

The

JEWISH MONITOR

DR. GEORGE FOX, EDITOR

The LEADING JEWISH JOURNAL OF THE GREAT SOUTHWEST



VOL. X, NO. 8.

FORT WORTH-DALLAS, TEXAS, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 1920.

Price 5 Cents

We called him a poor devil, a failure, a victim of the pitiless economic system, which seems to take delight in knocking a man when he is down. It was not until the end when we opened our eyes and decided that not Levine but we were the victims.

I shall never forget how he plodded after us that dull Sunday morning when he first looked over his apartment. He took his duties as superintendent seriously enough, poor Levine, when they involved showing an empty apartment or collecting the rent. When it came to collecting the garbage on time or repairing a broken window lock, that was a different matter.

He was a tall, slightly stooped son of Israel with a sandy mustache and pathetic eyes. Some thing dog-like about them, you know, which made you afraid of hurting his feelings. The same sort of look which causes some of us sentimental dog lovers to refrain from flinging stone when a mangy cur insists upon following us down the avenue. He followed at our heels very much like a dumb beast, too, pathetically anxious that we should like the place.

We didn't like it at all—the dark bedrooms just a little larger than our wife's best tablecloth, the too highly decorated dining room and the living room which did not seem to have had any decoration whatever since the year of the World's Fair. But we thought we would like our superintendent whom at first in our western ignorance of New York's vocabulary we called our janitor. For he was old, a little lame (he always limped more when you put an extra job upon his bowed shoulders) and a Jew. With so much rishus in the world, I ask you mustn't we be fond of our fellow-Jews!

But, Jew or no Jew, it soon grew rather a tax to be fond of Levine. He seldom did what was expected of him; when, by chance, he performed some duty, he always blundered and made matters worse than before. He was most erratic in the business of calling for slops every morning, and, when he finally did send his musical cry up the area way, seldom failed to berate our maid for not being ready to receive him, which irritated our maid and filled our hearts with misgivings; we were rather fond of our wife and the children and the family silver; still we might have viewed the loss of them with comparative composure. But to lose our treasured Elizabeth, who could actually cook little, didn't object to children and was willing to work for us for only sixteen a week, was a blow too awful to conjecture. In desperation we sought Levine and bribed him with cigars not to anger her ladyship. He merely grunted in reply—a most unpleasant habit.

Another thing, he was always care-

less about delivering the morning's mail. Since our persecuted landlord could not raise our rent more than the lawful 25 per cent he thriftily lowered running expenses by sending away our bell boy. Levine, grumbling over the extra work, sometimes brought the mail around; sometimes he sent it up in the dumbwaiter, and it was just as likely as not to land along with the wastepapers and slop pail into a neighbors kitchen. The Lord knows how many of our over-due checks from tardy editors have thus been lost forever. Though it must be confessed, Levine's system brought joy to at least one member of the household. Elizabeth, in pawing over our morning's mail, delivered via the kitchen, used to take infinite delight in censoring our postal cards.

Most irritating of all, Levine never finished a job. I remember, to recall just one painful example of his inefficiency, the time one of the kitchen pipes burst. We sent for Levine, who looked over the flooded area with his usual philosophic calm. With painful deliberation—all of his movements were slow and painful—he bent down, turned a faucet, or whatever one calls them, to and fro, then, rising, promised to come back shortly with some tools.

Minutes passed and dinner time drew near. Elizabeth refused to ven-

ture into the whirlpool, and starvation seemed imminent. Until, moved to heroism by ever increasing pangs of hunger, I paddled across the floor, damned the stream (in more ways than one), ordered Elizabeth to put on the roast, and stalked to the telephone to tell Levine what I thought of him. He answered mildly that he was looking for tools. An hour after dinner when our children accompanied us on a stroll, we glanced down into the open windows and saw him sitting behind his Yiddish paper. He looked at us, nodded and smiled. I now saw a better natured man.

"But why don't you complain about him," I demanded of Finkelstein, our next door neighbor. "Even if the agent is a grouch and won't give us any repairs he has to give us decent janitor service."

Finkelstein agreed. The halls, he said, were never swept, and honest to God, he was ashamed when his wife's relatives came to see him. He knew they pitied Flossie for living in such a bum apartment.

"Then complain about him," I urged. "You say you're the oldest tenant here and that ought to help a little. And I'll back you up—all the tenants will."

Finkelstein gave me a withering glance. "All of the tenants are Jews,

except the Browns on the third floor," he told me, "and with his looks I bet that his name wasn't Braunsky or something once."

"But what's that got to do with Levine?" I demanded.

"Ain't he a Jew and should we make trouble for a poor devil like him, nebbich, with a bad leg and everything? If he lost his job he'd oser get another one at his age. And ain't the agent an Irishman and such rishus ponum that if he was complaining about Levine wouldn't he go and say we Jews was always picking on one another. I tell you it can't be done. We've got to put up with it."

I protested. "We're not running a home for cripples or aged Jews," I answered hotly. "Only this morning the awning fell down and almost hit the baby. And he's been promising to fix it ever since we moved in. Go ahead and complain. I'll start a petition to have him removed, if you're afraid to do anything yourself. And all the rest of the tenants have to do will be to sign it. You'll do that much, won't you?"

But my neighbor shook his head. "You don't know my wife," he said sadly. "My Flossie has a good heart and she's so sorry for the poor devil that if I got him in trouble she'd throw me out of the house. A heart of gold that woman has. The last time I wanted to go to my lodge I couldn't find my dress suit. Honest to God, she went and sold it to one of them robber old clothes fellows. She said her Sisterhood was making each member give five dollars to charity they earned themselves and she thought it was the quickest way. And then they say they've got brains to vote."

"I left Finkelstein shaking his head over the follies of womankind in general and his Flossie in particular and made formal calls upon several other tenants. With no better results. Everyone agreed—with different degrees of violence—that Levine deserved hanging, or at least deportation. But none of them wanted to complain to the malicious agent. "There's enough rishus as it is," was the unanimous cry. "Why should we Yehudim get the poor devil in trouble?"

Now I am a man of many ideas and refused to be beaten so easily. For a whole morning my typewriter stood idle while I walked in Central Park devising means of ridding the neighbors of the inefficient Levine. Time is money with me, but I was more than willing to devote both to a good cause. My motives, I admit, were selfish. I felt I could never sit down in peace to begin by newest masterpiece until Levine ceased clogging up the wheels of the household machinery.

My planning bore fruit. Even our wife who had entirely too many ideas of her own agreed that the plan was

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POOR DEVIL

By E. C. Ehrlich.

I came to this land with Columbus, as an astronomer, interpreter and physician.

I followed the Father of our Country, George Washington, in his fight for Liberty, and helped to feed and clothe his army at Valley Forge; some of my brothers gave up their lives for this land of Liberty.

I followed General Robert E. Lee in all his battles; I assisted President Jefferson Davis in establishing the Southern Confederacy.

I assisted the North in establishing peace.

I followed Theodore Roosevelt to Cuba and the Philippine Islands. I followed General Pershing across the seas and many of mine, lie buried under the poppies of Flanders.

I gave to the Sciences some of my best. I gave to the Legal Fraternity the first Book of Law. I gave to the Medical Fraternity the best that was in me. I gave to the Press, men that were qualified to meet the necessary requirements. I contributed to the Wealthy Class, to the Poor Class, to the learned and to the Unlearned, to the Benevolent and to the Miser.

My ancestors gave the Light of the One God.

I am good and I am bad—no better nor worse than my fellows.

I am the spirit of the Jew.

HENRY GERNSBACHER.