

**THE JEW IN
ENGLISH FICTION**

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The Jew in English fiction by Rabbi David Philipson

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RABBI DAVID PHILIPSON

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ENGLISH FICTION**



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THE
JEW IN ENGLISH FICTION

BY
RABBI DAVID PHILIPSON, D.D.

AUTHOR OF
"OLD EUROPEAN JEWRIES" AND
"THE REFORM MOVEMENT IN JUDAISM"



Fourth Edition, Enlarged

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1918

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DEDICATED
TO THE
MEMORY
OF
MY FIRST AND MOST LOVING TEACHER,

My Mother.



PREFACE

TO THE LAST IMPRESSION

During the six years which have elapsed since the last edition of this book appeared a great number of novels and dramas containing Jews as principal or minor characters have been published. Most of these have no value as literature. They are ephemeral, and with few exceptions aroused scarcely more than passing interest.

Besides the fiction of this character, which has been written in English, many translations from the Yiddish have been made into English. These Yiddish tales belong to the category of the ghetto novel, which forms the subject of the closing chapter of this book. The principles there discussed are largely applicable to these stories and, *mutatis mutandis*, hold good of them as they do of the books treated in that chapter.

A few words, however, must be said touching a class of novels which has been called forth by the changes wrought in American Jewish life by the immigration from eastern Europe. Several writers have attacked the problems which have arisen from the new adjustments which must be made and with more or less acumen have set forth the conflicts between the old-world ghetto view-points and the American environment. Three of the most recent of these latter day American Jewish novels may be mentioned: "Witte Arrives," by Elias Tobenkin, is a well-told story of an immigrant boy who achieves material success but ends far from his starting point when he marries out of the faith. "The Abyss," by Nathan Kussy, is announced as a trilogy whereof the

first volume, which has appeared, is a powerful tale of the life of the underworld where the hero, kidnaped as a child, passes his youth; the Jewish element in this first part is negligible; it may appear in the future volumes. "The Chosen People," by Sidney Nyburg, presents an excellent diagnosis of the situation in a large American Jewish community. The antagonisms between the native American and the Russian Jewish elements are clearly set forth. These three writers will undoubtedly prove to be forerunners of a great number who will find material for novels in the kaleidoscopic life of modern American Jewry.

The original purpose of this volume was to subject to a critical analysis, from the Jewish standpoint, English fictional classics that have Jews as leading characters. I am loth to depart from that original purpose and therefore cannot give a place in the volume to recent novels which have not, and what is more, may not, find a place among the classics of English literature. However, in order to make the volume a comprehensive handbook of the subject it treats, a bibliography of the Jew in English fiction has been included in this new edition as an appendix. For this bibliography I am indebted to Miss Rebecca Schneider, who prepared this painstaking work originally in 1914 for the New York State Library School as a graduation requirement. The bibliography has been brought up to date.

DAVID PHILIPSON.

Cincinnati, 1918.