

# **DISCOURSES OF KEIDANSKY**

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Discourses of Keidansky by Bernard G. Richards

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**BERNARD G. RICHARDS**

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KEIDANSKY  
*By Bernard G. Richards*

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### *Note*

**T**HE majority of these papers have appeared in the Boston Evening Transcript, and thanks are extended to the editors not only for their permission to reprint the same, but also for the many kindnesses they have shown my friend Keidansky and myself.

All the papers have undergone many changes, and numerous corrections and additions have been made.

B. G. R.





## Introductory

**H**ERETICAL, iconoclastic, revolutionary; yet the flashing eye, the trembling hand, the stirring voice held us spellbound, removed all differences, and there were no longer any conservatives and extremists; only so many human beings led onward and upward by a string of irresistible words.

"Outrageous heresies," some said, yet those who paused to listen for a moment lingered longer, and as they hearkened to the harangues, marked the words and followed the flights of fancy, it came to them that these dreamers of dreams and builders of all sorts of social Utopias upon the vacant lots of the vague future; these ribald rebels holding forth over their glasses of steaming Russian tea in the cafés, or on the street corners under the floating red flag—that they were but a continuation of the prophets of old in Israel.

Those who paused to listen were loath to depart and some prayed for a perpetuation of the things that came out of a throbbing heart and soaring mind. Faint reflections here of the outpourings of a soul, but maybe they will shed some little light upon the inner life of that strange cosmos called the Ghetto and point again to the Dream it has harbored and cherished through the harsh realities of the centuries.

## *Discourses of Keidansky*

*"Why perpetuate these things," you wrote to me, "since that life is so fast slipping away from under my feet; practicability is urged on every hand, and to-morrow I may be led under the canopy, perhaps elected to the presidency of a congregation, given full charge of an orthodox paper, or put into a big store on East Broadway, and then, what I said would only stand out to taunt and menace me about the life that could not be. Besides, I may become so radical that I shall not want to say anything." Yes, we change, and the castles we build in the air become tenement houses, and we are either the tenants, or worse, the landlords; but "life has its own theories," and if the fine poetry of youth be reduced to plain prose in later years, and wisdom teach us to be stupid, why, we are still a pace ahead and those who will come after shall put their shoulders to the Dream and move it up at least one inch nearer to life. "And if the dreamer dies," as you said yourself, "will not the Dream live ever on?"*

*Surely! And let me send you the glad assurance that death will come sooner than the presidency of a synagogue.*

*You are safe, Keidansky; the orthodox will never forgive you.*

*We change, yet those who fail also come to their own, and even lost souls make great discoveries. Did you not say that "Life is the profoundest of all platitudes?"*

*B. G. R.*

*New York, March, 1903.*

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