ISRAEL ZANGWILL

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

By Harry Schneiderman

"Israel Zangwill was one of the great thinkers and writers of this era. Profound and original in thought, graceful as an essayist, a poet and dramatist of powerful imagination, creative as a novelist and intense as a contender for Jews, justice and righteousness, as he saw them, he adorned and illuminated whatever he touched. His versatility was astounding, his wit was scintillating, his sense of humor unique and his literary style a delight. However one might occasionally differ with him, his strong personality, his manly independence and his fundamental goodness of heart never failed to charm. As a Jew he was loyal, reverent, and self-respecting, a hater of sham, proud of the fine achievements and traditions of his faith and deeply concerned for the future of his people. Posterity will justly rank him as one of the brilliant luminaries of Israel who loved his brethren even when he chastised them."

The foregoing tribute from the pen of Louis Marshall briefly summarizes the value and significance of the life of that great man and great Jew who, as he himself would have preferred to put it, was gathered to his fathers on August 1, 1926, at the age of sixty-two.

Zangwill possessed many talents. His literary gifts embraced all forms of the writing art,—the short story, the essay, the novel, the drama; the spoken as well as the written word; poetry and prose. Next to his interest in literature, yet not far behind, was his devotion to the trials and problems of the Jewish people, a devotion which had a double source,—his keen Jewish consciousness and, what was largely an outgrowth of that consciousness, his deep sympathy with the downtrodden, no matter of what race or creed. Fortunately, combined with this sympathy was an admirable

ability as publicist, and a high courage to declare what he believed to be truth, in the face of all opposition.

Thus, Zangwill's activities may be roughly divided into two groups, literary and humanitarian, both overlapping at many points and both inspired and vitalized by his essential Jewishness.

I

Zangwill's literary career began while he was a teacher at the Jews' Free School, London, in which he had distinguished himself as a pupil. At eighteen he wrote and, with the help of a colleague, Louis Cowen, printed, between paper covers, "Motza Kleis," a picture of life in the East End of London, which was later incorporated in his *chef d'oeuvre*, "Children of the Ghetto." About this time, a group of Dutch Jews, engaged in business in England, founded the *Jewish Standard*, a weekly organ, devoted to the interests of Orthodox Judaism, and Zangwill became a member of its staff, contributing each week a column of satirical comment under the rubric "*Maror and Charoseth.*"

In the meantime, in 1888, had appeared Zangwill's first novel, "The Premier and the Painter; a Fantastic Romance." Of this work, which appeared under the pseudonym "J. Freeman Bell" (made out Jews' Free School, Bell Lane) Zangwill wrote: "Seven-eighths of the book came to be written by me, though the leading ideas were . . threshed out and the whole revised in common with Louis Cowen," his collaborator in "Motza Kleis." This work exhibited, to an immoderate degree it may be said, the cleverness and wit in which Zangwill was so rich. "His cleverness," wrote Holbrook Jackson, the English critic, "verges on the prodigious and the prodigality of his wit is always astounding and often disturbing. He has put enough of it in 'The Premier and the Painter' to make three reputations, but too much to make one."

In the same year, Zangwill, still employing a pseudonym, contributed to "Myers' Jewish Calendar and Diary" several stories which were later published as part of one of his larger works. In the following year he became a contributor to *Ariel*, a short-lived humorous and satirical weekly. Augustin Filon, writer of a most sympathetic biography

in 1909, thinks that Zangwill must have been somewhat unhappy as a regular contributor to this weekly. "To write on nothing," says Filon, "to furnish on fixed days fantasy, gayety, and paradox, these are tasks which could not be agreeable to a spirit avid for real intellectual action and one feels that there were days,—and that these days became more numerous as time went on—when the young author was tired of his trade."

The young author was soon to be released, for while contributing to *Ariel* he had written and published, with his own name on the title page, a book which became a popular success, two editions being absorbed in a short time. This was "The Bachelors Club," a series of stories presenting extremely interesting situations and ending with a startling and altogether unexpected climax. This book was soon followed by "The Old Maids Club."

With the publication of these two books, Zangwill's reputation as a writer of the short story was firmly established, and during the next two years he produced a number of excellent examples of this art. One of them, "The Big Bow Mystery" has been acclaimed by some critics as the best detective story of our times.

At about this time, the Jewish Publication Society of America decided to endeavor to secure a book on Jewish life in a western milieu, and the late Judge Mayer Sulzberger, then chairman of the Publication Committee, invited Zangwill to write it. Zangwill had already shown pronounced ability to handle a theme of this nature in his "Motza Kleis" and his contributions to Myers' Jewish Calendar and Diary. To the then new *Jewish Quarterly Review*, Zangwill had contributed an illuminating analysis of the state of Judaism in England, showing up with good humor but at the same time unsparing fullness, the anomalies, the contradictions, and the hypocrisies that had accompanied the process of the adjustment of Jewish customs to the English environment. It included a most diverting sketch of a genealogical tree showing all the numerous varieties of Judaism which had branched from the parent trunk. The book which he wrote for the Publication Society was the now famous "Children of the Ghetto."

In writing this book, Zangwill was able to discard the motley of the jester-author of the "Bachelors Club" and the "Old Maids Club" and appear as his pure self. "This Zangwill," writes Filon, "kept his marvellous instrument, that language, supple, rich, mordant of which he had so ably appropriated all the resource, that English humor whose secret he had discovered. But the new faculties which he was about to show came from elsewhere. That imagination of oriental magnificence, united to a vision of most intense realism, emotion underneath satire, a penetrating melancholy which reveals itself through the optimism of youth and talent,—nothing of this was the fruit of an English education. It was really the soul of those humble unknown ones who, having lived, toiled and suffered down there at the other end of Europe, had at last come in search of peace and liberty, if not of fortune, on the banks of the Thames. They had been all their lives mutes, but all at once those sensations, those dreams, those pities, those angers, those gayeties which were in them, but of which they were scarcely conscious, found utterance in their grandchildren,—they reappeared in the 'Children of the Ghetto.' "

This master work presented in story form many of the ideas and observations which Zangwill had outlined in his *Jewish Quarterly Review* article. Like that article, this book was concerned with the difficulties, the incongruities, inconsistencies, insincerities, and evasions which attended the rapid, often too rapid, adaptation of the Jew of East European ghetto background to a totally different and strange environment. Zangwill saw clearly, understood sympathetically, and could portray with artistic truth the humorous and ludicrous, as well as the serious and pathetic phases of this adaptation. This was an altogether new type of fiction of the Jew. Holbrook Jackson remarks that this was a new interpretation of the Jew to the English world which, until then, had acquired its knowledge of the Jew largely from "the naïveté of Shakespeare's Shylock and the stale bufoonery of the comic papers."

Jewish critics, best qualified to express an opinion as to the truth-to-life of Zangwill's portraiture, are unanimous in pronouncing it excellent. "For the first time," wrote Lucien Wolf, "the heart and soul of Jewry were laid bare." André

Spire, the well-known French-Jewish writer declares that among many writers, Zangwill alone knew how to be the faithful mirror of the old Jewish race. "It is in him," says Spire, "that his people may look at itself not with pride and yet without hating itself. In him, it will see its ridiculousness, its vices, its tenacity, its mobility, its fever for change, its audacity and energy." In another place, Spire makes also this pertinent observation: "To create such a work, Zangwill had to have exceptional gifts of sympathy, not only for all mankind but also *for those among whom he was born.*" Professor Robert Morse Lovett probably refers to that same quality of sympathy in selecting pity as one of the two most important facts of Zangwill's life, and he accounts for his possession of it by the hardship of his early days. "Like Charles Dickens, whom in many respects he resembled," says Prof. Lovett, "the fear and suffering of his early life gave him the great quality of pity." Another writer* finds in this work numerous traces of an "exquisite sense of pity for unpitied humanity."

Zangwill's point of view and the variety and richness of his painting are outlined with his usual felicity in the prologue which he wrote for the dramatic version of "Children of the Ghetto:"

Our drama shows a phase transitional,
Young love at war with ancient ritual—
How dead laws living, loving hearts may fetter,
The contest of the Spirit and the Letter.

Yet noble, too, that kissing of the rod,
That stern obedience to the word of God,
In Godless days when sweated Hebrews scout
The faith that sunless lives are dark without.

But do not deem the ghetto is all gloom!
The comic Spirit mocks the ages' doom,
And weaves athwart the woof of tragic drama
The humors of the human panorama.

The poet vaunts, the hypocrite goes supple,
The marriage-broker mates the bashful couple,
The peddler cries his wares, the player aces,
Saint jostles sinner, fun with wisdom paces.

The beggars prosper, the babes increase,
And over all the Sabbath whispers, "Peace!"

*S. L. Bensusan, Quarterly Review, London and N. Y., 1926, vol. 247, p. 285-303.

"Children of the Ghetto" was an immediate success. The first English edition was sold out before the American edition was off the press. New editions have appeared from time to time, and the work has been translated into German, French, Polish, Russian, Hebrew, and Yiddish.

The ten years beginning 1892, the year of publication of "Children of the Ghetto," were crowded with many literary productions of great merit. · Zangwill was during the early part of that decade contributing regularly to three weekly magazines, including the *Pall Mall Gazette* for which he wrote a weekly *causerie* under the heading "Without Prejudice." In 1893, he published "Merely Mary Ann," a charming romance of a young musician and a housemaid which ends in a characteristically Zangwillian manner. In the same year appeared "They That Walk in Darkness," a series of short stories and sketches, later republished under the title of "Ghetto Tragedies."

In 1894, appeared "The King of Schnorrers" which not a few judges regard as his best work. The book is a series of anecdotes of Jewish life in the London of the eighteenth century, all revolving about a beggar, yea, the king of beggars, Manasseh Bueno Barzillai Azevedo da Costa, who carries all before him by an effrontery and an impudence which leave his victims aghast, but which amuse and win the involuntary applause of the reader. Prof. Lovett places "The King of Schnorrers" in the class of picaresque stories which recite the successes and failures, the triumphs and defeats of lovable rascals and adventurers. He points out, however, that Zangwill's book differs from other picaresque stories in that there is not in it, as there is in them, any cruelty. "The king triumphs by his ability, but no one suffers, or, at any rate, his enemies or opponents suffer only in their mental humiliation." Holbrook Jackson says of this book: "You have to go back to such great humorous conceptions as Sir John Falstaff and Mr. Wilkins Micawber to find the equal of that luxuriously named mendicant, Manasseh Bueno Barzillai Azevedo da Costa."

In the meantime, Zangwill had published two books not on Jewish themes. These were "The Master," published in 1895, and "The Mantle of Elijah," which appeared five years later. Both show literary and artistic talent of a high

order, but critics agree that they do not belong to the world and the people whom Zangwill knew best, and that they lack the emotion which quickens his works on Jewish subjects. In "The Mantle of Elijah," however, written during the excitement of the Boer War, Zangwill vehemently expresses that love of peace and abhorrence of war, which he never omitted to reveal when opportunity offered.

His many admirers were delighted when, in 1898, he returned to the Jewish scene in "Dreamers of the Ghetto," which vies with "The King of Schnorrers" and "Children of the Ghetto" for first place among Zangwill's works. "Dreamers of the Ghetto" is a series of semi-historical and semi-imaginative biographies of celebrated men, born in the Jewish community, whose lives, to Zangwill's way of thinking, had been tragedies because, being essentially Jews, they could not thrive in a non-Jewish atmosphere; these great men would have been greater and happier if their Jewish souls had had an opportunity for free and unhampered expression in a Jewish environment. In his preface to the American edition of this book, Zangwill gives the key to his thought in the following paragraph.

> "For Jews to be Germans in Germany, Frenchmen in France, Englishmen in England, Americans in America, divided by every frontier, sharing in no common brotherhood, dreaming of no common fatherland, and at one with their various fellow-countrymen in everything but religious observance, or—worse!—everything but intermarriage, would be an anti-climax to the long tragedy of Israel, more paralysing to its finer spirits than the ghetto itself, more deadening to the genius of the race, unless this apparent fragmentariness were redeemed and lifted into a higher unity by some international conception of a Judaism working itself out in analogous action upon the respective environments. The sons of Zion were only preserved in exile by becoming sons of the Law, inhabitants of the Idea. The alternative still remains. Either a Common Country or a Common Idea.

The book consists of a prologue, a sonnet describing a meeting of Moses and Jesus, who are saddened to hear their teachings, essentially the same, recited on the one hand in the synagogue and on the other in the church, instead of in harmonious union. There follow fifteen sketches, nine dealing with historical characters or occurrences—Uriel Acosta, The Turkish Messiah (Shabbatai Zevi), the Maker of Lenses (Spinoza), The Master of the Name (Israel Baal-

Shem Tob) Maimon the Fool (Solomon Maimon) and Nathan the Wise (Moses Mendelssohn), From a Mattress Grave (Heinrich Heine), The People's Savior (Ferdinand Lasalle), The Primrose Sphinx (Benjamin Disraeli), and Dreamers in Congress (the first Zionist Congress at Basle). The remaining sketches deal with imaginary characters. The last one "Chad Gadya" is especially poignant. A Jew who had spent years of his life wandering about the world, returns home at the Passover season and is so heartbroken because he cannot thrill again, as in his youth, to the old chant that he decides life is no longer bearable.

In 1901, Zangwill's next volume "The Grey Wig" appeared. This is a collection of stories and novelettes, including some of his scattered contributions to magazines and several of his earlier works, notably "Merely Mary Ann" and "The Big Bow Mystery."

About this time he became absorbed in his work as head of the ITO, Jewish Territorial Association, and gave all his time to promoting the objects of that organization. During the brief respites he had from conducting a voluminous correspondence and arranging the details of investigations of various territories suggested for colonization by Jews, he contributed numerous articles to magazines and newspapers on various aspects of the Jewish question, and on what he was convinced was its solution. It was not until 1907, that again he brought out anything of an artistic as distinguished from a polemical character in the shape of a collection of short Jewish stories, the title of which, "Ghetto Comedies" is self-explanatory. The comedies are not just funny stories. They present situations which are often pathetic at the same time as they are humorous, growing out of the conditions which surround the life of Jews, especially of those who have but recently emerged from East European ghettos.

Three years later, appeared "Italian Fantasies," a book which many critics consider his best work. Zangwill himself referred to it as "the best and least read" of his books. The germ of this book was three articles published in Harper's Magazine with illustrations by the famous American-Jewish artist, Louis Loeb. It is a book of the impressions, thoughts, ideas, and emotions of the author during a tour of Italy. It is not a "Jewish" book, but every page contains evidence

of its Jewish authorship. "This book masquerading as a travel book," says Holbrook Jackson, "is really a confessional, an autobiography, the record of a soul's adventurse among master ideas."

During the World War, Zangwill was outspoken in his condemnation of the catastrophic conflict. His denunciations were hurled at all who had brought the war about, and were not partisan. The world tragedy called forth some of his finest writing—speeches, articles, verses,—and in 1916 he published a collection of these under the title "The War for the World." As Zangwill did not place the entire responsibility for the war on one set of belligerents, this book aroused much angry criticism, and in some quarters the author's patriotism was impugned. To those who expressed doubts as to his loyalty to England, Zangwill retorted: "For my own part, I hold that the highest patriotic service a writer can render to the country of his birth is to offer it his truest thinking and his deepest race-heritage, and to try to make it worthier of his love."

The issuance of the Balfour Declaration in November, 1917, again drew Zangwill's attention to the Jewish question, and we find him contributing articles and delivering addresses on Zionism, first in a spirit of jubilation, but later, convinced that the Declaration did not envisage the real solution, in a spirit of sorrowful disillusionment. In a lengthy essay entitled "The Voice of Jerusalem" which gave its name to a volume of miscellaneous works published in 1921, Zangwill expresses his disappointment with the progress of the Zionist movement, with the Peace and the League of Nations, his views on Christianity and Judaism, on anti-Semitism, and on other topics, all from the point of view of a great mind steeped in Jewish learning, and inspired with burning zeal for righteousness and world peace which characterized the Hebrew prophets,—in short with "the voice of Jerusalem." This phrase Zangwill had first used in a letter to *The Times* (London), in November 1914. The Washington correspondent of that newspaper had reported an interview with Jacob H. Schiff, in which the great humanitarian proposed a conference to bring about "a permanent peace that shall end not only this war, but war." The interview was printed under the heading "German Press Cam-

paign," and the correspondent had insinuated that Mr. Schiff held a "brief for Germany." Zangwill indignantly retorted that "in proposing a conference to end Prussian militarism—and every other—he [Mr. Schiff] speaks not as the mouthpiece of Berlin, but with *the voice of Jerusalem.*"

The same volume contains "The Legend of the Conquering Jew," a brilliant analysis of anti-Semitism and a masterly defense of the Jewish people against the then new accusation of anti-Semites, based upon that notorious forgery "The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion," that the Jews are plotting the overthrow of Christian civilization with the aim of achieving the domination of the world; essays on various other aspects of Jewish life and thought, poems, and biographical sketches of Joseph Fels, the American Jewish single tax advocate, and of Joseph Jacobs, the well-known Jewish scholar and folk-lorist.

From 1900, when "Italian Fantasies" appeared, to the close of his life, except for several plays and some poems, Zangwill devoted his literary gifts to propaganda. There was, however, one bright and shining exception, a novel called "Jinny the Carrier," published in 1919. In this book, Zangwill showed that he could portray rural England with an artistic fidelity almost equal to that shown in his pictures of the ghetto.

In addition to the major works in prose, commented upon in the foregoing paragraphs, other numerous essays, speeches, lectures, and letters from his pen were published during his lifetime. Some of these will be referred to in succeeding sections of this article.

II

We come now to consider another phase of Zangwill's literary work, the drama. In this medium, he was not as happy as in fiction or essay, although he was nearly as prolific a writer of plays as of other forms. His productions in this field may be classified roughly into two groups. On the one hand, we have farces and comedies, in which the author's aim was to amuse and entertain rather than to stimulate thought, although nothing Zangwill ever wrote lacked this latter quality. Into this class fall most of his earlier work as playwright. His first play, written when

Zangwill was only twenty-three years of age, "The Great Demonstration" was composed in collaboration with Louis Cowen, co-author of his first novel, "The Premier and the Painter." It was produced in 1892. This was followed by "Six Persons," a play in one act. In 1899, a dramatic version of "Children of the Ghetto" was produced first in Washington and then in New York, and, later, by the same company, in London. In both countries the productions were, commerically at least, failures. In New York, this production had a "bad press," which Zangwill laid at the door of "pseudonymous Jewish journalists, men who are without a scrap of religion, with their tongues in their cheeks and their bribes in their pockets."

"The Moment of Death or the Never, Never Land," a one-act tragedy, was produced, in 1900, in New York City and was well received, as was also "The Revolted Daughter," a comedy in three acts which was performed in London the following year. Three years later, Zangwill dramatized his novelette "Merely Mary Ann," and it had profitable runs in London, New York, and in other cities in the United States; it was also produced as a motion picture. It was, from a financial point of view, the most successful of his plays.

To this group of lighter productions also belong "Plaster Saints" and "The Next Religion," and two comedies produced toward the close of his life. The first was "We Moderns: A Post-War Comedy in Three Movements (Allegro, andante, adagio)." In the course of a visit by Zangwill to our shores in 1923, this was staged in New York under capable management and with an excellent cast, but it was savagely attacked by a number of newspaper critics, whose antagonistic attitude may have been in part traceable to Zangwill's uncomplimentary references to America in various public addresses and interviews. Upon his return to England, Zangwill leased a theatre and produced this play there, but with like unsuccess, the unfavorable comments of critics drawing him into heated and bitter controversies which sapped his vitality, already somewhat impaired by his polemical encounters in America. But, Zangwill wished to retire from the field with his flag flying, and although he was conducting the theatre at a loss, he exhibited a side of

his character which has aptly been called "Zangwillfulness" by putting on a farcical comedy, "Too Much Money." At the close of that season, Zangwill was physically exhausted, financially broken, and sick,—sick in body and at heart. It was shortly after this he died, proof of his own dictum that "while play-writing . . . is life-enhancing, play-producing is life-destroying."

Zangwill had always been impatient with the commercial theatre. "Can one erect a noble contemporary drama upon a paying basis?" he asks, "when the play, in order to survive, must appeal at once to a multitude and must express . . . the lowest common measure of culture, the most normal emotion and vision. . . . That leisurely respite during which the book may educate taste, win appreciation and gather momentum is impossible in the theatre, where at least a hundred pounds are oozing away every evening."

Nevertheless Zangwill was not discouraged by these considerations from writing plays which were "caviare to the general," and at least four of his dramatic works possess those attributes which render them classics. The first of these in point of time, "The Melting Pot," is also the most famous of all his plays. It was first produced at the Columbia Theatre, Washington, D. C., on October 5, 1908. The opening performance was attended by President Roosevelt, who, at the close of the play, enthusiastically congratulated the author, who was present, exclaiming: "That's a great play, Mr. Zangwill, a great play!"

In this play, Zangwill expressed his affection for America and his great hope that our country would be the means of regenerating the entire human race. The term "melting pot" has passed into common usage with a connotation not intended by Zangwill. It was not his thought that all the races and national groups coming to America are to be fused into one type. His idea was rather that America is a crucible in which the European races are refined of all the dross of national and religious prejudices, enabling them to work together for the advancement of mankind. This is brought out clearly in the following extract from one of the many rhapsodical speeches in the play:

> "Yes, East and West, and North and South, the palm and the pine, the pole and the equator, the crescent and the cross—how

the great Alchemist melts and fuses them with his purging flame! Here shall they all unite to build the Republic of Man and the Kingdom of God. Ah,—what is the glory of Rome and Jerusalem, where all nations come to worship and look back, compared with the glory of America, where all races and nations come to labor and look forward!"

"The Melting Pot" has been produced in many countries and in many languages. Zangwill adopted the term "melting pot" as a symbol of a country or a condition where peoples of different origins or of varying interests dwell in harmony. In contradistinction to "melting pot" was the "Cockpit." This was the title of another of his more serious plays, the second of a trilogy on the subject of international wars. The first "The War God" appeared in 1911, and was produced in London in that year. This was a tragedy in five acts showing the intrigues and conspiracies which bring about international disputes and foment wars. In "The Cockpit," which was published in 1920, he shows how astute statesmen use the slogan of regaining "lost provinces" to push a small country into a war against its peaceful neighbor, and how a queen, who had been brought up in America, "the melting pot" is revolted by the chauvinistic diplomacy but is a powerless figurehead in the hands of the diplomats. In "The Forcing House" the same small country is the scene of a revolution which results in "the dictatorship of the proletariat." Here Zangwill shows the mixture of idealism and sordid materialism which underlies the new order. This play was produced in 1925 in London, and Zangwill invited 200 members of Parliament to attend one of the performances. In both of these plays, the author portrays most vividly, in Baron Gripstein, a type of Jew who from humble beginnings attains a high place because of his wealth, becomes converted to Christianity and tries very hard to hide traces of his origin,—a most pathetic and yet ludicrous character.

III

As a poet, Zangwill is perhaps best known for his rendering of many of the gems of synagogue liturgy in the series of prayer books, published in England under the title "The Service of the Synagogue."* In these more-than-translations of the medieval religious poems, Zangwill gives eloquent

* Some of these have, by permission of the translation and publisher been reprinted the Maḥzor issued by the United Synagogue of America.

expression to the exalted conceptions of Jewish religious devotion. The rhyme and metre used are largely Zangwill's own, as they are mainly an approximation to those of the original. The temptation is great to present specimens of his work in this field, but space does not permit of giving a sufficient number of representative examples. Besides, selection is extremely difficult, so uniformly well chosen for the themes are the meters and so felicitous the language and the rhymes.

The same scholarship, the same skill and felicity mark Zangwill's translations of the devotional poems of Solomon ibn Gabirol, the eleventh century Spanish-Jewish poet, which have been published by the Jewish Publication Society of America as the first volume in the Schiff Library of Jewish Classics. It would render this article unduly long to give any excerpts from that work, and to select them would be a bewildering task; besides many of the readers of this article no doubt have this volume in their possession.

But Zangwill did not devote his poetic gift to translations alone. From time to time, even early, in the days of his connection with the *Pall Mall Gazette*, he broke out into verse, most of it humorous or satirical, marked by the agile wit which abounds in his prose works. All his poems have not been collected; they are scattered through some of his volumes of essays, and in various magazines. In 1900, "Blind Children," a selection of some of his poetic works up to that year was issued. A great deal of his verse is naturally on Jewish themes. Among these, a few deserve special mention. "Yom Kippur" in which he describes a "dream" of

> "A noble people scattered through the lands,
> To be a blessing to the nations"

is at the same time a colorful description of the manner in which the Day of Atonement is solemnized, and a touching expression of the writer's ideal of the Jewish people. "The Hebrew's Friday Night" is a tender and affectionate picture of the Sabbath Eve, which the author closes with these significant lines:

> And so while medieval creeds at strife
> With nature die, the Jews' ideals last,
> The simple love of home and child and wife,
> The sweet humanities which make our higher life.

In "Israel," Zangwill develops in a powerful manner the dualism he saw in Jewish life, expressed in the first couplet:

> Hear, O Israel, Jehovah, the Lord our God, is One.
> But we, Jehovah His People, are dual and so undone."

His sonnet "Moses and Jesus," which is the prelude to his "Dreamers of the Ghetto" deserves quotation in full:

> In dream I saw two Jews that met by chance,
> One old, stern-eyed, deep-browed, yet garlanded
> With living light of love around his head,
> The other young, with sweet seraphic glance.
> Around went on the Town's satanic dance,
> Hunger a-piping while at heart he bled.
> *Shalom Aleichem* mournfully each said,
> Nor eyed the other straight but looked askance.
>
> Sudden from Church out rolled an organ hymn,
> From Synagogue a loudly chaunted air,
> Each with its Prophet's high acclaim instinct.
> Then for the first time met their eyes, swift-linked
> In one strange, silent, piteous gaze, and dim
> With bitter tears of agonized despair.

Finally, a quotation from his " 'Our Own': A Cry Across the Atlantic," written for the Central Jewish Relief Committee of the United States, will illustrate the vigor of his poetic style:

> Jews of the great Republic
> Clasped to her mother-breast,
> Nestling so warm and peaceful
> Within that bosom blest,
> Turn to our tortured Europe,
> Hark to the myriad moan
> Of pinched lips, white with hunger,
> That stiffen as they groan,
> And remember in these wan creatures runs
> the blood that is your own.
>
> Set your lips to the *Shofar*
> Waken a fiery blast,
> Shrill to the heathen nations
> This slaughter shall be the last!
> And send our old Peace-greeting
> Pealing from cot to throne,
> Till mankind heeds the message
> On the Hebrew trumpet blown,
> And the faith of the whole world's people
> is the faith that is our own.

IV

We come now to consider phases of Zangwill's life apart from his creative literary work, although it has already become evident in the foregoing recital that much of his literary effort was bound up with practical questions. During his lifetime and more so after his death, many who wrote about him expressed regret that he ever occupied himself with anything else but writing. "He was not faithful to litera ture for which nature seemed to have designed him" complains an obituary notice, "but diverted his energies, which were great, into big causes and movements that captivated his imagination and sympathies. . . ." Others, however, expressed regret for Zangwill's passing precisely because he interested himself in world problems. "His loss is international," said a writer in the *Manchester Guardian*, "not alone because the Jews of all nations have lost a leader, but because every cause which looked beyond the boundaries of race or nation or sex received from him the support of his numerous and astonishing qualities."

The fact is that Zangwill's claim to fame is two-fold,—as creative artist and as humanitarian. Steeped in Jewish learning and possessed of an acute consciousness of his racial heritage, it was impossible for him to remain silent in the face of injustice and unrighteousness. All his works proclaim his hatred of hypocrisy and sham, his love of sincerity and truth; his detestation of oppression and persecution, his thirst for justice, freedom, and universal peace. The ideals of Judaism were dear to him, and he tried to exemplify in his own life his belief that the mission of the Jewish people is to serve humanity.

A biographer has said of Zangwill that no movement planned for human betterment appealed to his sympathy and active interest in vain. The suffering of the negroes in the Belgian Congo, the massacres of the Armenians, the persecution of the Jews in Russia and other lands, the recrudescence of religious intolerance and racial prejudice in our own country, brought Zangwill into the open and made him raise his voice, fearless and unafraid. He was a champion of unpopular causes. In the early days of the woman's suffrage movement in England, when its advocates were

jeered, lampooned, and caricatured, Zangwill was one of its most ardent supporters, because he believed in the essential righteousness of the cause, and that many human ills could be cured by

> "Joint work to foster every noble growth
> Joint work to make a better world for both."

When the Bolshevik revolution filled the world with fear and apprehension and the English press hysterically demanded intervention in Russia, Zangwill dared to stand on a platform at a great public meeting in London attended largely by Bolshevist sympathizers, and while declaring that he "should be no honest advocate of liberty if he endorsed the Russian method of imposing Socialism by brute force," and that "even Socialism proper holds grave dangers for the human spirit, however welcome be the tardy justice it does to the human body," demanded that the British Government keep its "hands off Russia!" And this he did because he believed that by intervening England would be helping the return of a reactionary regime in Russia.

The World War brought many of the maturest prophecies from Zangwill's lips and pen. He knew its real causes, and was not hoodwinked by propaganda. It was a source of keen regret to him, openly expressed, that England was an ally of Russia, the persecutor of six million human beings within its boundaries, the land of the iniquitous Pale of Settlement, and of pogroms. And yet his sympathies were definitely pro-Ally. In the early days of the War he issued an appeal to the Jews of the United States and other neutral countries "not to let the shadow of Russia alienate their sympathies from the indomitable island which now, as not seldom before, is fighting for mankind." At the same time, he gave his support to every movement which sought to bring about peace.

To Zangwill, the basic cause of the war was exaggerated nationalism, with which not only Germany but the other countries of Europe as well were tainted. He believed in the abolition of frontiers, passports, customs and tariffs as the only way out of a repetition of the World War, and it is especially interesting at this time to note that he placed great hope in the progress of aviation for the promotion of

international peace and good will. He believed that as long as the numerous states of Europe each insisted on its sovereign rights there could not be that unity without which there could be no peace, and that the swiftness of air-travel "will make counties of countries, and countries of continents," and that "the shrinkage of space through aviation and 'wireless' " will make the ancient kingdoms parochial. "By our duties and passports," he goes on to say, "we are artificially bolstering up their crumbling partitions, trying to hold asunder what science has brought together. The sooner these rotten barriers fall, the sooner we settle down to cultivating our planet."

The outcome of the War was a great disappointment to Zangwill because it was his view that the peace treaties changed not at all "the bad world-order," and that the League of Nations "was merely a device for guaranteeing the injustices of the Peace Treaty and eternalizing them." Whereas, during the War, Zangwill was outspoken against the militaristic and super-nationalist spirit of the then German leaders, he felt that the Allies had not kept faith with the German democracy; he also considered that injustice had been done in the treatment of Germany's ally Austria. All his views on international politics were based on a burning desire for peace. "His plays 'The War God', 'The Next Religion', and 'The Melting Pot', and his . . . 'Italian Fantasies'," said Holbrook Jackson in a critique of Zangwill's works in 1914, "reveal the universalism of the prophet of world-peace, which long since ought to have won for him the Nobel Prize."

While Zangwill's public interests were world-wide, no cause was as dear to him as the life of the Jewish people. Indications of the thought and study which he gave to this subject in his early years were mentioned in the first part of this article. His interest never flagged but grew more and more intense with maturer years. The persecution and suffering of Jews anywhere stirred him profoundly, and he gave his aid to every movement for the amelioration of their condition.

He had faith in the future of the Jewish people and in their mission, "self-perfection as instrument for the perfection of the world." In his late twenties he belonged to an

informal club called The Nomads of which the late Dr. Schechter was a member, and which later became enlarged into the famous Maccabæan Society. When Theodor Herzl, in the course of his endeavors to establish the "Society of Jews" which became the Zionist organization, came to England in 1896, Zangwill was one of the first persons he called upon. Zangwill often told how "a black-bearded stranger knocked at my (his) study door like one dropped from the skies and said 'I am Theodor Herzl. Help me to rebuild the Jewish State.' " Zangwill was not entirely in accord with Herzl's ideas, but he prevailed upon the Maccabæans to grant Herzl a hearing. The following year, Zangwill accompanied other members of the Society on a pilgrimage to Palestine. He was not well impressed by what he saw, but upon the return trip he attended the first Zionist Congress, held at Basle in Switzerland, and was deeply touched by the enthusiasm of the "dreamers in Congress" as he called them. He soon became an active Zionist, supporting the movement with pen and voice.

In his "Voice of Jerusalem" he explains the motives which led him to do this, as follows:

> At the time Dr. Herzl did me the honour to beseech my services I stood at the opposite pole of thought to him. Anti-Semitism alone had made him race-conscious, and he defined himself as "a Jew by the grace of Stöcker." He had drawn from the Dreyfus case—which was the inspiration of his movement—the conclusion that a settled and dignified life for the Jew would never be possible in Christendom. I, on the contrary, had drawn from it the conclusion that Zola was essentially a Jew and that in the organisation of such lovers of justice throughout the world and in cooperation with them lay the true path of Israel, his true mission. . . . If in the end I endorsed his political conception, it was partly because of sympathy with a great man who was being misprized, abused, misunderstood, and little supported, and partly because I saw there was no real contradiction between the spiritual ideal and a definite *locale* for it; which *locale* could be at once a land of refuge for the oppressed and a working model of a socially just commonwealth. I set myself therefore to establish for the intelligentsia a rational basis for the movement that with the masses was instinctive.

In 1901, he presided at a dinner tendered by the Maccabæans to Herzl whom he introduced as "the first statesman the Jews have had since the destruction of Jerusalem," and as "a Prince in Israel, who has felt his people's sorrows as

Moses felt the Egyptian bondage, and who has sought to lead the slaves to the promised land." His view of Zionism as a movement not only for the redemption of the Jewish people but also for the regeneration of the world he expressed in these eloquent terms:

> The gospel of Herzl is not only for the poor Jews who lack bread, but for the rich Jews who lack a conviction, nay, to the world at large—a world relapsing into barbarism and dominated by mechanism—it restores the light and warmth of idealism. Never since Imperial Rome fell in its rottenness has there been an hour in which the world needed so much the inspiring spectacle of a movement, incorrupt and instinct with the noblest humanity. And it is fitting that from Zion this light should go forth.

When the practiced realization of Herzl's project insofar as Palestine was concerned appeared hopeless, Zangwill favored the idea of securing another suitable territory; and when, in 1905, the Congress rejected the offer of Great Britain of a territory in British East Africa, he formed, with the cooperation of others who were opposed to this action, the Jewish Territorialist Organization (ITO), and became its President, a position which he held until the organization was officially disbanded in 1925. The object of the ITO was: "To acquire a territory upon an autonomous basis for those Jews who cannot or will not remain in the lands in which they live at present." In pursuance of this aim, the ITO investigated the possibilities of Jewish colonization in the Argentine, Australia, Brazil, British East Africa, Canada, Mesopotamia, Nevada, Iowa, Paraguay, Rhodesia, and Tripoli (Cyrenaica). This work was personally directed by Zangwill who gave up his literary labors, and for seven years "went down to a city office like a business man." Some of the territories investigated were found to be unsuitable for colonization; the proposals of the ITO that a territory be set apart for Jewish autonomous settlement in Canada, South Africa, and Australia, were not favorably received. Eventually, the ITO took up the work, initiated by Jacob H. Schiff and financed principally by him, of diverting some of the Jewish immigrants to the United States from the Eastern States to the southwest by having them land in Galveston, Texas. This involved the establishment of emigration committees in various European centers, and the development of a *modus operandi* which, the ITO believed,

could eventually be employed for aiding Jews to immigrate to an autonomous territory should such be found. When the World War broke out this work was, of course, discontinued.

In 1917, when the Balfour Declaration was published, Zangwill addressed a great massmeeting in London on December 3, congratulating the Zionist leaders "upon their historic achievement in the region of diplomacy," and stated that it was the duty of Israel, and particularly of the ITO, "to see that this is followed by a similar achievement in the more difficult region of practice."

Later, Zangwill became convinced that the British Government was not giving the Balfour Declaration the interpretation intended by the Lloyd George Cabinet and assumed by the world at large, and that the Zionist leaders had erred in accepting the circumscription of the meaning of the formula, and he became an uncompromising and outspoken critic of the Government and the Zionists. His most bitter criticism was expressed in an address which he called "Watchman, What of the Night?" which he delivered before a large audience in Carnegie Hall in New York City in October 1923, at the opening session of one of the meetings of the American Jewish Congress, in which he deplored the acceptance by the Zionist leaders of what he considered the "evisceration" of the Balfour Declaration by Winston Churchill in the preceding year, when Churchill, then British Secretary of State for the Colonies, had declared that the Jews have the right to establish "*a* national home" in Palestine, instead of the right to make Palestine *the* national home. Zangwill also pointed out that certain provisions of the Mandate were not being fulfilled by the Mandatory. In general, his view of the situation was extremely sombre and pessimistic and brought down upon him indignant protests of the Zionists. Since that time, some of the points made by Zangwill have been taken up by the Zionist Organization, and to Zangwill's criticism may be traced in part the existence of a group within the Zionist movement, calling themselves Revisionists, who demand a more vigorous policy.

V

Israel Zangwill was born in London on February 14, 1864. His parents had come to England from Ridenishki, a

small town in Latvia, sixteen years before. He received his elementary education in Bristol, whither his family removed shortly after his birth. Later, when the family returned to London, Zangwill became a pupil at the Jews' Free School where he obtained a scholarship, his examiner being "struck by the excellence of his papers." It was here that Zangwill acquired that deep and extensive knowledge of Jewish lore which is apparent in many of his writings. Later, he became a pupil teacher at the school, being subsequently promoted to its regular staff, in the meanwhile attending London University from which he was graduated with honors.

Zangwill's parents, though poor, were never needy as some assert. Zangwill did not hesitate, when occasion offered, to refer to himself as the son of a Jewish peddler. It is said that, when Zangwill was awarded a scholarship of £500 by the Jews' Free School, his father, who was very devout and of an extremely independent spirit, came to the exercises in his everyday clothes with his bundle of sponges on his back as if to show his contempt for "Gentile" learning. In later years, the father went to live in Palestine where Zangwill maintained him until his death. Zangwill was ever reverent and tender to his mother. A friend tells us that when he married and established a home away from his parents, he could not get himself to remove his books for fear of hurting his mother's feelings.

In 1903, Zangwill married Edith, daughter of Prof. Ayrton and Matilda Chaplin Ayrton. Mrs. Zangwill's mother died when she was a young child and she was reared by her father's second wife, a Jewess, a woman of extraordinary intelligence and marked scholarship. Mrs. Zangwill is the author of several books. A personal friend of the family says of her that "her sympathy and devotion kept Zangwill among us a decade or two decades more than else was at all likely." In addition to his widow, three children, two sons and a daughter, survive him.

He was eccentric in some respects, and, while giving the appearance of brusqueness, sometimes bordering upon rudeness, this was largely due to mental preoccupation; those who knew him more closely found him considerate and hospitable. He was very fond of long walks through the country-side near his home; and did not give these up even

during the War, when the appearance of strangers in the villages through which he would pass aroused suspicion, as he tells us in his amusing essay "Walking in War-Time." He also took long rides on a bicycle, and was fond of sea-bathing and croquet. He was a generous friend of struggling writers, and seldom declined a request to criticize a manuscript or write an introduction to a book. His private conversation was full of wit and frequent flashes of humor, but he never aimed the shafts of his repartee against his companions.

He was on terms of personal friendship with many of England's most distinguished men and women, especially in literary circles, with writers, poets, and liberal thinkers of the European continent, and with the leading Jews of all countries.

His death was noted by the press of the entire world, and many newspapers published editorial appraisals of his life and work. Memorial meetings to mark his passing were held in many places. On September 27, 1926, a great meeting was held in New York City, and on October 31, a similar meeting took place in Philadelphia. Numerous organizations and groups, both here and abroad, adopted memorial resolutions in Zangwill's honor.

We cannot more fittingly close this sketch than to quote the words of an intimate friend of Zangwill who wrote of him that he "lives on through the tens of thousands he has reached by his writings and his speech, and, these, in turn, will reach out to others through the years to come. All life, unto the remotest future, becomes profoundly altered by an Israel Zangwill. This is immortality."

NOTE: In preparing this sketch the writer consulted besides Zangwill's works, numerous magazine and newspaper articles, many of them in the files of the Department of Statistics and Information of the Bureau of Jewish Social Research. The author acknowledges his special indebtedness to the excellent biography of Zangwill which appeared in *The Jewish Chronicle*, London, on August 6, 1926.