

## MAYER SULZBERGER

---

### I. ADDRESS OF LOUIS MARSHALL, ESQ.

“Through wisdom is a house builded,  
And by understanding is it established;  
And by knowledge are the chambers filled  
With all precious and pleasant riches.”

Words could not more fittingly describe that unique combination of elements that constituted the mortal embodiment of him whom we knew and revered and loved as Mayer Sulzberger. During his long, active and blessed life, he stood on an eminence, shedding light upon the paths of his fellow-men, extending to them the warmth of his guiding hand, and bringing solution to their perplexities. From earliest youth he devoted himself to the gathering of knowledge and to the day of his death he never wearied in the quest. No branch of learning found him indifferent. No subject of human thought failed to attract him. Naught was too ancient and nothing too modern to repel him. He read omnivorously; he pondered what he read and separating the dross from the golden grains, he made his own all that was pleasant and precious. Not like a miser did he hide his garnered treasure. It was his joy to share it in princely generosity with all who wished to partake of it. It was at all times readily accessible for use and for adornment. It rusted not; it tarnished not; it wasted not. But his

knowledge was not derived from printed books alone. It was gleaned from his contact with men, from the speech of those whom he encountered on the street and in the market-place, from his searching observation which took in at a glance the minutest detail, from his profound study of human nature, from his Socratic method of inquiry, from his marvelous intuitions, from his power of accurate analysis which enabled him to discern the promptings of the heart and the motives of the brain. He read untiringly in the book of life and delved deeply in its mysteries. His knowledge was not confined in narrow grooves or limited in scope. It was not a dreary waste of dry and uninspiring facts arranged in statistical tables. It was not of the Gradgrind variety. It was broad and comprehensive, vivid, vital and picturesque. It possessed the virtues of truth, beauty, goodness and usefulness. Prodigious though it was it did not produce a sense of oppressiveness in those who came within its spell, but rather one of mental solace and stimulation. It touched upon all the great realms of thought; law and religion, poetry and philosophy, history and politics, economics and government, art and literature, language and philology, fiction and anthropology. Though vast, his knowledge was never superficial, though versatile, it was not that of the sciolist. Whatever he acquired was illumined and sparkled with the touch of joyous grace as it entered the treasure house of his intellect.

His was also the gift of understanding. He not only knew but he penetrated into the very heart of things. He did not strive to adapt his environment to a strait-jacket provided for it. He sought to understand not only the will of the Creator, but the ideas and the aspirations and

even the incoherencies of his fellow-men as well, and to interpret them not from his, but their point of view. He was never impatient with the simple, honest and unpretentious mind. His task was to draw out these who struggled with the difficulties of utterance and to bring the encouragement resulting from the consciousness of being understood. He was practical in the art of psychology. He could glimpse as with the lightning's flash that which was passing in the souls of his associates. He was an adept in perceiving the inner content of popular movements. Though an intellectual aristocrat he understood the people and their strivings. He understood because he was not composed merely of brains and nerves, but because he had a great and sympathetic heart which felt what the mind alone could not perceive and which by its subtle magnetic current touched responsive chords, which even the driving power of intelligence could not stir into activity. He not only understood the plain and unassuming and had their unqualified trust and confidence, but he also understood the arrogant and the pretentious, the insincere and the hypocritical, the self-sufficient and the intolerant and at time made them shudder in their discovered nakedness.

And his house was builded through wisdom, not only the wisdom of knowledge and understanding, but that of justice and righteousness and of love for humanity. How truly did the words of the Psalmist apply to him!

“The mouth of the righteous uttereth wisdom  
And his tongue speaketh justice;  
The law of his God is in his heart,  
None of his steps slide.”

His words were indeed "clad with wisdom's majesty" and he received "the veneration of accumulated wisdom". He was wise in counsel, wise in the wordly concept of the term, but wiser still in its spiritual connotation "the fear of the Lord." He was wise in the untranslatable and comprehensive sense of *Chochmah*. Nobody came to him for instruction and returned empty. As the years mellowed his judgment, and experience modified his ideas, one felt the unerringness of his sagacity and became impressed with the consciousness that one was in the presence of greatness. As I look back upon an acquaintance of nearly forty years, I regard the days spent in association with him as red-letter days, and the pilgrimages that I was wont to take in order to walk at his side, as a humble disciple, along the loudsounding sea, to listen in amazement to the accompanying music of his oracular voice, have always been to me like visits at a sacred shrine.

How often has the wish been uttered: "Would that he had had a Boswell,—but a more worthy one,—to perpetuate the wisdom of a greater, a saner and a more noble philosopher than Doctor Johnson!" His wisdom was that of optimism. Unlike many who attain advanced years, he continued to laugh and did not resort to weeping and lamentation because of the passing of time and of its changes. He had an abiding faith in the ultimate betterment of the world and of mankind. He smiled at folly and at ephemeral foibles with that sweet, knowing and indulgent smile, which so greatly added to his natural charm. He gloried in the "somehow good", which he encountered everywhere.

"His labor was in wisdom, and in knowledge and in

equity," and with this equipment he became a spiritual and intellectual force not only in his beloved Philadelphia, but throughout the land of his adoption, and was acclaimed as a leader by tacit consent.

In the chosen profession, which he adorned both at the Bar and on the Bench, he rose to great heights. In the consultation room, at the forum and on the seat of justice he was pre-eminent. He mastered the principles of the law, its reason, its philosophy, its technique, its practical application, and made of it a living, sentient organism. He hated fraud and sham and chicanery and was fired with that passion for justice and righteousness exemplified by the ancient Hebrew prophets. He may occasionally have exhibited impatience, but it never was toward those who were striving to overcome evil. The highest compliment that I ever heard one lawyer bestow upon another came from the lips of no less a personage than the late John G. Johnson, for many years the leader of the American Bar, who had been opposed to Judge Sulzberger in many a forensic contention. We were discussing the noted lawyers and orators of the land when he, with characteristic earnestness, declared that although he had probably heard everybody in this country who was worth listening to, the greatest speech that he had ever been privileged to hear was one by our departed friend. It was delivered, he said, in a little back room here in Philadelphia, and only three persons were present, the opposing lawyers and the Master. Its greatness consisted in the profound legal learning and the extraordinary research into the reason of the law which it evinced, the clarity and soundness of its argumentation, the choiceness of its diction, the beauty of

its rhetoric, the depth of philosophy and the keen appreciation of human motives which it disclosed and running through it all, the golden thread of wit and humor, which punctuated its eloquence.

He was not only professionally in the first rank, but he had a statesman's grasp of public questions. He would have adorned any Bench to which he might have been called. At a time when most men seek leisure he threw himself into the task of revising the Constitution of this Commonwealth and devoted to it his most mature thought and his best energies. He never ceased to occupy his mind with the study of the political and economic problems which challenged the attention of thinking men and he freely gave expression to his opinions in furtherance of his conception of civic duty. His patriotism was of the most unselfish and exalted type. He loved America, and every square inch of its soil; he loved Pennsylvania; he regarded the ground on which he trod in Philadelphia as sacred. He did not prate about his love of country. He never undertook to appraise it by percentages nor by the wearing of a badge. It was enshrined in his heart. Yes, the immigrant boy strove during all the days that the Almighty allotted to him to make his life an expression of gratitude for the blessings which he and his brethren enjoyed in this land of freedom, by dedicating himself soul and body to the preservation of its institutions and the maintenance of its traditions. If ever there was a more loyal American he has not yet been discovered. But this fine exemplar of citizenship, this man who made such exalted contributions to American life would not have been permitted to enter our gates had the quota principle pre-

vailed when he landed; nor would other men of foreign birth whose names are written large in the life of this country have been enabled to shed lustre upon our history. I choose at random four other Philadelphians, Girard, a Frenchman, Haym Salomon, a native of Poland, Albert Gallatin, of Switzerland, and Edward Bok, of Holland. Picture to yourselves this city founded by William Penn without these adopted sons of alien birth, of differing faiths, of varying races. Not one of them bears the hall-mark of the recently manufactured Nordic stock, concerning the passing of which Madison Grant has written a lachrymose volume, which if true in its thesis demonstratates that the fabled being which, as a sort of war measure, he adapted from Stewart Houston Chamberlain's Teutonic paragon, cannot have been of "the fittest."

As a Jew, he was unswerving in his loyalty to his faith and to those of the House of Israel,—a devout son of the Synagogue, a defender of Judaism and its institutions and traditions. From his very youth he was convinced of the importance of founding educational establishments which would foster the spirit and exemplify the ethics of our religion. He became an adept in our sacred tongue. He associated himself with that ardent champion of historic Judaism, the Rev. Isaac Leeser, in the editorship of "The Occident." He was one of the founders of the Young Men's Hebrew Association of Philadelphia, in which he maintained his interest for more than half a century. Through him the Jewish Publication Society became a possibility. It was he who shaped its policies and made of it the medium for promoting Jewish literature. He was one of the originators of the American Jewish Committee, and its first

President. To his energetic intervention was due the re-organization of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, and it was he that gave the initiative to the organization of Dropsie College and Gratz College. The library of Judaica and Hebraica which he gathered patiently and assiduously, his gift to the Seminary, became the nucleus of its present monumental collection, the greatest of its kind in the world. Happily he lived to learn of the realization of his cherished hope that this stimulus to scholarship should find its habitation upon this continent. To him is due the initial encouragement of the Jewish Encyclopedia. He was likewise connected with the formation of the Jewish Hospital of Philadelphia and of the American Jewish Relief Committee, and was from the very beginning of its existence one of the trustees of the Baron de Hirsch Fund. In a word, he led in every endeavor which tended to the mental, moral and physical betterment of his brethren.

He was generous not only of his time and thought, but of his savings far beyond his means. He was the patron of scholars and literary men—a veritable Maecenas. Through the library where this sage sat enthroned, there passed a constant procession of men of learning, of thinkers and philosophers and poets, and literary genuises, many of whom owed the realization of their ambitions to his aid, his advice and his incentive. No man who possessed merit or ability knocked at his door in vain. His admiration for those who struggled against tremendous difficulties in their efforts to attain their goal led him frequently to overlook faults and peccadillos which would have been regarded as insuperable by most men.

After he had passed three score years and ten he undertook

a scholarly work which called for meticulous research and unusual originality, presenting four unexplored, and to some extent unsuspected, phases of ancient Jewish life: "The Am Ha'aretz," in which he established the existence of a parliamentary organization in the Jewish Commonwealth; "The Law of Homicide"; "The Polity of the Ancient Hebrews" and "The Status of Labor among the Ancient Hebrews." They involved astounding familiarity with the biblical text, the keen analysis of a trained scientific mind, and the insight and vision of one gifted with the same kind of creative imagination illustrated by Cuvier, Darwin, and Renan.

He was simple and modest, never seeking honors, but having them thrust upon him. There was a grace and kindness in his manner that attracted young and old. He possessed that mysterious quality known as personality, which gained for him the devotion of multitudes of affectionate admirers and which called into being a host of disciples through whose loyalty his influence will be perpetuated. For generations to come those whom he so faithfully served will remember him lovingly for his moral rectitude, his nobility of soul, his tenacity of purpose and his adherence to his convictions, for those strange combinations of vigor and subtlety, of statesmanlike practicability and the power of philosophical abstraction, of the cold light of reason and the warmth of sympathy, which led him to espouse and enabled him to further the cause of human brotherhood. We shall not look upon his like again.

## II. ADDRESS OF DOCTOR SOLOMON SOLIS COHEN

Of Mayer Sulzberger the man, my friend, our friend, I do not at this time trust myself to speak. We honor him, we love him, we mourn him. His memory is blessed.

Nor shall I speak of the external features of his life—the positions of trust and service he filled so worthily, the societies and the institutions he founded or reorganized, or wherein he became the active, moving spirit,—all these are familiar facts.

What I shall have to say concerns an influence—a precious, a marvelous influence—the beneficent influence of a rare mind and a lofty soul, united in a personality intensely human—and utterly devoid of self-seeking; conscious, it is true, of strength, and desirous of power, but only that strength and power might be exerted for the public weal.

It would be vain, and it is not my province, to attempt to set forth the many phases of Judge Sulzberger's influence. The Hebrew word Meir means enlightener—luminary. And as the light of the great physical luminary is resolved by the raindrop into the myriad hues of the bow of promise, while the instruments of the laboratory reveal, beyond the brilliance of that visible spectrum, the invisible waves of varied forms of energy—so the force radiating from this luminary of the spirit assumed, beyond the brilliance of its visible aspects, innumerable potent energizing, vivifying forms.

But it is possible with a suitable lens to focus a part of the sun's shining upon a small area; and even to preserve upon sensitized plates a record thereof—inadequate, it is true, but still a record.

Such a partial record of that special phase of our friend's

influence which is my theme in this memorial meeting,—his influence, namely upon the ideals and the public institutions of American Jews—we possess in the twelve monthly numbers of the 26th volume of “The Occident” and “American Jewish Advocate,” which he edited from April 1868 to March 1869.

This journal, founded in 1843, the year of Mayer Sulzberger’s birth, was, it will be recalled a part of the educational activities of Isaac Leeser, who for the biblical period of 40 years had been concededly foremost among the Jews of the United States. When Leeser saw death approaching, he sought and obtained from the young lawyer and student of Hebrew literature who, of all his disciples and coadjutors, had become closest to his heart, the promise to continue “The Occident” for at least a year.

Thus did Elijah cast his mantle upon Elisha.

For it was not alone the editorship of “The Occident” that passed from the man whom his pupil and successor characterized as “the greatest of American Israelites,” to the youth of whom—now that he rests from his long and useful labors—we, his survivors, speak in like words. With it passed also a duty of leadership—of leadership in defense of the most precious human rights, freedom of thought and conscience; of leadership in the dissemination among men of the principles of justice and loving-kindness, proclaimed in the Bible of the Jew, and lying at the very foundation of civilization and free government; of leadership in enterprises of education, of religion and of benevolence, within the Jewish fold.

And how nobly, how magnanimously, was that duty fulfilled!

The significance of “The Occident” in an appreciation of

the influence exerted by Mayer Sulzberger upon the development of Jewish thought and the history of Jewish institutions in America for the five and fifty years succeeding his assumption of its editorship, lies in the themes discussed in his leaders, and in the character of the articles contributed by him to its literary columns. For these are in truth an index to his career.

They show the trend of his mind and the extent, even then, before he had completed his twenty-fifth year, of his studies in the fields of Biblical interpretation, of Jewish history and of Hebrew literature. They show, also, his mastery of expression, his clarity of perception, his broadness of view, his profundity of thought. They exhibit brotherly affection for all men, unlimited by lines of creed, race or nationality. They are charged with an intense patriotism that was not only loyalty to the Republic, but also love for its principles and ideals. Toward honest differences of opinion they have the tolerance that ever marks sincerity and knowledge; for bigotry and sham, they have only a vast contempt. But chiefly do they manifest a reverent faith in the purposefulness of the universe, in the infinite wisdom and goodness of the Creator and in the dignity of man, His creature; a deep and reasoned conviction that the function, alike of religion and of law, is the betterment of mankind; an informed and informative belief that the Hebrew people early in its history had perceived, and by continuous development throughout its career, had formulated into law, the fundamental principles of right, justice and love that should guide the relations of man to man and of nation to nation—and that in a conscious return to those principles and a conscious

modeling of legislation upon that ancient pattern, lies the salvation of the modern world. Hence, there was, not only throughout these articles, but, expressed or implied, in all of the subsequent speeches and writings of their author, an almost passionate insistence that the study of the Bible and the diffusion of its teaching is the ineluctable duty of the descendants of them who first saw and proclaimed those mighty truths.

Time and the occasion do not permit the extensive extracts from Judge Sulzberger's all too scanty writings, that would be necessary in any attempt to set forth fully even that limited, but central, phase of his influence to which attention is here given.

But whatever is set forth must be quoted. A man like this should be let speak for himself. To refract his thought through another's mind, obscures it.

Let me first cull from "The Occident" a few significant titles of articles that its young editor translated, either from Hebrew text or from the researches of French and German students of Jewish lore.

"De Rossi's Dictionary of Hebrew Authors"—begun indeed, two volumes earlier—presages the great collection of rare books and manuscripts given to the Seminary; gifts continued even after the donor's death.

Articles on "Chisdai ben Isaac;" on "Don Joseph Nasi Duke of Naxos;" on "The Vizier Rabbi" (Samuel ibn Negrela); Joseph Halevi's report on the "Falashas;" Kayserling's chapter on "Sephardic Jews in America;" Levy on "The Coinage of the Ancient Hebrews," tell of his interest in Jewish history and affairs of state, and evidence his tireless industry. Munk on "The Cabala," shows that

even mysticism had its attraction for his catholic mind. "Maimonides on the Names of God" was part of a projected translation of the Hebrew text of the *Moreh Nebuchim*, the remainder of which unfortunately, he refrained from publishing. He once read to me a fragment of the unpublished manuscript. To my urging that he print it, his reply was "Friedlander has done it now. One English version is enough."

But most important and most interesting are the leading articles in which he sets forth his views upon subjects of universal and eternal concern to the Jewish community and to all men.

The titles "Our New Volume" and "Valedictory"—with which the series begins and ends—by no means indicate the contents of these papers.

Whoever talked with Judge Sulzberger knows that apparently trivial themes might lead to witty and profound disquisitions upon matters of pith and moment.

So do these editorials merely touch upon the personal, to give excuses for characteristically keen analysis of the status of the educational and religious affairs of American Jewry, and inspiring discussion of its needs and historic obligations.

Thus in the salutory he says;

"During a period as long as the average duration of a generation, the opinions of [this periodical] have become so widely known that all are cognizant of them. From the fact, however, that the death of the distinguished gentleman who edited [it] until lately, has placed in his position one whose sentiments are comparatively unknown, it may be deemed pertinent to say, that in no essential respect, will

the views of this journal be altered. It will in every way endeavor to foster and promote ancient Judaism. The religion of Moses and the prophets, transmitted to us by our ancestors, has served as the guide through life and the comfort in death, of some of the most illustrious men in the world's history and is still sufficient for us, their descendants. We are unable to perceive how the lapse of ages has in any wise altered those duties to God and man which are taught in the Pentateuch, and the modes of whose observance tradition has imparted to us. The world has doubtless advanced in many respects, in the centuries that have rolled by. The physical sciences especially have been greatly cultivated, and the practical improvements in machinery and manufactures are wonderful. But we must not for that reason, fall into the error of supposing that the ancients possessed no wisdom, or that they produced no master minds. . . .

“Nor have the Jews failed to produce shining lights since their dispersion, even to our days. . . . To assume, therefore, that from the beginning of the world until within a few years, there was naught but utter darkness among the people of Israel, that its prophets and teachers taught vain things, and that it was reserved for the last few decades to bring forth true wisdom, is to declare an absurdity. . . .

“Nor is there anything in our position as Americans, and as faithful citizens of a free country, that [conflicts] in the slightest degree with our character as Jews. We firmly believe that all men are good and valuable members of any community, just in proportion as they are alive to the great truths which their religion inculcates. We all know of shining examples of English and American

gentlemen whose love for their government is only equalled by their affection for their religion, and fidelity in the observance of its demands. Ever since the existence of this government, many true Jews have been born and lived under it. Not a few have closely studied its constitution and laws, and none, understanding them, has as yet discovered any point in which the strictest adherence to them would prevent any one from being as conscientious a Jew as the most pious of our ancestors. On the contrary, the liberty of conscience, guaranteed to every citizen by a free government, should make each one a better Jew and a better citizen; the former, because he owes gratitude to God for relief from oppression—the latter, because man is naturally well inclined towards institutions which grant him protection and indulgence.”

And this concluding remark is characteristic:

“In defending the religion of Sinai, however, we will not offensively condemn any other. Whatever our own views may be no advocacy of them, or contradiction of an adversary’s, shall find its way into these pages unless it be written in a calm, temperate and dignified style. Argument is a better weapon than invective, and hence we say, once for all, to that large class of whose writings bitterness is the inevitable characteristic, that nothing violent will be admitted into this magazine.”

Other weighty titles are: “A Jewish Publication Society”; “Maimonides College”; “Synagogue”; “Apostasy”; “A Synod”; “Civic Equality”; “[Against the Union of] Church and State.”

From the editorial upon the Jewish Publication Society may be cited the following:

“Few realize how profound is the ignorance amongst men on the subject of religion and its duties. Vague notions, instilled into the mind in early youth, of the professions and practices of their fathers; indistinct recollections of morning and evening prayers, of grace said and blessings spoken, float through their minds and remind them after the lapse of years, of the creed in which they have been reared; but so far as concerns a genuine appreciation of the grave truths and important teachings which religion should promulgate, there is a lamentable deficiency. It has been the pride and boast of the Jews that the study of God’s Law has ever been fostered among them, that in their darkest hours they exalted learning above all earthly good, and made great sacrifices that their children might become wise. In the gloomiest periods of the middle ages, when science was at a standstill, when the nations cultivated war and delighted in bloodshed, when all rights were denied to Jews, and they were persecuted and pursued like wild beasts, then—in the face of all difficulties and discouragements, in spite of obstacles and opposition—they increased their religious knowledge and attained a perfection in theology truly wonderful. Jewish academies and seminaries, flourished everywhere, and when a great light of learning was extinguished, another blazed forth and threw additional lustre upon the ancient name of our people. Printing had scarcely been invented, ere a stream of Jewish publications—Pentateuchs, Commentaries, Bibles, Responsae, Talmuds, Law Digests—flooded the literary world. A supernatural strength, that bade defiance to mortal per-

secution, seemed to pervade the whole Jewish community of Europe. Kings and princes might issue edicts driving out tens of thousands of their loyal subjects, priests and inquisitors might torment and burn the faithful, but these were determined to cherish the word of God which endureth forever. They held fast to that eternal inheritance, so that when death should end their sufferings, they might have an abundant endowment in the everlasting future. So stupendous are the works produced by the Jewish press of that era, that even now when all the implements employed have been so vastly improved, and the speed in producing books so greatly increased, we cannot repress feelings of astonishment at the energy, industry and faithfulness of the Jewish people of these days, at the learning of their teachers, and at the liberality of their wealthy men. Jewish books were thus spread; and only a few generations since, the Jews were better educated in their religion than any other sect. Few, indeed, could be found who were not conversant with the manifold duties which the religion of Israel imposes on its votaries, and, as a consequence, it exhibited a vitality which has withstood all the efforts of time, of hatred and of persecution. The bodies of the true believers were tortured, but their souls, in departing hence retained the sublime consciousness of the absolute Unity of God. . . . .

“At the present time, in this country especially, the whole subject of religious change is in the hands of laymen, who, to a great extent are unlearned in theology. We are not content with the fact that those having spiritual charge of the communities are able men; for it is not a healthy state in which one man is the exclusive thinker for a thousand.

The greatest genius may err, and in such case his blind followers imitate his defects. All should be properly informed on the questions that arise, so far, at least, as to enable them to act intelligently. . . ."

Peculiar interest attaches to a further exhortation to duty contained in the same editorial. Part of this program, happily, the Judge lived to see carried out. Of the rest, a part is under way. But the preparation of an adequate Jewish Bible Commentary in English, has been halted for lack of funds; and nothing has yet been done toward the adequate distribution of the new English version of the Holy Scriptures.

What the young editor said, the veteran servant of the community often repeated. Let us hear it—and heed:

"If we desire Judaism to prosper, we must make it understood. Misconception, in our midst and from the outside world, is the great enemy against which we have to contend. Our religion cannot be properly comprehended without familiarity with the works teaching it. Foremost among these is the Bible. In it are contained the germs of all religions, but especially and distinctively of the Jewish. It is true that other creeds have so interpreted [it] as to destroy Israel's faith and hope, and have labored unceasingly to disseminate the versions tinctured with their peculiar ideas. They have expended millions to distribute these, and there is still no relaxation in their energy. If those not of our faith do this, how much more active should we be, who claim that the law was commanded to us as 'an inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.' If shiploads of Bibles are sent to savages and cannibals in distant continents, how much more obligatory is it on us to furnish

the living word to our own poor brethren. Our labors should not stop there. The profound thought and extensive erudition of our host of Bible commentators should likewise be made accessible. The various moral and devotional works and philosophical treatises of our great men should not be confined to the few who can read them in the original or in the German and French translations which the industry of our continental co-religionists have furnished. The history, poetry, fables and romances of the Jews should be made popular, and a stimulus be thereby given to men of ability to turn their attention to our literature."

Of the worth of costly synagogues as contrasted with that of academies, a topic still of first importance, this was written:

"Let us think on this and impress it on our hearts. Let no vain desire to outshine our neighbors in the costliness of our synagogues allure us to devote to ornamental stone piles what should be applied to cultivate the intellect. First and foremost is our duty to make provision for the education of our children, and when this has been done to the best of our ability, when school and college have been established, when libraries have been founded, scholarships endowed and publications provided for, then we may apply our superfluity to the erection of splendid temples. When we have been generous in all these things our munificence in the matter of synagogues will no longer seem like vanity and boasting, but the emanation of an enlightened spirit, which loves to invest with beauty the things that are dear to it. When our families can go with us to our places of worship, understanding the ancient language of our ritual

and appreciating the significance of our time-honored usages; when they can hear the law taught and explained in the language of the country, by men of our own choice, reared in our own land, imbued with our feelings, familiar with our customs, and sympathizing with our habits, then it will be time enough to pour out money, like water, for external decorations.

“But so long as we are too poor to have both good colleges and fine synagogues, let us be content to meet, as our fathers did, in plain buildings, and devote what we can spare to make our children’s minds places where reverence for God and love for man may dwell. Let us adorn their understanding with knowledge, and the influence thereof will be vastly greater than if we built structures of stone higher than the stateliest pyramids of Egypt. Genuine piety dwells in the humblest places as well as in the highest, and better is he who hath wisdom without riches than the fool covered with diamonds.

“Judaism demands that we investigate and learn. It is not so meritorious to build a synagogue and to sit in it, as to know why we should attend it, to appreciate its lessons and to act on them. It is our sacred duty to search and ponder, that we may understand all things within our comprehension. Such is the injunction of one of our greatest teachers, and we shall fulfill this obligation only in proportion as we prefer learning to show, a good education to an expensive pew, a well-endowed college to a costly synagogue.”

In saying that the writings of Mayer Sulzberger were far too few, I have had in mind particularly his addresses that were never put upon paper—some before national organizations, and some before local bodies. Fortunately

we have in print his lectures upon the institutions, political, judicial and economic, of the ancient Hebrew Commonwealth, with their original methods of study and their important even startling, conclusions.

But these are not the chief factors in that influence of which I speak. They are enduring and inspiring contributions to biblical study, but they are not the origin of his work or power; rather may they be looked upon as the products in himself, of the same inspiration that he conveyed to others.

It is true that this inspiration as it affected individuals, was personal in its communication. But as it created an atmosphere in which might flourish devotion to high ideals of public service and private life, consciously realized as Jewish ideals, it was diffused and energized by his public word.

It was not his habit to write out his speeches—unless they were to occupy but a few minutes and therefore required intense condensation—except when some peculiar importance of the occasion demanded authentic publication. Of the latter class, the ones that I recall best at this time are two great orations; one delivered at the celebration, in Philadelphia, of Moses Montefiore's hundredth birthday, the other spoken at the commemoration, in New York, of the two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the landing upon Manhattan Island of Asser Levy and his fellow refugees from the Inquisition of Brazil.

But a third address of some importance, delivered before the Young Men's Hebrew Association of Philadelphia in October, 1877, has been preserved—albeit in a crude and imperfect form—through a report made by an associate

member of that day, and published in the Association Review and the Jewish Record.

It is from this imperfect report that I now quote. The language is not accurately that of the lecturer; but there is no mistaking his sentiments. Nor is their appositeness lessened, either by their transfer from the nineteenth to the twentieth century—from the shadow of the Russo-Turkish war to that of the world horror—or by the vast developments in science and industry, of the forty-six intervening years.

Hear the words of a prophet.:

“We are told that in our century the motives actuating men are improving, that the principles guiding nations are ameliorating, progressing to a goal that can be nothing but perfection; and being told what fine and noble developments we are part of, we are asked: ‘Why persist, in such a golden condition, in urging that we should look back to, and perhaps copy, a people long since dead, and who, while living, were vastly our inferiors?’

“This assumes that there is in mankind a law of inevitable progress; that no matter how base individuals may be, that no matter how much truth and honor and justice may be disregarded and neglected by nations, we are bound to become better; that personal character and national righteousness count for nothing, there being some magic in this age to atone for the lack of high principles and noble aspirations; that rapid transit and improved machinery, and the heaping up of wealth, are the noblest achievements of which man is capable. . .

“It is this over-estimate of mere material comforts that is the essentially vicious characteristic of the age we are

so much accustomed to laud. . . . . But the overwhelming worship of modern improvements may be a mistake. There are other things beside rapid transit, and artistic dwellings, fine clothing and labor-saving machines to live for. We cannot by increasing the productive power of factory and field, abolish vice and wickedness, or banish unhappiness and misery from the earth. . .

“It is well to look back upon the past, and see if the world has never been at this point before. The power and prosperity of Assyria, the learning of Egypt, the art and culture of Greece, the mechanical developments of Rome, the commercial enterprise of Carthage, were as splendid in their day as any of our boasted achievements; yet now, what abides? The very mechanical powers by which their towering piles and noble monuments were raised, are a puzzle to modern science, and all their wealth and all their glory are but hieroglyphs which learned men spend their lives in endeavoring to read. . .

“Yet all this while there lived a little band of Hebrews, who thought they saw this difficulty, and resolved that there was something higher in life than a mere selfish struggle, something better than to run a race for enjoyment, not caring, so that we reached the goal, whether our fellow succeeded or fell by the way; something greater, nobler and more lasting than all this; that the true doctrine was not to seek only self-aggrandizement, but that to treat one’s neighbor as himself, to assist the weak, to cheer the hopeless, to acknowledge all men as brothers, was a higher and a better plan.

“And then, as now, those prosperous and sleek nations looked down and smiled at that little band, and said,

'You have no canals as we have in Assyria; no pyramids as we have in Egypt; no aqueducts as we have in Rome; no statuary as we have in Greece; no ships like ours of Carthage. Ye are dreamers, dealing in vain words, but we have the good things of this earth.' Yet, notwithstanding all their glory of modern improvements—for these were modern in their day—all their physical and mental wealth and strength have gone, and that little band of dreamers are found from end to end of the world in as large numbers as they ever counted at the height of their prosperity. It was the dream that was the substantive reality; it was the visionary projects that were more solid and lasting than the building founded on the rock. . .

"Judea, captive in the body, yet vanquished her Roman conquerer. She took his mind captive with the principles of Judaism in the form of her daughter, Christianity. For eighteen centuries all civilized nations have studied and appropriated those principles—have claimed them as their own even to the exclusion of the true proprietors—and yet, today, in the name of a religion whose cardinal doctrine is 'On earth peace, good-will to men,' hosts of men stand in deadly array, waiting to be let loose to grasp one another by the throat, to stab, to shoot, to burn, to lay waste prosperous cities and fertile valleys. . .

"Russia, with its million of ignorant barbarians who worship images, its myriads of serfs and slaves, stands up to bring rapine and desolation upon every Turkish household; and Christian Europe hesitates, counting the advantages, to see whether it will pay better to keep the peace or to sacrifice lives and maim bodies.

"And this speculation of the price of blood, as weighed

against diplomatic power, or commercial supremacy, or increase of territory—this is the speculation of the nineteenth century, the wonder age of philosophy and science. . .

“It would seem time for some one to study ancient history anew, and see whether the old Jews’ doctrines of unselfishness, of justice, of regard for the weak, have not some merits to commend them to modern attention. And who should study these but we, their descendants? The very faculty of maintaining and spreading such doctrines, is an inheritance that only blood can perpetuate. Men are the epitomes of their ancestors’ traits, and if those nations which are called civilized have inherited the subtlety and brutality of their Persian and Indian progenitors, we have a special and noble inheritance of the principles of our forefathers, whom the world still sneers at and denounces as dreamers. The old story of Joseph, as a type, is ever repeated. ‘Here,’ cry his brethren, ‘comes this impracticable and vain schemer, this man of dreams, with his lofty aspirations. He cares not for rapid transit, he pays no attention to improved machinery, he reproves and reproaches us, and thinks he is better than we. Let us kill him; let us cast him in the pit; let us sell him as a slave, to a life of misery and wretchedness.’ That is the way they treated idealists in those days, and that is the way the world continues to treat them. . .

“Notwithstanding this, we may rely upon the result. Out of the dream came salvation to the eleven and their families, and out of the principles our forefathers proclaimed—to protect the innocent, to help the weak, and to put charity and truth and justice before public and private improvements—will come salvation to the world. . . .

“And those who profess these unpopular doctrines will receive their reward in the hereafter. Hereafter, upon this earth, the reward will come, as men grow nobler and better.”

With inspiration such as this for its driving force, the Y.M.H.A. of Philadelphia became under Mayer Sulzberger's presidency, an instrument of incalculable good. Nor was its influence confined to this city. In many ways, direct and indirect, that influence extended to other Jewish communities in America, and even in the British Empire.

Perhaps the most precious writing that Judge Sulzberger has left us is his latest completed work—the four lectures upon “The Status of Labor in Ancient Israel”. Here spake together his youthful enthusiasms and his ripened wisdom.

It was not as a mere exercise in scholarship that he began this work and pursued it to a conclusion despite the interruptions of illness.

It was, as I have said, a part of his own practical reaction to his own spiritual influence. It had a purpose of humanity and statesmanship—to show, by a collation and analysis of the biblical injunctions concerning the mutual duties of employer and workman, and the relation of the State to both, a road toward the just solution of present-day economic problems.

Of its new departures in translation and commentary this is not the place to speak, except to say for the better understanding of citations, that, according to the author, the word “ger” or “stranger” refers to the Canaanites who had inhabited Palestine before the invasion under Joshua, and who, having lost their lands, had been “neither

exterminated, nor driven out, nor enslaved," but had become peasants or hired laborers on the estates of their conquerors.

Judge Sulzberger shows that the biblical precepts are not mere "counsels of perfection," but actual legislation intended to bind rulers in their policies and to guide judges in their decisions. He cited a great mass of pentateuchal and prophetic utterances prescribing and demanding just and equal treatment of the "gerim" or alien laborers, and in especial the law's provisions that they shall be released from work on Sabbaths, and holy days, and shall be free to share, if they will, in the spiritual and material delights of the occasion—even of the Passover. He says:

"The 'ger' drank in from his surroundings historical memories in which, it is true, he had no part, but which nevertheless tended to raise his intellect to a higher plane. When a mere yokel loses sight for a time of the insistent present and dwells even with bare superficiality on a past replete with great deeds, he imbibes ideas which spiritualize his whole being."

Treating of laborers in general, both Jew and Gentile, he points out that the denunciations hurled by the prophets against them "that grind the faces of the poor" could refer only to the injustice of employers in exaction of work or in skimping of wages, and shows the humane and enlightened spirit of the biblical laws upon these issues.

"[The laborers], may, it is true, be oppressed by the employer, but [they] can have recourse to the courts and [they] will obtain justice." "Indeed," he says, "there is nothing more admirable in any system of jurisprudence than the principles laid down in the Mosaic law to govern the administration of justice.

“The charge of Moses to the judges was: ‘Hear ye the causes between your brethren and decide justly between a man and his brother or between a man and his ‘ger’ (alien laborer). Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; ye shall hear the small and the great alike; and ye shall fear no man, for justice is God’s.’”

And to this the author adds a wealth of citations prescribing the duty of magistrates, forbidding them to take gifts, warning them against yielding to the voice of the one who “perverts the justice due to the ‘ger’”.

And thus he concludes the study:

“We may fairly say that a great movement for the protection and improvement of the laboring mass was initiated in Israel more than three thousand years ago and continued to permeate its life and literature, becoming indeed a part of the mental constitution of the people.

“While the records of the Bible on the subject may not have been fully appreciated, the main fact could not be ignored and by the wide diffusion of the Book it has penetrated into every nook and cranny of the civilized world, changing institutions and governments.”

Once on a time, I consulted Judge Sulzberger as to the best way of presenting a certain topic to an audience. His advice was: “Begin at the end.”

In the imperfect presentation of that phase of our friend’s influence which I have made my subject, his wise counsel has apparently been disregarded. But in reality it has been obeyed. The man who succeeded to Isaac Leeser’s chair may have been young in years but he was mature in mind and rich in knowledge. All that followed has been but the continued fruitage of a tree already bearing. Under

a potent stimulus, the century-plant of Jewry in Philadelphia flowered twice in an hundred years.

And now, in conclusion, let me turn briefly to the beginning.

Such a mind, such a soul, such a career as Mayer Sulzberger's, must have owed much to heredity and to early training.

"Men," said our friend himself, "are the epitomes of their ancestors' traits;" and none insists more than he, upon the formative influence of home and school and personal example.

Over a door in the Jewish Hospital is affixed a tablet setting forth the founding of the institution by Abraham Sulzberger. He was Mayer's father. For twenty years prior to his emigration to America to give his children a freer atmosphere for their development, he had been minister of the congregation in his native town; as was his father Salaman Sulzberger, before him. It was from the example of his father and mother that the boy Mayer learned the beauty of the Jewish life. It was the teaching of his father that gave him, in the Hebrew language, the key of freedom to a vast city of intellectual and spiritual treasures.

May I not be pardoned if I choose a personal experience to illustrate the manner of that teaching?

In my adolescence I sat behind Abraham Sulzberger in the synagogue. On one of the rare occasions when he permitted himself to talk to me during the service, the Hazan—Dr. Morais—had just read the scriptural passage: "The secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those that have been revealed are for us and for our children forever."

The exact words of Mr. Sulzberger's comment upon this, I do not recall. Its purport has stayed with me and often comes to mind, when I hear or read the futile outgivings of those, who, ignorant of the essential truths of either, attempt to set science against religion or religion against science. "This text," he said, in effect, "is the real *Moreh Nebuchim*—the true guide of the perplexed. The ultimate mysteries we cannot solve; let us be humble in their presence. But the duty of man has been revealed. And these laws were not for the ancient day only; they are for us and for our children unto the end of time."

With such parental guidance; with the teaching and friendship of Isaac Leeser; and with his own rare endowments of mind and soul our friend became the upright judge, the kindly, big-hearted man, the loyal citizen, the faithful son of Israel, whose memory we have met to honor—who not only emphasized in his teaching, but exemplified in his life, Micah's\* summary of man's duty—

Doing justly, loving mercy,  
Serving reverently his God.

\* According to Judge Sulzberger (Status of Labor in Ancient Israel) the Hebrew word '*im*' (spelled with '*Ayin*' and meaning 'with') indicates *service*; as of Jacob *with* Laban. This is the word that Micah uses in the text quoted.