speech, and learning, they were not less divided from their Christian play-fellows by instinct and prejudices which made a really hearty sympathy and intercourse impossible. Whoever looks into a child's heart knows well it can surrender every other necessity than that of loving and being loved. No matter how much the father might attempt to prevent a feeling of isolation for his darlings, the time came when, of necessity, he acknowledged to himself that he had not properly appreciated the bitterness which this feeling aroused, and when he was forced to stand by and look on helplessly as they sought for companionship with others of the same age.

This happened when Raphael had reached his twenty-first and Judith her nineteenth year. They had just completed a course of dancing lessons, held in the house of Herr von Wroblewski, a magistrate, and one of Trachtenberg's most expensive acquaintances.

Raphael, who was weary of bearing slights because of his curly hair and round eyes, resolved, bitterly, that he would never again enter the house of a Christian, but would find associates among those to whom he belonged by race and common woe.

Judith's experience was just the contrary. She felt more and more at home among her Christian friends, and went to her Hebrew lessons with a frown. But

their father's authority prevented any complete change in their way of life, so they complied with his requirements just as little as they could. The wise man recognized the fact that his intentions were combated by the strongest of human emotions—self-satisfaction on the one side, on the other injured self-love.

Poor Raphael was doubly hateful to his partners in the dance because he was a Jew, whereas the premature beauty of his sister entranced her youthful admirers, because they could cherish hopes as regarded her on account of her race which would not have entered their minds towards a girl belonging to their own class.

At times it troubled Trachtenberg's mind lest this "childishness" should have a permanent influence upon their lives. But accustomed, as he had been for so many years, to keen calculation rather than to doubtful presentiments, he felt his forebodings vanish when he remembered his carefully laid plans for the future, which he thought could not be interfered with by these inclinations, but, so he sometimes sought to persuade himself, were even promoted by them.

He had intended his son for the law, not only because, like the rest of his race, he considered a diploma of a doctor of laws the highest of honors, but because he aspired to have him a model and a champion for his co-religionists. As Raphael was to pass his life in Galicia, it was well he should have this feeling for the oppressed awakened early, since it would nerve him for his destined work; while Judith, whom her father proposed to marry to some enlightened and educated Ger-