

# THE REFUGEE

By ISIDORE GOLDSTUCK

IT was about half-past two of a warm, sunny afternoon in May, when our ship, the "Empress of Russia," left the harbour of New York for England. Most of the passengers on board, it seemed, were wealthy people, who were taking a trip to Europe for pleasure. They were all very cheerful, and stood in groups on the deck, laughing and chatting among themselves.

Unnoticed by this gay company, there stood in a retired part of the ship, a young man of about twenty-eight, apparently a Russian Jew; rather poorly dressed, with a thin, pale face, sad looking eyes, and a thick black moustache. He stood apart from the cheerful young men and women, and seemed not to notice or pay any heed to their loud laughter. I regarded him for a few minutes and passed on my way.

One morning (it was, if I rightly remember, four days after our setting out) I found him leaning over the rail, and looking thoughtfully into the water. From his appearance and behaviour I understood that he must be very miserable, and I felt—I can't account for it—an intense longing to inquire of him about his sorrow; but I did not dare to disturb him. At last, however, taking courage, I approached him, and in a low tone said: "Shalom Alechem." He did not stir. I repeated it a little louder when he suddenly turned round, and appeared a good deal startled. I, too, became perplexed, and we thus stood for more than half a minute looking into each other's face.

"Excuse me," said I, recovering, "Excuse me, I—I thought you were a Jew—a fellow countryman. I hope I am not mistaken."

"No, you are not mistaken, sir," he replied in a sad tone. "I am a Jew."

"Yes, I am a Jew," he added after a short pause, during which he had been staring at me, and then returned to his former position.

The following evening I entered into a conversation with him and he told me his sad story:

"I was serving in the Russian army," he began, "when the war in Manchuria broke out, and together with our whole battalion, in which there were many other Jews, I was sent to Port Arthur. There, under the leadership of that 'gallant' Stossel, all my co-religionists fell, fighting for Russia. I, too, received some serious wounds, but fortunately, or rather unfortunately, remained alive, and was sent back to Russia."

At these last words an outburst of tears interrupted his voice; but he soon recovered and continued:

"I was sent back to Russia, I said, to Adessa, where my parents were living; and imagine—no, you can't imagine!—I walk through the street approaching our house—but, God of Abraham! What do I see? The whole house is destroyed—the windows, the doors, broken. I rush into the house—empty."

Here he became silent, and again hung his head absorbed in thought.

"Friend," said I, deeply moved, "Friend, will you continue?"

Here he suddenly raised up his head and looked into my face as if he had never seen me before; but soon, as if he were reminded of something, added:

"Why? Wherefore shall I molest you with such things? You are a free Canadian, a cheerful youth—why disturb your happiness?"

I entreated him, and he resumed:

"Next, I remember, when I opened my eyes, I found myself in a clean white bed, and a nurse holding my hand. I was in a critical condition—they told me—too sudden a surprise."

At the last word he took a red handkerchief and wiped off a tear:

"I soon found out that in the \*pogrom which had taken place in Adessa—indeed, all over Russia—during my absence, my father and mother were killed. My old father! My dear mother! A horrible death they had! kerosene, they—those furious beasts—poured upon them, and burned them alive. This happened while I was fighting, shedding my blood for the Russian nation."

At the last words his voice trembled; he ground his teeth and went on:

"I swore revenge! I joined one of the secret societies, not for the purpose of liberating Russia. Nay! I will not sacrifice my life for a people, which can drive nails into the heads of human beings, which can cut open bellies, and fill them with feathers; saw off hands, pierce eyes, and fill them with sand and commit other cruelties of which the Middle Ages did not know. I entered this or-

ganisation in order to cause as much terror, as much devastation and destruction among the Russians as I could; and I have succeeded—I have satisfied my revenge. At last I had to flee from Russia. The "Relief Fund" furnished me with the necessary expense, and I set out to America. At New York, in Castle Garden, after those long examinations—those "Tortures," it was finally decreed that I had to return. To return?" he repeated, as if he did not believe what he had just said. "Whither? Whither shall I return? To my country? To my home?—I have no country! I have no home! We are a nation of 'vagabonds and rogues,' driven from one country to another. We had—we had a country, a powerful and fruitful one; but they have deprived us of it—driven us out—dispersed us among the nations, who despise and mock us."

"But our time will come, too!" he enthusiastically burst forth, after a short pause. "Zionism, the modern Messiah, will lead us back to the land of David, to the land of the Maccabees!"

He slowly arose, and began to walk to and fro with slow strides. I can yet call up his earnest look, full of despair, his thin, pale cheeks—indeed, the whole scene remains fresh in my memory.

"This Sheeny," I heard a voice behind me, "Must still be mourning over the fall of Jerusalem." A burst of loud laughter followed. I wanted to turn round, when the Russian young man (who,

of course, did not understand this "Joke") made a few steps towards me, and in that ever-despairing voice said:

"My friend, I am returning to Russia. To Russia! My mind shudders at the recollection. The 'Goddess of Liberty' has shut the gates before me. What am I to expect now?—Death? Nay, this word cannot express it, nor will the Auto-de-Je of the Middle Ages. They will torture me, torment me! I am a two-fold criminal—both a Jew and a revolutionist."

Having said the last words, he approached the rail, and looking into the water, which was then quite restless, said:

O! that these raging waves of the ocean would swallow me alive ere I reach that cursed country."

He remained leaning on the rail and I went off. On the next day at four o'clock, as I was sitting in the cabin, thinking about the strange meeting I had, I was suddenly aroused by loud shrieks over head. In terror I threw myself out upon deck. "Too late, too late," I heard the people say, as the life boats were let down. "He's gone." I at once knew what had happened—the wretched man had made an end of his sufferings. The waves continued their usual course, the ship again advanced at its usual speed, and the people soon regained their composure. On the twenty-seventh of May, the "Empress of Russia" entered the harbour of Liverpool.

## VALUE OF CANADIAN CLUBS

*Opinion of Mr. J. A. Macdonald as Given to the Fort William Club.*

I CONCEIVE of The Canadian Club, not as a doer of things but as a maker of opinion. One of its advantages is that any man can say anything he likes, knowing that every member has the same right. These Clubs exist right across the continent, and in them all classes of men meet, not to do things, but to make opinion. This is the function of the Canadian Club. When you cease to do things, you will begin to make opinion and that will be your function. The importance of a club like this lies in its background—the Canadian Democracy. Our Canadian Democracy is not a democracy such as the Greeks enjoyed, where the few were free and the great multitude were slaves. It is not such a democracy as the French Republic meant. What we mean by a democracy is that all citizens are under obligation to do every man his share in estimating what are the laws under which men should live, not in making laws. We elect men to our Councils and Legislatures and Parliament, as though laws could be made. We shall never come to an understanding of democracy until we come to know that laws are not made—that laws ARE. The men who go to Parliament no more make the laws under which men should live than the medical men and the scientific men and go into the laboratory and make the laws by which things coalesce, or out into nature to make the laws by which things grow. LAWS ARE! The business of scientific men is to study the facts, to examine what actually are the laws by which things combine and grow and make them known for the advantage of man. The same is true of social institutions. Men do not make laws, Laws are. The business of men in Council, Legislature and Parliament and everywhere is to ascertain what are the laws by which men may live together in a socially organised state. This is one of the functions of an institution like the Canadian Club, to estimate what are the laws of life, industrial, commercial, social and political. If that be true, this follows: in a democracy where the right to vote belongs to every man, the obligation to make that vote represent public opinion rests upon every man. We pride ourselves on our right to vote. We think it a great thing. We tell new men coming to our land that they are to be citizens of this land. We put upon these newcomers the responsibility resting upon the scientific man, to study what are the laws of life. Public opinion is the expression of general representative opinion in a community on any live public subject or interest. Without your public opinion your democracy cannot stand. I should like you to think, first of all, what public opinion must be in your community and in your land if the democracy is to be strong. In the first place it must be informed public opinion if it is to be at all effective. In the

next place it must be alert. There is much public opinion that is informed but is not active. On many public questions, what is everybody's concern is nobody's concern. Much opinion is warped by men's own interests. Ordinarily men are straight and honest, as I find them. But generally, when a man's own personal interest is concerned, his judgment will go wrong, his perspective will be awry. He will be sound on the tariff until some interest of his own is affected. I have known high tariff men who were strong free-traders in the materials involving their own interests, in the making of stoves, for instance. When our own personal interests are concerned our judgment goes wrong, human beings as we are. More than that, informed active, public tone is as needful in the community as in the individual. A local interest often disturbs and warps the judgment of a community.

## Stories of the Czar

NOT the least interested spectator of our present naval situation must be the Czar, who, by the way, is expected to pay a visit to this country shortly, says M. A. P. Nicholas II is keenly interested in everything to do with the sea, and possesses what is probably the finest collection of miniature men-of-war and other vessels in the world. His collection numbers over fifty specimens, each model being most beautifully and accurately constructed. It is said that some of these models have cost hundreds of pounds each. Some years ago, he gave orders for a model to be made of the *Lucania*, the vessel which for many years held the record between Liverpool and New York, and he has many other replicas of famous merchant vessels which are perfect in every detail.

As is well known, the Czar is very superstitious, and he has often consulted spiritualists and others claiming supernatural powers. Among his most treasured possessions are some ancient coins, which came to him in a curious manner. Some years ago, a certain Jew dreamed three times that the spirit of Czar Alexander III appeared to him, and told him that some coins which he owned, and which had been procured from a wonder-working rabbi, had the power of shielding anyone from all evil, and begged the Jew to give them to Nicholas II. The former was greatly impressed by his "visions," and at once took steps to have the coins presented to the Czar. He sent them, with a description of his dreams, to the Russian Ambassador at Vienna, who had the coins conveyed to Nicholas. The Emperor was greatly pleased with the gift, and caused the donor to be profusely thanked.

\*Massacre of Jews.