This is to certify that the

dissertation entitled

"THE PEN AND THE PULPIT": ISAAC MAYER WISE'S FICTION IN THE ISRAELITE

presented by

Lev Raphael

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in English

R. Glenn Wright
Major professor

Date July 30, 1986

"THE PEN AND THE PULPIT": ISAAC MAYER WISE'S FICTION IN THE ISRAELITE

By

Lev Raphael

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of English

1986

ABSTRACT

"THE PEN AND THE PULPIT": ISAAC MAYER WISE'S FICTION IN THE ISRAELITE

By

Lev Raphael

More than anyone else in the nineteenth century, Isaac Mayer Wise is responsible for the development of Reform Judaism in the United States. His unceasing efforts to unify and invigorate American Jewry led to the creation of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, and the first permanent American rabbinical seminary, Hebrew Union College.

Wise also considered himself the first American Jewish novelist. Between 1854 and 1864 he serialized eleven novels in his newspaper The Israelite, though only two were ever published in book form-- The Combat of the People (1859) and The First of the Maccabees (1860). Wise claimed that his novels were one way in which to create images of contemporary and historical Jews that would build American Jews' self-esteem and understanding of their past, as well as press the case for Reform. There has never been a study of Wise's fiction, its themes and achievement. Critics and biographers merely refer to the fiction in passing or summarily dismiss it as unworthy of attention. There is even some confusion as to the exact number of novels he wrote and

the dates of several novels' publication.

The most striking characteristic of Wise's novels is their deep and strident rage against Gentile, and predominantly Roman Catholic, oppression of Jews. Gentiles emerge in the fiction as villains bent on conversion and destruction of the Jews, who are generally presented as noble, heroic, intelligent and infinitely superior in culture and humanity to their enemies. Wise's literary imagination is deeply Gothic. Persecution is the central element of his novels, with the Jewish people taking the role of the Gothic heroine who is abused, threatened, kidnapped, imprisoned. One of the novels rises above paper-thin characterizations and often ludicrous plots, and deserves to be brought out of obscurity. The Last Struggle of the Nation (1856-1858), describing the Bar Kochba revolt of 135 C.E., is a deeply felt and movingly created picture of the rise and fall of the last independent Jewish state.

"...we have been given the pen and the pulpit,
the English language and a boundless enthusiasm."

The Israelite
April 25, 1879

For Glenn Wright, with many thanks

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

Isaac Mayer Wise dominated the American-Jewish scene in the nineteenth century for almost fifty years. A tireless writer, preacher, lecturer and polemicist, he fought to create a Judaism that was both Reformed and American. His single-mindedness, his extensive traveling and publishing, won him admirers and detractors--and left an impressive legacy. A pragmatist, Wise translated the vision of Reform into religious institutions.

In the late 1840's, newly-arrived from Bohemia, Wise was already writing newspaper articles about the need for unity and structure in American-Jewish life (1). He deplored the ignorance and blind adherence to tradition he found in American Jews and proposed the solutions of a common liturgy, a synod to guide Judaism in America, and a college that would train American rabbis, reducing dependence on rabbis from Europe. Wise's goals took some twenty-five years to achieve fruition. In 1873 the Union of American Hebrew Congregations was formed with its first order of business the establishment of Hebrew Union College, which was accomplished two years later. Graduates of that first permanent rabbinical seminary joined in 1889 to found the Central Conference of American Rabbis. All three Reform organizations are flourishing and HUC is a central institution of Jewish learning in America.

Firmly established in 1854 as Rabbi of Cincinnati's B'Nai Yeshurun Temple, one of the country's largest and most flourishing congregations, Wise set out to establish a weekly journal which he envisioned as a weapon and a tool. It would fight anti-Jewish discrimination wherever he found it, bring the richness of Scientific Judaism from what he considered its German obscurity to an American audience, and create what did not exist: American-Jewish literature. In 1851, studying English and working on his History of the Israelitish Nation in the Albany State Library, Wise had discovered that "there simply was no Jewish literature in the English language...I became furious," he recalls, "rushing impetuously through the materials on hand, but in vain. There was nothing" (2).

In the opening issue of his newspaper, July 15, 1854, whose motto was "Let There Be Light," Wise began to remedy that problem, the first page launching him as an American-Jewish novelist. He wrote eleven novels in the course of The Israelite's first decade, and inspired other writers to deal with Jewish themes in fiction and poetry. In addition to writing for and editing that newspaper and its German language companion, Die Deborah, Wise published many books and essays on the theology of Judaism, early Christianity, and Jewish history. This was all in addition to his congregational and educational duties and his extensive travels to dedicate temples and boost the cause of Reform.

Much of Wise's writing is forgotten, and in fact, scholars and historians focus more on Wise's activities in the realm of the practical than on what he wrote, with the exception of Israelite

editorials which are frequently quoted. Wise contributed to this neglect. In his memoirs he constantly asserts that he hated to write, and was always pushed into it by circumstances that would admit of no other solution. The situation with his fiction is more complicated, however, as we shall see. Wise's published comments on his novels express a deep ambivalence, and the very little that has been said about his fiction reflects those conflicting feelings. Given his stature, Wise's fiction has received the barest attention; it is usually mentioned just in passing, perhaps to give a sense of his range and versatility.

For Wise, writing, preaching, and lecturing were inseparable; he used "the pen and the pulpit" equally to Americanize the Jew and his Judaism. But his aims for The Israelite were more specific still: to arouse Jewish consciousness, highlight the bright side of Jewish character, inculcate respect for Jewish literature, awaken Jewish patriotism in the young. The largest question to consider in this study, then, is how these aims were expressed through his fiction.

My intention here is not to claim that Isaac Mayer Wise's fiction is the work of a neglected genius; his novels certainly "lack the esthetic, intellectual, and moral complexity and artistry that we demand of great literature" (3). But they are nonetheless worthy of attention for a number of reasons: Wise was a major figure of nineteenth century American Jewish life and examining the novels sheds new light on his beliefs and career; Wise's aim in writing fiction was to create a new literature and a new consciousness for American Jewry; what little has been said about the novels is distorted and

incomplete, and the entire body of his fiction has never been examined. In a larger context, Wise's curious ambivalence about his fiction reflects an era which sought to determine the true value of fiction; other, more substantial writers also wrestled with the question of worth. More attention too has been paid in recent years to the study of the American Jewish community before the great immigrations of 1880, and examining Wise illuminates the grey area of American Jewish literature before writers like Abraham Cahan and Emma Lazarus.

Because Wise's fiction is unknown, my concern here is with making it accessible; to that end, I have heavily relied on plot descriptions (simplified for clarity). But the emphasis on plot is also important because Wise's novels are really variations on one story: the courage of Jews through history in the face of Gentile perfidy. Chapter One will analyze Wise's attitude toward his fiction as expressed in his two memoirs, Reminiscences (1875) and "The World of My Books" (1898). It will also survey what critics and biographers have said about the fiction, partly in response to Wise himself. Chapters Two and Three cover eight novels set primarily in Europe, written from 1854 to 1864, in which Christian villainy battles but does not subdue Jewish heroism and faith. The novels discussed in Chapter Two are set in the 1830's and 1840's; those treated in Chapter Three are set in previous centuries. Chapter Three discusses the three novels Wise set in ancient Israel during the Bar Kochba Revolt, the time of Herod, and the Maccabean Revolt. Two of these novels were published in book form from the same plates used in The Israelite, and Wise tried raising

subscriptions to publish the third. In the Conclusion I will discuss the novels' literary quality, and the nature of Wise's literary imagination. Appendix A brings together Wise's comments on his major novel , The Last Struggle of the Nation; Appendix B examines a "Jamesian" tale that may or may not be by Wise.

I have found Wise's fiction far more interesting, entertaining, and suspenseful in its own right than any critic has indicated, but then I was not searching for a Jewish Hawthorne, Melville, or Poe. The fiction surprised me in another way, however. Given Wise's persistent and heroic efforts to create Jewish unity through rabbinical and congregational organizations, a college, and a common liturgy, I expected his novels to strongly press the case for Reform. On the whole, that is not their thrust. While various aspects of Reform are sometimes singled out for praise, the driving force of this fiction is anger. Again and again, Wise attacks Christians for their contempt, hatred, persecution and murder of Jews. Jewish wedding rituals, the Sabbath, and Passover may be singled out as commendable and important elements of Jewish faith, but Wise builds the case for a strong Jewish identity by recounting the sufferings of the Jews at the hands of their enemies. The implication is, of course, that Jews can never expect better, except in America, and even there they must be wary of missionaries. The fiction has also shed unexpected light on Wise's dismissal from his Albany post in 1851 and amplified what he is known to have written about conditions during the Civil War.

My initial research on this topic was supported by a small grant from the College of Arts and Letters of Michigan State University,

which also awarded me a dissertation fellowship in 1983. My work this past year could not have proceeded so quickly without the generous support of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. Glenn Wright has been the ideal thesis advisor: calm, clear, good-humored, thoughtful and sensitive. His editorial comments have always been on target, illuminating the text and my intentions, and I am deeply grateful for his continuing to work with me despite some difficult circumstances of his own. This project has been consistently enjoyable because of his guidance. Michael Bennett of Michigan State's interlibrary loan staff has been extremely helpful and I thank The American Jewish Archives and its director, Jacob Marcus, for prompt responses to many requests for information and copies of Wise's novels. Tamara Fish has been enthusiastic and supportive, and Gershen Kaufman has generously offered his time, insights, and encouragement. I am grateful for his careful proofing of the text. Kristin Lauer--my friend, guide and cheerleader for fifteen years--has been involved in every stage of this research and my graduate work at Michigan State. She alone knows how much I owe her. Lastly, without my parents' belief in me and support through rocky times, this project would have taken far longer.

NOTES

(1) Occident, VI, No. 9, pp. 431-5, December 1848. Quoted at length in Max B. May Isaac Mayer Wise (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), pp. 77-80.

(2) Isaac Mayer Wise Reminiscences trans. and ed. David Philipson. 2nd edition (New York: Central Synagogue of New York, 1945), p. 50.

(3) Nina Baym Woman's Fiction A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-1870 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 14.

SELECTED CHRONOLOGY
Isaac Mayer Wise
1819-1900

1819--born in Steingrub, near Eger, Bohemia
1843--Becomes minor religious official (religionsweiser) in Radnitz, Bohemia
1844--marries Terese Bloch
1846--emigrates to America; first public address: temple consecration in New Haven, Conn.; elected rabbi of Beth El, Albany
1847--First published article in Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums
1850--travels to Washington and hears the Senate en route to Charleston, S.C. seeking Beth Elohim's pulpit
1851--Dismissed from Beth El; forms Anshe Emeth ("Men of Truth") congregation in Albany.
1852--Writes articles for The Asmonean as contributing editor; "The End of Popes, Nobles and Kings"
1854--History of the Israelitish Nation; accepts B'nai Yeshurun pulpit in Cincinnati; starts The Israelite: The Convert, The Jewish Heroine; The Catastrophe at Eger
1855--The Shoemaker's Family; Romance, Philosophy and Cabalah, Resignation and Fidelity; starts Die Deborah, German weekly
1856--The Last Struggle of the Nation (ends 1858)
1857--Minhag America prayerbook
1858--The Combat of the People (published in book form 1859)
1859--First of the Maccabees (published in book form 1860)
1860--The Wizard of the Forest
1863--Nominated by Ohio Peace Democrats for State Senator, but congregation makes him decline
1864--The Rabbi of Bacherach
1868--The Origin of Christianity
1873--Union of American Hebrew Congregations formed (UAHC)
1874-1875--Reminiscences in Die Deborah
1875--Hebrew Union College founded
1880--History of the Hebrews Second Commonwealth
1889--Central Conference of American Rabbis formed (CCAR)
1892--The History of K.K. Bene [sic] Yeshurun
1896-1897--"The World of My Books" in Die Deborah

CHAPTER ONE

INCLUDING NOVELS

"He wrote many books, including novels...."

Nathan Glazer
American Judaism

I

Nathan Glazer's passing reference to Isaac Mayer Wise's fiction is typical of the general neglect suffered by the eleven novels Wise wrote for The Israelite (1). Jewish historians mention the fiction as if adding another, minor medal to a well-beribboned uniform. Wise may be "surely the most written about American Jew of the nineteenth century," (2) but his fiction has received the barest attention. Those few critics and biographers who do mention it have little or nothing of substance to say.

Wise's biographers, both early and more recent, have tended to write hagiography in which Wise is "rabbenu, morenu: our rabbi, our teacher, sainted scholar, prince of the Torah, one in a generation" (3). Their comments on his fiction have not been substantial or especially insightful. Other, negative judgments of the fiction are not quite as insubstantial, but they add little to our understanding. Occasionally, those judgements seem based on less than careful scholarship, and even an apparent failure to read the works they dismiss. The only critic attempting a meaningful survey of Wise's

fictional oeuvre, Abraham Steinberg, even gets the number of Wise's novels wrong, citing just six as definitely by Wise and two others as "probably" his (4).

In several of the brief discussions there is a curious ambivalence that appears to have its source in Wise's own statements about his fiction. Sefton Temkin notes that Wise's biographers have relied far too heavily on Wise's "own published recollections without checking them against contemporary sources" (5). In like manner, writers discussing Wise's fiction have ill-advisedly quoted Wise's own comments--or been subtly influenced by them--without noting the contradictions in what he says. The fiction itself has lain almost ignored in the pages of The Israelite.

Because Wise's autobiographical writings are so full of inconsistencies, discussion of Wise and his memoirs has frequently focused on major or minor questions of historical record. For instance, was Wise really ordained (given s'micha) in Europe and by whom? Did he meet Judah Benjamin in his 1850 Washington, D.C. visit? Why was he dismissed from his first Albany post? Was he a moderate or radical reformer--or an opportunist? Was his name even the German for "wise" because an ancestor was given the honorary title chacham (Hebrew for "wise")? In his definitive biography, James G. Heller devotes a long "prefatory critical note" to dealing with a number of such questions that arise because his early accounts of Wise are largely based on Reminiscences and works that rely on that memoir. In wondering how reliable Wise's own words were, Heller concludes that Wise was "wrong about details, dates, etc." (6), but got the stories

themselves right. The tone of the note is defensive, which partially vitiates the conclusion, and Heller does have to admit that for many of Wise's statements no external corroboration exists.

Leon Jick finds this "loyalist" defense unsuccessful, however valiant, warning critics to treat Wise's autobiography with "healthy skepticism" because Wise's "accounts of events tend to exaggerate his own role and give full rein to his later prejudices" (7). Jick argues for something like the tolerance with which we would greet a charming family blowhard; after all, "Wise himself was more earthy than those who would canonize him" and "might have acknowledged (and justified) a bit of hyperbole" (Jick, p. 218). While this "explanation" is rather simplistic, it alludes to a question that is far more interesting than determining what Wise actually did or said or even was. How did Wise present himself and his writing in his memoirs? The answer--to be considered in Part II below--will help explain the curious lack of study his fiction has received, as well as the attitude of his critics, which will be surveyed in Part III.

II

In their discussion of the ways in which autobiographies are linked with the American Myth, William C. Spengemen and L. R. Lundquist offer a serious and extremely useful caveat. It is a mistake to read a writer's memoirs seeking historical accuracy, they say. Autobiography "implies only that the author is writing specifically about himself; it has nothing to do with factual truth. It presents rather, a metaphor for the raw experience" (7).

Autobiography is the translation of an author's "unique view of himself" into his culture's language, by which the author creates two things: "a fictive character who undergoes adventures drawn from the author's memory and a narrative persona who reports these experiences and evaluates them." The source of this fictionalization of experience is the author's desire to "adapt some consistent, overriding view of himself and his past...if he does not, his life will seem to him fragmented and incoherent, and his story will appear to us pointless and confused" (p. 514). Spengemen and Lundquist see the American Myth as "describing human history as a pilgrimage from imperfection to pefection." This millenial myth has a cast of four: Prophet, Hero, Villain and Outcast, with American writers of autobiography tending to assume one such role. Wise assumes three in his memoirs: he is everything but Villain.

When Wise arrived in New York, he was penniless and unknown, a minor religious functionary (Temkin, p.103). Reminiscences is a chronicle of Wise's eleven-year rise from virtual obscurity to notoriety as the nationally-known rabbi of one of the country's most prominent congregations in a major economic center, Cincinnati, "Queen of the West." On the way, there are a great many struggles against Orthodoxy and apathy which Wise generally wins with stinging oratory. Wise eventually moves throughout the country as a sort of Reform Johnny Appleseed, noting about his travels in 1855 to Chicago, Milwaukee and Detroit:

> Every word that I spoke during the trip was a fruitful seed that took root and sought the light. New congregations were formed in rapid succesion in the places where I had stopped, and questions of Reform were agitated so strongly that they never ceased being debated (8).

The book's primary note is heroic and it rings with assertions like "the world belongs to him who dares," "I was a child of destiny," "no man, no event...should ever conquer me," "I never refused to take a challenge," "I must conquer, come what may," "I never undertook a journey without some definite object," "courage grows in battle," "no one among all the Jews that had emigrated to America...had to fight such a coterie of bitter enemies as I." When Wise first meets Rabbi Max Lilienthal in New York, he practically receives a call to arms. Wise reports that Lilienthal--who would later co-edit The Israelite and preach in Cincinnati--cries, "Hold up your head! Courage! You are the man. We need you" (p. 20).

The book occasionally and entertainingly reads like an opera, with supernumeraries chiming in to praise and exhort Wise. In 1851, long-brewing dissatisfaction with Wise erupted in his Albany congregation of Beth El; Wise had abused his authority and been insensitive to the religious feelings of his more Orthodox congregants (9). The congregation's president attempted to keep Wise from the pulpit on the morning of Rosh Hashanah (New Year's), struck him, and a melee resulted that ended with the police closing the temple. Aftewards, one of Wise's supporters declaims:

> 'We all recognize that this is a critical moment for American Judaism, which must be either thoroughly reformed or die. We recognize no less clearly that you are the bearer of the new idea which will conquer or fall with you.

> We are ready to stand by you to the end, and to sacrifice everything in our power. If we endure, the Orthodox party will soon perceive that it gave itself the death blow last Rosh Hashanah. If we fail, Judaism will fall with us' (p. 173).

Wise also compares himself to Samson and Faust, explicitly and implicitly: he is frequently tempted to give up the rabbinate for a career in law, teaching or a position in the Library of Congress. But these mephistophelean temptations only firm his resolve to go forward "in God's name."

Wise, the bearer of a new idea, the Promethean, is also not surprisingly a prophet with a "holy mission," invoking both Moses and Paul as models: "I stood before the burning thornbush and struggled with myself," "Since the days of Saul of Tarsus...no sensible person has undertaken to travel far and wide, to quarrel with everybody, to scold, to endure so many attacks, threats, insults, and defamation on behalf of Judaism as did I" (p. 202). The comparison to Paul is not at all incongruous, given Wise's high estimation of Paul and his sense of Paul's mission. In "Paul and the Mystics" Wise praises Paul for his "fearless, powerful and unyielding character" (10) and his efforts to denationalize "the Hebrew ideal" and promulgate it among the Gentiles "in the form of universal religion." The parallels with Wise's vision of Judaism's future are obvious; Dena Wilensky as well as others have demonstrated that through Wise's work ran the belief that Judaism would become the world's religion, uniting all people in rationality and peace. It was a claim Wise made boldly and consistently (11).

Wise's prophetic vision in Reminiscences is predominantly a

bright one; again and again he calls himself an idealist and optimist, enthusiastic "on the subjects of America and freedom," and Reform. But the striving, the sense of mission and truth Wise has to share are counterpointed by something darker. Wise also compares himself to Macbeth and Hamlet. The latter's "The time is out of joint: O cursed spite,/That ever I was born to set it right!" (Act I, Scene V, 188-189) seems echoed in observations like "A terrible fate has condemned me to be the scapegoat of an era in conradiction with itself" (p. 196). A sense of doom and isolation runs parallel to Wise's heroism, and emerges whenever Wise is disappointed or frustrated: "I shall never be happy," "I stood alone, completely alone," "not a soul had the courage to take my part," "I was alone once again," "like Jeremiah, I sat upon the ruins."

For all this desolation, however, Reminiscences is a story of triumph, and lest readers be unclear about how to approach his story, Wise supplies a virtual program in the form of a dream he says he had the night before landing in New York. The themes of his heroism, isolation and prophetic role are all clearly present and the dream is worthy of full quotation:

> I dreamed that a great storm which drove the ship toward the land had arisen. Every one swayed, trembled, feared, prayed; the inky waves rose mountain high, and broke into seething masses, only to give way to other watery heights. Convulsively I embraced wife and child, and spoke words of calm and comfort. It then appeared to me as though a high, steep, rocky mountain was hurrying toward us and threatened to crush us. 'Here we must land, or we sink,' cried the captain, with quaking voice. Scarcely had these words been uttered ere the ribs of the ship, which had been hurled on the rock, cracked. I took a daring leap, and stood on the rock with wife and child, the ocean still roared; a wave seized the ship, and cast it far out into the seething waters; in a few moments it was swallowed up in the night,

> and disappeared from my gaze. So then, here we were on a rugged rock; at our feet the waters, agitated by the wild storm, raged; above us and about us were forbidding rocks, while the darkness added its terrors. Finally, after a long interval, morning dawned, and revealed the dangerous situation. 'However steep this mountain appears, we must ascend it,' said I to my wife. I took my child on one arm; tremblingly my wife clung to the other, and then forward, in God's name! It seemed to me as though an inner voice called, 'Up above there is help.' With dififculty we clambered from rock to rock, higher and higher, constantly, untiringly. Then, as though the measure of woes was not yet full, hollow-eyed, ghostly, grinning dwarfs, lascivious, ragged goblins, and tiny poodles with large, hollow, puffed-out heads, came towards us on the narrow path, opposed our further progress, and mocked me mercilessly. I brushed them aside; but for every ten that I pushed away a hundred arose from out the bare rock. They came in the shape of night-owls, and deafened me with their cries; the sizzed about me like angry wasps, and stung me; they placed themselves, like stupid blocks, in my path; in short, they did everything to harass me and prevent my further progress. My wife at my side cried for fright but my courage, strength and confidence grew. I begged, implored, avoided, circumvented them, to no avail. Then I marched straight through the crowd of dwarfs, paid no attention to their ravings, dashed them aside to the right and the left, until finally, weary and perspiring, we reached the summit of the mountain. Arriving there, I saw the most beautiful and glorious landscape, the richest, most fertile meadows, but I sank fainting; thereupon I awoke, and found that it was all a dream; but I have often thought of that dream (pp. 14-16).

Sefton Temkin astutely recognizes this dream as "the leit motif for Wise's life" (12) and that its importance lies in what the dream reveals about Wise. "Wise sees himself as the lone hero, the instrument of salvation" and "the idea of presenting himself to the public in that light does not abash him" (p. 14). The dream is transparently anachronistic, especially in its language, which is often more appropriate for doctrinal struggles than a Walpurgisnacht: "opposed our further progress," "prevent my further progress," "placed themselves, like stupid blocks, in my path." But what would a prophet and hero be without such a burning vision of his mission to come?

Temkin also points out elsewhere that from his earliest struggles in the United States, Wise envisioned himself as a God-inspired "lonely warrior" (Temkin, p. 570).

Reminiscences is indeed the story of an arduous but successful rise from being a schlemihl to eminence. The "I" Wise writes about is headstrong, daring, and though he does need polish, Wise admires him for his energy as much as later writers do. The book is a sort of Bildungsroman, with Wise learning a great deal: how to inspire a congregation after early failures at oratory; how to succesfully rout Christian missionaries by word and by his pen; how to move comfortably in Gentile social circles; how to plan and calculate his "campaigns"; how to get along more amiably with a congregation; how, even, to acquire more "tact and moderation," a necessity he did not easily comprehend.

Wise may present himself as a hero, prophet, and visionary, but what he says about his writing is not quite so exalted, and definitely more complex. He found his early articles to be "very poor," mere "scribbling," insipid and obscure. Yet his first articles "debunking" Christianity for Jews were dreaded by Christians, he says, and attacked by Jews who feared that Wise would bring down Gentile wrath on American Jewish heads. Thus even before he considers himself a capable writer, he sees his work is noteworthy and controversial.

Wise says that he became an editor (he was actually a contributing editor) of the Orthodox Asmonean in 1850 "almost against the will of" his other self (p. 202). He claims that the weekly's editor-in-chief, Robert Lyons, was persuaded to hire him by a mutual

friend, "Mrs. F.," who also pressured Wise to write a book on Jewish philosophers, which was never written. As a journalist, Wise "became a veritable literary machine" who wrote better than his critics. The same Mrs. F. urged Wise to write on Jewish history and this project revealed to him that "There were practically no books on the most elementary Jewish subjects," (13) and so Wise heroically worked himself "almost to death" to fill that gap with his History of the Israelitish Nation, published in Albany in 1854. The book presented Jewish history from "the democratic standpoint, condemning the monarchy as contrary to the laws of Moses," and relegated miracles to the realm of religion, not history. This was the most explosive of Wise's writings up to that point, a book that would "shock the world," and he claims that the Orthodox used it as an opportunity to hound and attack him. Wise credits the History with having "worked a revolution within Judaism and Christianity"; it also gave him invaluable experience with typesetting and proofing.

The heroic note recurs in Wise's determination to inaugurate a newspaper in 1854 dedicated both to Judaism and Reform: "I will start a conflagration which the whole Orthodox host will not be able to quench" (p. 263). In discussing The Israelite Wise comments on his ease at composition, his enjoyment of writing and his facility with English. Wise also rhapsodizes on the inspiration and feeling, the "heart's blood," that go into writing that may be ignored, devalued and even attacked by the ignorant. All this is in contrast to earlier remarks about the difficulties of writing and the act certainly seems to have become easier for him by his own account, and when one

considers his increasing output.

"There was no Jewish journal West of the Alleghenies" (14) and Wise intended a broader range for his newspaper than that of Isaac Leeser's Occident and Lyon's Asmonean. He felt that Leeser's monthly presented Judaism as "a set of observances devoid of any higher spirit that elevated mankind" (15) and Lyon's weekly was a hodgepodge of differing views "crowded in and upon each other between lead mines, iron works, railroad stocks, market prices, new books, music and dramatical performances" (Cohen, p. 141). To overcome the apathy among his prospective audience, Wise could hardly have excluded novels, for he wrote at a time when America's reviewers recognized novels as a major feature of the age. Putnam's wrote in October 1854, "We know not what we would do without them....Do you wish to instruct, to convince, to please? Write a novel! Have you a system of religion or politics or manners or social life to inculcate? Write a novel!" (16) The Southern Literary Messenger opined in May of the same year: "The novel is the characteristic effort of the present age. It is more. It is its creature and impression" (Baym, p. 36).

The 1850's saw the number of weekly newspapers in the United States rise by more than a third, from 2,048 in 1850 to 2,971 in 1860, and the most widely read, Robert Bonner's New York Ledger, serialized fiction by popular writers like E.D.E.N. Southworth on its front page (17). Wise clearly understood the contemporary importance and impact of the genre, writing in 1859 that the novel

> offers the advantage that it unrolls in life pictures to the reader, the realized doctrines of morals and religion which in their abstract form are dry and serious; in the novel

> they are incarnated, living, pleasant, attractive, and much more impressive. Good novels with a moral and religious tendency will effect more good than good treatises on these subjects; because they are read more extensively, understood more readily, and the living and acting characters impress themselves much deeper in the mind than dead words (18).

Wise is in tune here with many contemporary reviewers who "elevated" the "basic psychological reality of the human love for fiction" (Baym, p. 37).

In the prospectus for The Israelite, Wise promised "novels, romances and poems, gleaned from our own fields, and sheaved by our sons and daughters" (19)--but where were the novels to come from? Wise avers that friends promised translations from French and German, which were apparently a staple of early Jewish journals in America (Harap, p. 271). Once again, however, Wise stood abandoned and alone: "My sorriest embarrassment lay in the fact that I had announced Jewish novels in the prospectus, and could not obtain any...despite all promises I had none. I had no choice but to write novels in [sic] the sweat of my brow" (Reminiscences, p. 270).

What follows in the memoir is a crucial and much quoted passage (see Part III) in which Wise describes his method of writing steadily but always in haste, and its apparent consequences:

> How did I write novels? I wrote the required chapter every week, but no sooner than I had to. The first pages were set up while the last were being written. On one occasion I was in a sorry plight: I had made two maidens fall in love with one and the same character, and I had to get rid of one of them. I was in sore straits. How was I to get rid of a lovelorn female? I had no experience in such things, and yet wanted to dispose of her decently, romantically and effectively. I therefore had the poor thing become insane; and the unhappy creature had to jump from a window during the conflagration of the ghetto of Frankfort and thus meet her death. The poor creature was greatly mourned and wept for the following Saturday, and all the tears fell on my

> burdened conscience. The most serious feature was that my wife made sport of me every Thursday evening, and declared stoutly that I had forgotten entirely how to enact a lover's part (pp. 270-71).

In moving from his first pages being set up to describing his "sorry plight" in the following sentence, Wise seems to imply that writing under the pressure of deadlines somehow led to having a surplus heroine. This implication is made explicit almost twenty years later in "The World of My Books":

> How did I write novels? Each week I wrote a chapter exactly as long as the space in the paper permitted. Usually the manuscript went red hot from my pen to the printing press, often without being checked, and generally without even having been outlined in advance. Once I forgot the name of the sweet heroine and gave her a different one the following week. It became plain that I had given the good Oppenheimer two sweethearts. One of them had to go, and so, in spite of all the efforts of the rabbi, Naphtali Cohen, I let the poor girl burn to death in the Frankfurt fire. That Friday, when this terrible chapter appeared, I spoiled the appetites of my dear lady readers for their fish. But Oppenheimer was saved; he had to marry only one girl (Guide, p. 115).

Wise's second version of the anecdote is more colorful and entertaining than the first, and even more inaccurate. Because it has appeared in discussions of Wise's fiction, the story needs to be examined more closely.

The fire Wise refers to is in his novel Romance, Philosophy and Cabalah, or, the Conflagration in Frankfort o. t. M., A Narrative from from the beginning of the last century, discussed in Chapter Three below. A heroine does go mad and kill herself in the novel, but Wise's other facts are wrong. The hero is not an Oppenheimer but Judah Gruenhut; an Oppenheim appears in another novel, The Catastrophe at Eger. Rabbi Cohen makes no attempt to save Dinah; he is in fact something of a villain in the book. Wise's major claim that he forgot

the heroine's name is simply not true. The two young women in love with the hero, Dinah and Eugine, are always clearly differentiated in the novel--one is Jewish and the other is not, for example. Wise's readers may indeed have objected to the way in which Dinah died, but her death was not a solution to a memory lapse caused by hasty composition. The story is quoted as an example of Wise's inattention, his candor, or his arrogance (see Part III below), but apparently no one checked its basis in Wise's fiction.

Wise vaunts the popularity of his fiction in Reminiscences, but emphasizes its role as a weapon in his battle to arouse Jewish pride, especially in the young. To that end, he wrote historical novels set in "brilliant periods of Jewish history": The Last Struggle of the Nation (1856-1858), The Combat of the People (1858), and The First of the Maccabees (1859) discussed in Chapter Four. The first of these novels not only "left a deep impression on thousands," according to Wise, but he himself wept and rejoiced as he wrote. Wise's praise of his historical novels contrasts sharply with his being forced into becoming a novelist, and that contradiction is reflected in some discussions of Wise's fiction, which is classed as didactic and popular, but not carefully composed.

If it is a mistake to take Wise at his own word on so many larger questions, why then should we give complete trust to what he says about his fiction? If the novel was considered to be one of the 19th century's primary art forms in America, why could Wise not have intended to write them all along, especially for his own newspaper? In that connection, it is well worth noting that Wise's story of

discovering an absence of American Jewish literature in the Albany library in 1851 is not entirely accurate; Wise was aware of the problem several years earlier. In his very first published article, written in German in 1847 for the Algemeine Zeitung des Judentums (20) Wise capped a glowing and unrealistic description of the American Jewish scene with a comment on the death of Grace Aguilar, Anglo-Jewish poet and novelist, whose work also appeared in American Jewish journals. The lack of the kind of literature Aguilar wrote was "even greater, than it is perceived to be," Wise wrote, and would only be addressed when German Jews in America learned English (21). Because Wise consistently paints himself as heroic and alone in Reminiscences, his assertion that he wrote fiction only because he had to is a likely and misleading exaggeration.

The ambivalent attitude towards his writing appears more intense in "The World of My books," written over twenty years later. It is a series of essays describing Wise's shifting literary interests and productions, almost all of them in response to a call that could not be ignored. Wise "constantly repeats that he detests writing books, and yet there is a strong pride implicit in the defense which he puts up for every one of his writings" (Guide, p. 106). Pride is an understatement; the image of prophet and hero is central here in the realm of literature. Again and again, circumstances force Wise to write even though he had resolved "never to torture humanity with a book" (p. 107): he was elected by fate to be an author.

Wise first wrote poetry, which he burned, and turned to fiction out of desperation. Writing a story, "The Siege of Milan," in his

early twenties, was a response to having worn out boots, threadbare clothes and "no money, no credit, no staunch friends who had anything to spare" (p. 108). He sold the story, thus saving himself and his boots. Wise claims never to have been able to read "Siege" again--which implies that he kept a copy until some point?--"from fear that my conscience would force me to return the honorarium to the publisher who had paid for the worthless stuff" (p. 108).

There are two versions of "Siege's" publication (see Part III), but whether the story appeared in Prague, elsewhere or anywhere at all is not the issue here; what is interesting is the story's martial and sentimental nature, given both the role of romance in his novels, and the emphasis on armed struggle in his three novels set in Ancient Israel. This first story, Wise says, was "full of gun smoke, the clash of sabers, and the thunder of cannons, gallant deeds of heroism and cruel pangs of love" (p. 108).

Despite having gotten himself out of financial trouble, Wise says that he felt "deep contrition" for having produced secular literature and begged his schoolmaster for forgiveness. Wise went so far as to alter for himself the group penitential prayer on the following Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) which is phrased in the first person plural ("We have sinned, etc.") to include his personal confession, "I have written." One can argue that Wise is telling a tall tale to those who might have been amused by his foray into secular literature, or taking a swipe at the Orthodox, or that he is mocking his own youthful intensity. But it seems more probable that Wise was indeed ambivalent about writing fiction and writing in general, and that this

ambivalence grew over the years. Why else portray each major book of his as a victory over his own desires and conviction? Why say that his real goal in life was "to make some substantial contribution" to the world "rather than to write something" (Guide, p. 109) and then show how each book of his was a substantial contribution?

In Albany, Wise saw an opportunity not just to contribute to American Jewish literature, but to create it. With "its two large libraries, no Jewish book, except the Chumash [Pentateuch] and prayerbooks was to be found." There was "nothing substantial on Jewish history or culture...simply no Jewish literature in the English language. And then the desire to write awoke in me, weakly at first, then ever more strongly, until I had overcome my dislike of writing and had forgotten my lack of knowledge" (Guide, p. 111). The absence of an American Jewish literature; attacks on Reform; and Wise's desire to bring knowledge of Scientific Judaism (Wisenschaft des Judentums) into English led him to write articles in The Occident and The Asmonean as well as his History (see above). But all this writing was without his volition: "man is what circumstances make him" (Guide, p. 110).

The fiction and poetry (22) Wise wrote for The Israelite were written only "out of dire need" and the paper itself was started at the demand of friends. Wise's version of becoming a novelist is more specific here than that in Reminiscences twenty-one years earlier. Because "nothing useful could be found" in English, his writing fiction seems even more heroic: "in that desperate situation, nothing remained but for me to do the work." Not only is Wise more offhand about his

fiction than in Reminiscences, as quoted above, he says he regrets his excursion into fiction ("God forgive me") and that he wanted only anonymity as "The American Jewish Novelist." His authorship was only revealed accidentally when his son-in-law published The Combat of the People (1859) and The First of the Maccabees (1860) and put his name on the title pages, Wise says. The story is not true. Wise had signed his fiction as early as 1856, and even without a signature, how could he have remained completely anonymous when Cincinnati's Jewish community numbered only a few thousand and the American Jewish scene was not rife with writers whom readers could suspect of being "The Novelist"? Anonymity seems even more unlikely given that Wise set his first novel in Bohemia and even mentioned the town nearest his birthplace.

Wise claims that the translations he did of the prayerbook he edited, Minhag America (American Rite) were also due to outside pressure, and he entered the field of apologetics for similar reasons. Friends urged him to undertake a book explaining the doctrines of Judaism from a Reform standpoint and turn that into a catechism, which he did, without regret, this time. As for writing about Christianity to counter missionaries in the 1850's and after, Wise says, "I was conscripted for the battle. Against my wishes, against my aesthetic inclination, in disregard of my pecuniary and moral interests, I had to appear in the public arena as an author against Christianity" (Guide, p. 120). The reluctant author credits himself with having tackled the prevailing atheistic spirit of the times; harmonizing Judaism and contemporary science, thus ridding Judaism forever of the

plague of atheism; routing the missionaries; and creating understanding between Jews and Christians.

While "The World of My Books" is an informal and unfinished memoir, it is consistent in its vision of what writing means to Wise. It is a less combative work than Reminiscences, perhaps because he has seen the triumph of Reform in the establishment of Hebrew Union College, the Central Conference of American Rabbis and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and because he has outlived his rivals, David Einhorn and Isaac Leeser (23). But Wise's distaste or conflict over writing deepens in the second work. Its translator notes that Wise wrote it "at the peak of his career, surveying a past which any man might prize" (Guide, p. 116). Why then does Wise portray himself as a man shaped by ineluctable circumstance to write against his will? Is it an attempt to pre-empt possible criticism of his writing by at once trumpetting its impact and success while disclaiming responsibility for it? Is Wise, whose rhetoric of heroism has softened, shifting the field of his battles to triumphs over himself and his aversion to writing? Is he like Koheleth declaiming that all, or almost all is vanity? Should we perhaps wonder with the narrator of Flaubert's Parrot, "What chance would the craftiest biographer stand against the subject who saw him coming and decided to amuse himself?" (24)

As a number of scholars have pointed out (Guttman, Rubinstein, Dawidowicz), Wise is more complex and contradictory than his biographers have generally acknowledged. It is thus not surprising that Wise's fiction has been all but ignored. Not only is it somewhat

inaccessible, but Wise devalues and acclaims it so strangely in his two autobiographies. It is quite possible that Wise's ambivalence was simply a posture, a way of depicting himself as something of a tormented artist, struggling against himself and his world. But if that is so, no one has bothered to consider how Wise talks about his writing and how his attitudes, real or assumed, might have influenced readers of his autobiographies. Critics have not paid attention to Wise's abivalence, but have tended to focus either on his didactic aims or his "casual" technique and its consequences. Unintentionally or not, Reminiscences and "The World of My Books" do not clarify the subject of his fiction, but sew confusion and quite possibly distaste.

III

Wise's first biographer was David Philipson, a major figure in American Reform Judaism. Wise knew his father, a Columbus, Ohio mechanic, and changed the boy's life by inviting him to the rabbinical college that was opening in 1875 (25). A graduate of Hebrew Union College's first class in 1863, Philipson's "whole personal culture and career were made possible" by enrolling there (Freehof, p. xii). Co-sponsor of the 1885 Pittsbrugh Platform (26) and author of the standard Reform Movement in Judaism, Philipson also translated and edited Wise's Reminiscences. In his introduction to those memoirs as they appeared in The Israelite two months after Wise's death, Philipson claims that the memoirs reveal a side of Wise's personality known only to intimates: "a romantic strain...which enabled him to forget the realities of life and find recreation in an imaginative

world which obtained expression in novel and drama" (quoted in Reminiscences, p. 7). The fiction sounds almost dilettantish, mere youthful effusions, and is thus stripped of any real significance. This impression is heightened by a passing reference in the biographical introduction of his edition of Wise's writings to "several novels" Wise wrote in Vienna when he was around twenty-two or twenty-three.

Philipson co-authored that introduction to Selected Writings of Isaac Mayer Wise (1900) with Luis Grossman, who became Wise's assistant rabbi in 1898 and led the Cincinnati congregation after Wise's death. Grossman has a bit more to say about Wise as a writer of fiction. Wise's writing in general was not an "amiable pastime," but part of his strenuous life purpose (Writings, p. 89). A man of action, Wise always translated his views into policy, for instance writing to prove that Judaism was in harmony with science, writing a great deal on the origin of Christianity, on Jewish religion and history, and Biblical criticism. With an equal earnestness, Wise wrote "romances and novels" so "that there should be a revival of pride in our beautiful history, and that the virtues of our ancestry have a vitalizing power such as the story of all heroism has" (p. 99). Grossman lists nine of Wise's novels as well as several he wrote in German for Die, Deborah--Wise's German language newspaper (27)--and concludes that Wise "showed a high order of ability," treating his subjects "with psychological tact," though he "may have been premature in his novel writing" (p. 99). These remarks are not only vague, it is difficult to know what the last comment actually means. Did Wise

begin writing fiction before he was mature enough or had a sufficient command of English? Did Jewish writers have a better sense of Jewish history when Grossman was writing than in Wise's day, or was there no ready audience for Jewish fiction in the 1850's and 60's? This last may be Grossman's point because half of what he briefly says about the fiction is an exhortation to contemporary Jewish writers to mine Jewish history as only they can do for its moral life, tragedy and pathos. This attempt could make "reformation moral and not merely formal" (p. 99).

Philipson's and Grossman's biographical essay is based on Reminiscences as well as conversations Philipson had with Wise (28), and Max. B. May's 1916 biography relies on both those earlier sources. Wise's grandson, May set out to prove that Wise was not only American Judaism's major figure from 1850-1900, but also the founder of that Judaism and the institutions which preserved it. To achieve that end, May tells the story of Wise's life largely in his own words, quoting heavily from Wise's writing and autobiographies in which Wise shared a similar view of his role. May mentions Wise reading "the best writers of English and German" (May, p. 355), but has nothing of his own to say about Wise's fiction or Wise's writing in general because he feels he is not competent to judge Wise as an author (p. vii).

In a chapter surveying Wise's important position as editor of The Israelite, May quotes Wise's plan to offer Jewish novels in his newspaper "to awaken the slumbering patriotism" of his prospective audience, but as we have seen, the promised novels never appeared and he had to write them himself (May, p. 203). May does not comment on

Wise's apparently offhand description of writing just under deadlines and in one instance having an extra heroine he had to dispose of "decently, romantically, and effectively." Readers are thus left to draw their own conclusions. For those later writers who may have relied on May's work, there is here initiated an error in dating one of Wise's novels. Writing in 1875, Wise lists The Convert and The Shoemaker's Family as the first two novels appearing in The Israelite, but Family appeared in 1855 and was his fourth novel (29).

Dena Wilensky also quotes heavily from Wise's writing in From Sinai to Cincinnati (1937), but her aim is explaining Wise's anti-Zionism, at a time when the classical Reform position against Zionism was under heavy fire and would ultimately be modified in the Cleveland Conference. In what is virtually an anthology, Wilensky attempts to show that Wise's belief in the revelation at Sinai of the Ten Commandments to Moses and the Jewish people was at the core of his thought. Wilensky calls Wise an "Author, Poet, and Dreamer" (p.23); there are, however, no excerpts from his fiction or comments on it. Wilensky's highly-charged book simply gives the number of his novels, eleven, noting that they appeared in The Israelite and that some are book-length.

Israel Knox's brief and readable Rabbi in America (1956) also relies too heavily on Reminiscences. Though Knox does show Wise as stubborn and combative, the portrait is weighted towards descriptions like this one of Wise's role as a teacher:

> he discovered ways of relieving the distress of students...of uttering a warm and friendly word when there was in one a heaviness of spirit or in another a feeling of

forlornness (Knox, p. 106).

While often following Wise's self-flattering accounts of his struggles, Knox is not so obliging in his discusssion of the fiction, to which he devotes two pages at the end of a chapter on battles Wise fought as editor of The Israelite.

Knox characterizes Wise's fiction as "replete with sentimentality, with melodramatic action and surprise, with villains and heroes" (p. 94). Written "for popular consumption," the novels were "didactic," inadequate and of slight literary merit despite their "great--if fleeting--success" (Knox admits that The Israelite's readers probably enjoyed the novels). Though Wise wrote with great fluency, Knox laments the lack of criticism or evaluation; thus while his pedagogic aim of rousing Jewish feeling may have been acceptable, Wise's inability to realize his fiction's "literary inadequacy" is not. Admiring Wise's versatility, Knox does not see Wise as having had contact with great literature, and considers the novels Wise set in ancient Israel a somewhat questionable attempt to vicariously enjoy nationalism when Reform was divesting Judaism of that aspect.

Knox uses part of the same passage in Reminiscences that May quotes in which Wise comments on his literary method and the surplus heroine we have already met in Part II. Knox criticizes Wise for his satisfaction at having "cleverly" solved the problem of eliminating that heroine. A careful reading of Reminiscences makes the "boast" seem more like Wise's heavy-handed humor than self-satisfaction, especially as Wise rounds off the story with Mrs. Wise condemning his un-chivalrous behavior.

But there is a deeper problem with Knox's view of Wise's fiction. He admits that it was popular and pleasing, the surprisingly fluent production of a versatile writer, but dismisses it for having minimal literary value. In the same Reminiscences passage that Knox quotes from, Wise affirms his didactic aim for The Israelite as a whole:

> I knew very well that my paper would have to be simple and popular; for I wanted to write for the people--i.e., for my people. This would not give scholars any reason for particular admiration (p. 77).

Wise wanted the paper to disseminate his ideas and projects throughout the country and in his own community, and by all accounts it fulfilled that aim, as well as exposing "all who abused and maltreated the Jew solely on account of his religion" (May, p. 239). Wise used his newspaper to continually "call for a union of Jewish congregations, a United States rabbinical seminary, and a permanent rabbinical organization, as well as to give moral and spiritual support (and press) to reform congregations all over the land" (30). The Israelite was more succesful than Isaac Leeser's Occident and attracted "a large following among the upwardly mobile, rapidly Americanizing Jewish burgher" (Jick, p. 127). Bertram Korn concludes that it "exerted a powerful force in the formation of Jewish public opinion on Jewish and national problems" (Korn, p. 125) and Naomi Cohen credits Wise's newspaper with "herculean" and "pioneering efforts on behalf of American Jewish defense" (Cohen, p. 150). Knox's contempt for Wise's fiction and by extension its audience, offers little to anyone seeking to understand Wise or his work. As Northrop Frye writes, "When a critic interprets, he is talking about [the artist], when he evaluates, he is talking about himself, or at most, about himself as a

representative of his age" (31).

Abraham Steinberg offers the most complete discussion of Wise's fiction in Jewish Characters in the American Novel to 1900 (1956) where he credits Wise with being "the first American Jewish novelist to treat Jewish themes extensively" (32). Even more importantly, Wise is to be praised for "providing an energetic example and establishing an organ for other American Jewish writers (Steinberg, p. 257). While Wise himself was "a failure as a novelist" and his disciples Moritz Loth and Henry Moos were even less distinguished, one protegee, Nathan Mayer (whose work first appeared in The Israelite), produced "the first American Jewish novel of literary worth" (p. 257).

Steinberg is certainly to be credited for supplying plot summaries of Wise's novels (they range from a line or two to almost a page). However, his reliance on Reminiscences to the apparent exclusion of other works on Wise leads to some curious errors and conclusions. Steinberg lists Wise as the definite author of only the six novels Wise mentions in his autobiography, concluding that two others are "probably" Wise's: The Catastrophe at Eger and Resignation and Fidelity. Both works are attributed to Wise in Selected Writings. A more serious error is Steinberg's naive reading of Reminiscences. In a long passage describing his work on the three novels set in ancient Israel, Wise not only remarks on their eager audience of "thousands" but credits them with "arousing patriotism and a desire for Jewish learning" (p. 337). Steinberg interprets Wise's assertion that the novels "accomplished their purpose fully, although I never had any ambition to become renowned as a novelist" as an attempt to

disclaim his literary ambitions (Steinberg, p. 257) because they were "unrealized." In the context of Wise's attitude toward his writing, the "disclaimer" only serves to heighten his success rather than diminish it.

Steinberg also misreads comments of Wise's that appeared on July 3, 1857 at the end of The Israelite's third volume. With great satisfaction, Wise reviewed his newspaper's "most extraordinary, "independent and splendid career" of succesful combat against Christian missionaries and Christianity in general, against anti-Jewish prejudice, atheism, "self-styled orthodoxy" and "ultra reform." While the focus of Wise's sanguine full-page review is The Israelite's success in vanquishing its enemies, Wise also praises the role of the literature that appeared there, including "the labors of The American Jewish Novelist" which had

> re-animated the spark of patriotic sentiment, of genuine Jewish pride and self-estimation in the hearts of thousands of our co-religionist, especially the young. The view of ancient Jews has been changed radically...and a sentiment of veneration and high regard for our fathers; and a closer attachment to the synagogue and the Jews has been engendered.

Given the bellicose tone of Wise's retrospective, his wondering whether The Israelite has any literary value, and claiming that it does, four times in one paragraph, seems uncharacteristically uncertain for Wise. Even at this early date, Wise's attitude toward his writing is unclear and ambivalent.

It seems clear that Steinberg has fallen prey to Wise's curious but compelling attitude to his own fiction. Steinberg is of two minds on Wise's designation of himself as "The American Jewish Novelist":

the label's use is termed at one point "simple" and at another "proud." Even more contradictory is Steinberg's classing Wise a "failure" as a writer of fiction, without supplying any evidence, and while praising Wise's "remarkable mastery" of English and his ability to "attain a quite literate and literary style." (p. 257).

Sefton Temkin's two-volume biographical dissertation on Wise (1964) refers very briefly to the novels: Wise forayed into fiction with "characteristic readiness to try his hand at something new" (Temkin, p. 420). Temkin quotes Wise's "candid" description of his literary technique in Reminiscences and quotes "World" as well, concluding that Wise took a more detached view of his fiction there. Temkin's work is valuable for the care with which he established the accuracy or inaccuracy of many of Wise's claims; his reliance on Wise in the question of his writing is thus somewhat surprising. In Temkin's estimation, all of Wise's voluminous writings were merely "by-products" of his activities; his prayerbook Minhag America was the "mainspring" and it alone had emotional significance for Wise (p. 537).

James G. Heller first refers to Wise's fiction in passing in his history of Wise's Cincinnati congregation, B'nai Yeshurun. Extolling Wise's "daemonic momentum" and the richness found in the early years of The Israelite, Heller mentions Wise's ability to pour out, "literally from week to week," a continuing novel for his newspaper's first page, "probably to retain the interest of ladies and young people" (33). The main audience at the time for fiction was indeed women, particularly young women, and Heller's intent is clearly to

praise Wise's energy. However, the tone of his remarks seems dismissive; it is therefore not surprising to find how little Heller--rabbi of B'nai Yeshurun from 1926 to 1954--says about Wise's fiction in his exhaustive 1964 biography.

Heller first speculates that in Vienna from 1842-1844, Wise may have "been nursing the notion that he might possess some literary talent. It is not unthinkable that he cherished a hidden ambition to become a great writer of fiction" (Heller, Wise, p. 76). Heller links this possible goal with Wise's ability both to "toss off some secular, lighthearted German plays" (34) and to "spin out, installment by installment" novels for The Israelite. If Wise did dream of becoming a writer, his "Siege of Milan" assumes more importance than either Wise or other writers have given it. "Siege" was Wise's first publication; no copy exists and there are different versions of its publication. Perhaps relying on his memory of conversations with Wise, David Philipson says the story was one of several novels and appeared in a Prague newspaper, Bohemia. Wise himself said in "The World of My Books" that he wrote one story in Vienna and Bohemia was issued in a "little country town."

Offering a "glimpse" into Wise's fiction, Heller notes that Wise's aim in launching his newspaper was not moralizing but instruction, and writing novels was a partial fulfillment of that aim. Heller says these "fictional adventures" were "astonishingly popular" without, unfortunately, giving evidence, and twice lists their titles. He goes on to paraphrase Wise on the haste with which he wrote and retells the tale of the superfluous heroine, conflating the versions

in Reminiscences and "World" so that Wise's single mistake is turned into a pattern. Heller thus outdoes Wise, picturing him as a slapdash creator. In extenuation, perhaps, he says that Wise "did not take lightly the task of composing [his novels]...he strove to transmit a knowledge of Jewish history, its pathos and grandeur" (p. 660). Wise's novels were "amazingly vivid and interesting," though his style was "typical of him and of the period and his English was not perfect "in the early years": "Tears flew rapidly from her eyes" is one example. To evince Wise's "period" style, Heller quotes the first paragraph of The Last Struggle of the Nation:

> It was a dark night. Rain poured down from obscure clouds in rushing currents. A hurricane-like wind swept over the plain of Esdrael, and reverberated in awful melodies from Mount Carmel. An unbroken silence reigned supreme in the plain below, and on the vine-covered Carmel, where the autumn leaves whistled the awful accords with the rushing wind and the breaking and foaming waves of the sea at its foot. Men and beasts had sought shelter under the roofs, none would expose himself to weeping and mourning nature (35).

Lucy Dawidowicz faulted Heller's biography for offering readers little of value about Wise or the Reform movement and one can say almost the same of his comments on the fiction. Heller makes no attempt to examine the fiction in any depth, and his only original contribution is to briefly speculate on Wise's ambitions as a writer. Aside from the passage quoted above, there is no real evidence that Heller seriously considered Wise's fiction, though he could hardly have ignored it altogether. Heller's neutrality verges on ambivalence; like Knox he admires Wise's energy and productivity, but he cannot say anything especially positive or specific about the

fiction itself and his comments lack a coherent point of view.

Of all considerations of Wise's fiction, Louis Harap's is the most negative in The Image of the Jew in American Literature (1974). Wise gets the nod for being "one of the earliest and most productive Jewish novelists in the country." But Harap dismisses Wise's fiction as "completely undistinguished and, to be candid, unreadable today" (Harap, p. 274). Harap places Wise in the first group of writers to devote themselves to Jewish themes, as early 19th century dramatists like Mordechai Noah did not. Pressing for Jewish fiction that would rouse "many a youthful heart" and fill it "with love and admiration for Israel" was admirable on Wise's part, as was his energy. Harap admits that Wise's "readers probably were inspired by his didactic, devotional tales" (p. 274), but Wise was a failure because he did not alter the contemporary negative image of the Jew in American literature.

Harap's very brief discussion is incomplete and distorted on several accounts. Wise set out to make Jews proud of themselves at a time when a "rascally Jew figured in every cheap novel, every newspaper printed some stale jokes about the Jews, every backwoodsman had a few such jokes on hand for use in public addresses" (Reminiscences, p. 272). Wise was starting a Jewish newspaper for a Jewish audience; why then should he be faulted for failing at what he did not attempt? A more serious problem with Harap's view of Wise is that the fiction is "unreadable." Harap discusses a great many books that he says have minimal literary merit, so the epithet "unreadable" implies that Wise is beyond the literary pale. Harap buttresses his

claim by the first line of The Combat of the People: "Solemn and harmonious was the merry song of the winged minstrels of the air greeting the radiant herald of the rising queen of the day" (p. 274). Because the novel opens with a Temple service in Jerusalem it seems likely that Wise chose this "elevated" diction deliberately; and in fact, the subsequent passages are not quite so stilted. But consider by contrast the very different opening of The Shoemaker's Family written two years earlier:

> It was some time in December, 1847, when the northern part of Austria was covered with a deep snow. The sound of the rivulets, running down the mountains, was silenced by the extreme frost, rushing in, as it were, with the cold blast of an unfriendly north wind. The low roofs in the village of S. supported a heavy weight of snow. Icicles hung in various forms from the caves, and the windows were hung with frosty crystals. The ground cracked under the footsteps of the few human beings who ventured to walk about the village. The snow, lately fallen, was driven about by a strong wind, filling up each footstep as soon as the traveller had passed. The clapping of shutters and front doors, and the sounds of the evening-bell, completed the somber effect peculiar to the winter evening in that climate (The Israelite, January 5, 1855).

My point here, an obvious one, is that quoting one line of any writer's work is a weak basis for sweeping conclusions.

In what seems otherwise to be a thorough and detailed work, Harap makes a number of unexpected errors in discussing Wise. At one point he credits Wise with having authored eight novels, but elsewhere quotes Heller's figure of eleven with no attempt to explain the disparity. He makes the same mistake as others have done in listing The Shoemaker's Family as written in 1854 and he is years off in dating Wise's lecture "The Wandering Jew" as appearing at the end of the 19th century when it was written in 1877 (36). In a book that

teems with many dozens of plot summaries of books Harap notes have little value, not including one summary of a Wise novel seems to underscore his judgment of Wise's fiction as "unreadable."

Given that Wise "bibliographically outranks" all other American Jewish figures (Dawidowicz, p. 63), his fiction has received remarkably little attention, and what has been written is neither particularly useful nor accurate. There is some confusion about publishing dates, the number of novels Wise wrote, and most especially, about Wise's attitude towards his writing, which has generally been simplified and thus misread. Critics and biographers have substituted Wise's entertaining anecdote about the dangers of serialization for professional, thorough analysis. When Wise's fiction is praised, it is in vague terms: the novels express his "romanticism" with "ability" and "psychological tact," are seen as more proof of his verstaility and energy, or mark him as an innovator, however untalented. Those who criticize or condemn the novels fault Wise's style, his use of melodrama and sentimentality, but appear to waver in describing Wise's aims and his apparent success. The absence of substantial discussion and the often ambivalent and confused nature of what little is said is partly due to Wise himself. Considering Wise's stature in American Judaism, an examination of his fiction is overdue.

CHAPTER TWO

THE ENEMIES OF ISRAEL

Written from 1854 to 1864, the novels discussed in this chapter and the next are almost all set in "Germany"--that is, "that part of Central Europe where Jewish communities took their cues from German culture" (37). But whether their action takes place in the nineteenth or the fifteenth century, they tell a very similar story: Jewish triumph over Christian, and in one case Moslem, oppression. While individual Christians may be what we would now call "righteous Gentiles," as a whole they appear as indoctrinated by the Roman Catholic Church to hate Jews. Jews are pressed and threatened to convert; are plundered, abducted, and forcibly baptized; imprisoned, tortured and killed, but they remain strong in the face of terror. Despite oppression and all the countervailing seductions of safety, position and wealth, the Jews in these novels do not ultimately abandon their people and their faith. Their belief in God and the inviolability of their religion is not shaken and they often face down their enemies with piercing rhetoric.

As Nina Baym has shown in another connection, "instruction is not at cross-purposes with entertainment," the lesson itself of these novels entertaining those readers who identify with the triumph of heroes and heroines over adversity and obstacles (38). These heroes and heroines are in most cases not strongly individualized; they are really figures that exemplify a number of characteristics like

bravery, fortitude, courage, strength. The settings they appear in are particularized only in the most general way, except where details of Jewish ritual, holidays and customs are brought into the text. The most complex aspect of these novels is the sometimes confusing plotting, which frequently involves hidden and disguised identities and exposition-crammed stories that characters tell to explain themselves and their actions. In almost every one of these novels, the traditional elements of fiction are secondary to the themes.

The Convert: issues 1-5 of The Israelite, July 15, 1854 through August 11.
Themes: Converting to Christianity to gain personal and professional advantage in an anti-Semitic society can only fail. Conversionists want more than mere compliance, and will use any means to get complete obedience.
Setting: Koenigsburg and Prague in northwest Austria-Hungary (Bohemia) in the 1840's.
Characters: Moses Baum, Doctor, convert to Christianity
Isaac and Hannah Baum, his parents
Zodek Baum, his older brother
Rachel Baum, his sister
Samuel Cohn, Moses' best friend
Rabbi Haim Cohn, Samuel's father
The Prior
The Police Spy

It is not surprising that Wise tackles the subject of conversion in his first novel. American Protestantism was "experiencing a new upsurge in evangelism" (Cohen, p.65) in the two decades before the Civil War. Missionaries' conversionist literature painted Judaism as a "dead religion, long superseded by a loving and benevolent Christianity, and no longer relevant to civilization. Those who continued to practice it proved their moral backwardness and their proverbial stiff-neckedness" (p. 62). Louis Harap notes that even

though intense "efforts to convert the Jews bore neglible fruit... Jewish leaders were unduly concerned over the threat" (Harap, p. 269). Indeed, the most prominent missionary agency, the American Society for Meliorating the Condition of the Jews, was a failure. Unable to agree on how it should accomplish reform, the society "made almost no converts, its plans for a colony for Christian-Jews failed, and it was unable either to send missionaries abroad or to bring converted Jews from Europe" (39). Despite its poor showing, however, the society continued to attract money and interest, and the missionary presence was so strong "that Wise and others saw a would-be proselytizer in every pious church attender" (Cohen, p. 63). America's first Jewish periodical, The Jew, appeared in 1822 to attack missionaries and defend Judaism; Isaac Leeser carried on the fight in his Occident and Wise "plunged almost frenziedly into a running tirade against the 'hypocrisy' and 'immorality' of missionaries in the United States" (Cohen, p.70).

Wise's novel opens in modern Koenigsberg in Western Bohemia, where the "steeples of its churches are visible far beyond the Eger valley." The story not only begins in the "king's city" and in the shadow of the Church, but in the darker shadow of its past. The Jews living at the Western end of the city are descendents of Jews who "sought refuge in that solitary corner of Germany, when the crusaders made havoc among their brethren on the Rhine."

Simple, religious Isaac Baum and his wife Hannah mourn their son Mose's conversion, which they have learned about from a letter, though their beautiful daughter Rachel implores her mother to accept "the

incomprehensible decrees of Providence." But Hannah exclaims "in the accents of wild agony":

> 'O that the son whom I bore unto my heart was dead, and I would pray for him day and night; but now not even the consolation of prayer is left to the bereft mother, I cannot pray for a Meshumed!' [apostate] (Vol. 1, no.1, p.1).

Rabbi Haim Cohn joins them in taking off their shoes, cutting a piece of their clothes as a ritual sign of mourning (shiva) and sitting on the floor; later he returns with a minyan (prayer quorum) for prayer.

Isaac blames Mose's conversion on his eldest son Zodek, who counseled that their father stop supporting Moses in his medical studies in Prague. Penniless, desperate and ashamed, Moses no doubt fell afoul of conversionists there: "The enemies of Israel are always ready to make splendid promises to those whose souls they lead astray," Baum says, "they have the power and the money, and we are feeble and but few in number." Zodek chimes in, decrying the lot of contemporary Jews fenced in by a hostile government:

> 'We are compelled by the laws of the land to reside in this town, because we are born here, and because we are Jews, there is no way for us in this place to earn a piece of bread, we must go to Eger on Sunday and return on Friday, live there among strangers, far from our relatives an object of scoff and persecution to our neighbors. We are forced to pay a heavy tax for the privilege of earning a hard living by the sweat of our brows, again because we are Jews' (no.1, p.1).

But Zodek still attacks his brother's lack of resolution, and Moses' profligate life as a medical student in Prague while their sister needed a dowry. Zodek also accuses Rabbi Cohn's son Samuel of having led Moses astray. Samuel did not fast on Tishe B'Av (The Ninth of Av, memorializing the Temple's destruction in 70 C.E.), was lax in his prayers, and ate with Gentiles. Rachel is in love with Samuel, but

Zodek reveals to their father that he is in love with wealthy Joseph Mast's daughter and that her brother wants to marry Rachel. Isaac Baum is convinced that these two marriages will erase the stain of Mose's conversion.

In Mose's Prague lodgings, which swarms with books and manuscripts, the handsome and elegant doctor argues with Samuel Cohn about his conversion, declaring that "he was forced by circumstance to that step. As a Jew, he said, he had no opportunity to come into public office, and even as a practical physician could not succeed, where opposed by a less skilful colleague of the Christian faith." Conversion has freed him of legal restrictions and prejudice, bringing him "many and influential patrons." Moses even hopes to obtain a university professorship, but professional advancement is not his only reason for converting: he now has the resources to help his family. Samuel, seeing Moses for the first time since he converted, warns that Moses will regret his action and disagrees that Judaism is merely "the performance of a set of ceremonies," interchangeable with any other set. Samuel's younger brother Smolek arrives with letters from Koenigsberg; one from Rachel explains the situation at home and begs Samuel to help Moses and herself. Moses writes a letter declaring Samuel's "innocence in regard to his conversion," which Samuel departs with instantly.

Back in Koenigsberg on Shabbos (Friday night), an argument breaks out at the Baums' when Rachel's intended, Aaron Mast, arrives after the Shabbos meal and wants to take her to Rabbi Cohn's to join other friends in welcoming Samuel back. Isaac Baum forbids it, but Aaron

demands his rights as a groom to be. Rachel--who was weeping for Moses before--silences Aaron with a piercing look before her mother drags her off. Apprised of the love between Samuel and Rachel, Aaron swears "I will tear him in pieces, if he even speaks to her," and leaves. Late at night Isaac mistakes his pale trembling daughter for a remonstrating ghost; Zodek also takes her for a ghost when he later comes across her asleep with her head in her arms on the table.

The next morning, Samuel Cohn preaches a powerful sermon at the synagogue "in a purely German style, and constructed according to the rules of rhetoric," which ends with a vision of future harmony between Jews and Gentiles. The congregants are sharply divided over the sermon's merits, with Zodek particularly dismissive. Samuel is dazzling once again at an afternoon Shiur (traditional Shabbos afternoon discussion of a Talmud portion). When Isaac Baum and Zodek describe the "ghosts" they saw the previous night (Zodek's was "headless"), the Rabbi strongly doubts their existence, as does Samuel. A misunderstanding ensues when Samuel advises sending for the doctor to treat them--which the Baums take to be a slighting reference to Moses ("The Doctor"). Enraged, Baum almost strikes Samuel, who hands him Moses' letter. In tears, Baum disavows Rachel and Aaron Mast's planned marriage, and offers her to Samuel if he can "reclaim" Moses. Until then Samuel will not be allowed to see her, but she later tosses Samuel a handkerchief through the window, wet with her tears and bearing her name.

Prague's Strahof Convent, "one of those lasting monuments of priestly predominance and despotism," a palace both gloomy and richly

appointed, is the lair of Moses's patron, the corpulent, beady-eyed Prior, who reveals to the shocked doctor the results of his intelligence gathering: "all the secrets of his [Moses'] house, company, employment, and even sentiments." Baum reads dangerous authors--Voltaire, Bolingbroke, Feuerbach and Paine--but the sneering prelate will not turn him over to the Imperial authorities if Moses joins the Jesuit order. Baum refuses, they argue, and he draws a pistol to prevent the Prior from calling his servants, but the contemptuous churchman pounds his chair and a secret wall panel lets in three of his minions. Baum escapes, however, having fired his gun and filled the air with smoke (later we learn he wounded the Prior in the arm), and Moses is followed home by a police spy who reveals that he too is a convert. At his lodgings, Moses discovers his servant drugged and all his "incriminating" papers missing, and the spy reports that Rachel is being held by the police for not having a passport. Released from prison and at Moses' lodgings, Rachel and Baum are joined by Rabbi Cohn who informs them that Samuel is in Padua's rabbinical college, where he is headed. It is Erev Yom Kippur and they attend services at the new Reform Temple, impressed by the music, the choir, and the decorum.

The story's climax is a dream in which Baum is seized by the Prior, given arms and forced along with a "large crowd of armed men, with priests, bearing standards, crosses, and other insignia of the church." The fanatical, savage crowd, spurred to "divine vengeance," surges through the countryside to Koenigsberg's Jewish quarter:

> On arriving there, the prior was seen standing on a high platform, and lifting up the cross he exclaimed furiously, 'Kill and burn the enemies of the cross, have no compassion, murder the child and its mother, this is divine vengeance and eternal remission of sins. Blood, blood, blood, the blood of the enemies of the cross!' The crowd repeated the last words of the prior, and then they broke into the houses of the Jews to kill, plunder and burn (no.5, p.33).

The orgy of violence and destruction spews forth Moses' father whom the Prior demands he kill, but Moses slays the prior and exclaims the Shema ("Hear O Israel..."), waiting "calmly to receive the blows to end his life."

Samuel wakes him at this point and Moses declares "I am a Jew. I can be no Catholic." Rachel and Samuel are happily reunited and the spy produces passports he has held in readiness for himself and Moses so that they can leave for America, where as Moses says, "a man is entitled to his own view, and none is bound to be a hypocrite in order to obtain an honorable portion in society."

The Convert ends with Rachel and Samuel happily married and Samuel the preacher of a large congregation; Moses and the spy become "founders of a Hebrew congregation in the Far West"; and the Prior is under suspicion by the Austrian government because the spy planted Moses' papers in his house: "A Jesuit was deceived, this is quite new," Moses notes.

Wise's chief targets in this novel are the Church and the onerous political and economic strictures on German Jews that did make conversion an attractive possibility for some. While Moses Baum seems motivated by a more reasonable assessment of his professional and social limitations as a Jew, the unnamed police spy who eventually

helps him is a more extreme example of frustration. The spy reveals his secret in Chapter IV and the following exchange dramatizes their differences:

> 'When I was a Jew openly and avowedly, I was a hunted beast an object of scoff and persecution. Then I swore in my wrath,' the spy continued gnashing his teeth, 'to embrace Catholicism, and become a police spy, that I may do unto them as they have done unto me. But I have never harmed a Jew, so help me God.' 'Vengeance is an ignoble monster and unworthy of a man,' the Doctor remarked. 'But it is sweet, and I was violently irritated, and unmanly [sic] excluded from the society of men, how could I be a man?' was the spy's bitter reply (no.4, p.26).

We never learn the specifics of the spy's misfortune or even his name, and he thus seems to represent Jewish hatred of persecution which is more modulated in the various speeches of Moses, his father and his brother--but springs from the same sources.

Wise's choice of a "convent" for the novel's confrontation between the good but misled Jew and the evil prelate echoes his lecture "The End of Popes, Nobles and Kings" (40). In that rousing talk, which became his first American publication, Wise calls the convent a "dark abode of deceit and cunningness" where priests could indoctrinate the ignorant and "maintain the dominion of Rome" ("End," p. 8). That dominion may be fading, but Imperial power over the Jews is still strong and the Prior's threat to turn Moses over to the police as a subversive is not idle. Moses' cunning antagonist is appropriately villainous: eloquent, peremptory, possesor of "a keen mind and searching glance," hulking in a throne-like chair in a Gothic hall reached by "a narrow and somewhat dark passage, guarded by a whole company of petrified saints." One can imagine Wise's audience

would have found the Prior's being wounded and under Imperial suspicion at the novel's end as satisfying as Moses does.

But the Prior is not The Convert's sole target: Isaac and Zodek Baum are lesser villains, speaking for a Judaism or Jewish way of life characterized by ignorance and superstition. Both Baums are foolishly convinced that they have seen ghosts and are sure that the cause must be a flaw in their mezuzah (41). The Baum's willingness to jump to nonsensical conclusions is of a piece with their attacking Samuel's sermon delivered in flawless German. It is, after all, "the young and better informed portion of the old men" of the congregation who are impressed by the sermon which concludes with a vision of Jews and Gentiles becoming united in the future. Zodek, "leader" of the ignorant, condemns that vision as mere advice for Jews to convert.

Sagacious Samuel is possessed of an equally perceptive father. Rabbi Cohn finds the Reform service at the Prague Temple so highly pleasing and edifying "that he wished to see all synagogues in Israel conducted in such a proper and elevating manner." It is worth noting that Wise praises Sulzer's "impressive" music which he introduced into his own congregations, for having "touched every heart, and satisfied the religious yearning of every mind." Likewise praised is the presence of "Jews and Gentiles from the best classes of society." Those words are almost a catchphrase in Reminiscences--Wise's ultimate praise for a social or religious event. Henry Feingold points out that Wise and other Reform leaders went out of their way to cultivate Protestant leaders because Reform could only succeed by becoming American "and that in turn meant associating with America's principal

religous creed" (42). The praise Wise heaps on the service that Moses, Rachel and Rabbi Cohn attend is clearly in line with the perception held by German Jews that Reform Judaism offered an enlightened religion "which sought to stem the tide of conversion to Christianity by Jews estranged from what they perceived as the obsolete rituals of Judaism and frustrated by the discriminatory practices of their society" (Raphael, p. 7).

While many German Jews did indeed convert "for political or professional advancement" and to escape an "anachronistic, unenlightened and unappealing Judaism" (Raphael, p.6), the problem in the United States seems to have been more the lack of Jewish knowledge and commitment to religious observance. The former appears to be reflected in Wise's translation in the text of even the most common religious terminology, like Minchah, afternoon prayer, Tephilin, phylacteries, and Tzitzith, prayer shawl fringes. Wise's assessment of his readers' lack of Jewish knowledge is borne out by most scholars of the period: "The German Jewish immigrant who came in the earliest waves of immigration...did not boast a thorough grounding in Judaism....Those most steeped in the religious tradition were...least likely to emigrate to what was rumored to be a tref medinah (unkosher society)" (Midrash, p. 61). And so, along with stirring Jews to take pride in the advances of Reform, to be on guard against "the enemies of Israel, "to abandon superstition and outworn practices," Wise also seems to have had a more prosaic goal: basic religious education. Samuel decries Jews having learned to think of their religion as a set of ceremonies, as Moses evidently does when he converts, and twice

vows to write a treatise on Jewish education. Wise, of course, wrote two versions of such a book (43).

The novel's most dramatic sequence is Moses' dream in Chapter Five, which at first seems to be actually happening. Tired by his adventures at the convent and with the spy, rescuing his sister, and the moving Kol Nidre service, Moses lies down; the recent events

> and many other ideas associated with each other crowded upon his half-suspended faculties in a fantastical yet vivid manner. Suddenly the door of his room was burst open, the old prior rushed in with a large cross in one hand, and a sword in the other; behind him was a crowd of armed men with repulsive countenances. The prior advanced towards the Doctor, and with a thunderlike and furious voice he thus addressed him, 'Rise, defender of the holy cross, the hour of Godly vengeance and eternal remission of sins is at hand' (no.5, p.73).

Forced to take up arms and dragged outside, Moses sees a crowd enfuriated [sic] by fanaticism." It is not until the crowd is sweeping from Prague to Koenigsberg that one is sure this cannot be actually happening.

Wise himself may have been haunted by such dreams, which were not far removed from the reality he knew. He was born in 1819, the year of the infamous "Hep! Hep!" Riots that swept Germany and Austria (44), and Wise significantly refers to them in Reminiscences, describing his arrival in New York. Wise helps some fellow travelers from being overcharged by German horse cart drivers who curse and threaten him and the Jews. Wise says he thought to himself: "you have left home and kindred in order to get away from the disgusting Judaeophobia, and here the first German greeting that sounds in your ears is hep! hep!" (p.16)

It is that reality Moses Baum leaves to start a congregation in

America's West and his name is surely not accidental. Like his biblical namesake, he smites a Gentile and later becomes a leader of his people, though at first a somewhat unlikely candidate for such a fate. This Moses is the only one of Wise's protagonists who will convert (though he returns to Judaism); all the others will refuse. "Baum" is also German for tree and beyond the obvious image of transplantation and growth, Wise might have had in mind the oft-quoted line from the Torah service extolling Torah "as a tree of life to all those who take hold of it."

The Convert opens on a note of grief and mourning and ends with reunited lovers, a convert restored to Judaism and starting a new life in America, and the blackmailing conversionist foiled. On the way to this happy ending Wise singles out for praise rational belief, enlightened family feeling, the warmth of the Sabbath (always a concern of his), America's freedom, and most importantly, fighting oppression and refusing to succumb to Roman Catholic blandishments and threats. Wise has already established the cast of characters that will appear in various incarnations in his subsequent novels: noble young man, love-struck and faithful young woman, befuddled and unintentionally cruel parents, wicked men of the cloth, and superstitious Jews. And Wise has also begun creating his literary world, one in which Christian tyranny can triumph only momentarily over Jews, who are always morally superior to their oppressors.

The Jewish Heroine: August 18, 1854 to September 22, 1854.
Setting: Tangiers and Fez, The Barbary States, 1830's.
Themes: Despite the most seductive and ferocious pressure to

convert, Jews will not leave their faith. Jews should beware "false friends" because conversionists are everywhere.

Characters: Phoebe Hachuel, a beautiful Jewess
Haim, her father, a poor trader
Simcha, her mother
Tahara de Masmoodi, Phoebe's Moslem friend
Arbi Esido, Governor of Tangiers
Don Jose Riero, Spanish Consul to the region

Conversion is even more central to Wise's second novel; a simpler story than The Convert, it reads very much like an expended anecdote because the action is fairly limited. The daughter of Haim and Simcha Hachuel, Phoebe, is praised for her beauty by "thousands of youths," but rarely allowed out. Because her father is not a successful enough trader to afford household help, Phoebe must do "nearly the whole of the domestic labor." As she grows older, prettier and more restless, she resents this burden and frequently expresses her discontent to a Moorish friend, Tahara de Masmoodi. Unfortunately for Phoebe, however, Tahara is a "fanatic," a "false and artful" friend for religious reasons:

> It being a precept of the Alcoran, the Arabs consider the conversion of a heretic (for such they deem all those of a different faith) to their belief as a most meritorious act; they hesitate not at the means they employ to make such conquests, when opportunities offer (no.6, p.41).

When a scolding from her mother one day sends Phoebe off to her friend's, lamenting her situation and wishing "to escape from the cruel oppressions which she imagined she was subjected to," Tahara offers conversion. Tahara's boasting about her own religion has always filled Phoebe with pity and she rejects this "terrible proposal." Tahara hurries to Tangier's governor, Arbi Esido, "a harsh and capricious character," to tell him that "a Jewess more beautiful than the Spring wants to convert but her mother prevents it." The

Governor sends a soldier to drag Phoebe off while her helpless mother watches.

At their first encounter, the Governor offers her rich clothes and jewels, but the weeping, trembling Phoebe resists: "I never will change my humble garments for others, exhibiting gold and my shame--a Jewess I was born, Sir, a Jewess I wish to die." Esido is angered, but he admires her "resolution and modesty." Tahara's false testimony makes Phoebe's "recantation" a crime of blasphemy, punishable by death, and the ladies of the palace paint Phoebe a picture of the wealth, power and adventure that will be hers if she converts, but Phoebe only trembles, weeps and sighs. Haim blames his wife's harshness for having brought about what he thinks is his daughter's conversion.

Patient Phoebe is detained for three days, still resisting, despite threats of being chained, starved, immured, and "torn piecemeal by wild beasts." Imprisoned, she has a nighttime interview with her parents through the grate, during which she is weighed down by silence and distress, and their anguish is "impossible" to describe. Convinced that she has "failed in the duty of a good child" by not being resigned to her mother, Phoebe is determined to serve as an example to other young women. Her father later seeks information about her fate, but the Governor is furious and Haim laments those unfortunate men "whom fate has condemned to live in this wretched country; we, merely because we are Jews, are treated as slaves; we are scoffed, despised; they will not even live in the same street with us. What happiness can we experience under such persecution." Wise

footnotes this outburst:

> The Jews are treated very harshly by the Moors in this part of Africa; their religious fanaticism leads them to commit horrors repugnant to humanity. It often happens that a Jew who has not taken off his shoes when within twenty paces of a Mosque, receives two hundred bastinadoes on the soles of his feet, or some similar punishment (no.7, p.50).

At another interview with her parents Phoebe is even more determined to die for her religion, astonishing them with her resolution: "Who gains the greatest glory, the tyrant overcome by his victim, or the oppressed, even at the expense of life, who becomes the victor?" she asks. "Charming Phoebe" is punished for her obduracy by being placed in a dark airless dungeon, an iron collar on her neck, chains fastened to her hands and feet--but she dwells on God in her thoughts. When the Spanish Vice Consul Don Jose Riero hears of her plight he intercedes, but it is too late because the Emperor has been informed and ordered her brought to Fez. "Moors as well as Jews" are dismayed by this dismal turn of events. Because Phoebe's family must pay the costs of her removal to Fez, the Governor demands forty dollars, and prohibits her parents or any Jews from contact with Phoebe. The money is supplied by Don Jose, and chained, sighing Phoebe, radiant and imposing, is tied to a mule by a "frightful Mulatto" where she invokes God's consolation in "a contemplative ecstacy." Her parents watch in secret and their shock turns to convulsed mourning and fainting.

Silent, uncomplaining Phoebe is pressed on her awful six-day journey to convert by all who see her; her courageous refusal astonishes everyone. At Fez, the Prince and 300 courtiers on

horseback fire their guns to impress Phoebe, but she is still unmoved, as is also the case when she is entertained in a "magnificent saloon decorated with extreme grandeur, in the Arabian style" and offered rich clothing and perfumes. The Prince and Emperor counsel all to treat her with kindness, and though impressed by her lavish surroundings, Phoebe cannot be misled by the Prince's wife to convert.

In her longest defense, Phoebe expounds on the lion, the oak, the Christian, the Jew, and the Moslem as all being unalterably what nature made them, concluding that religion "is imprinted on the soul by nature." A confrontation with the Emperor, who offers her a rare diamond, and his nephew in marriage, leads him to abandon Phoebe to justice, but he orders that before any punishment be inflicted, "every means of persuasion and mildness" be employed. "The Moors had determined to convert the Jewess, and sought it with desperation" and nine days of "useless persuasion" follow. Phoebe is told that rabbis ("sages of her faith") will come to intercede with her, but she does not know they are acting under personal threats.

These sages cannot shake Phoebe's "inexplicable courage" and she is condemned to death for "her repeated blasphemy of the Prophet and his dogmas." Even descriptions of her execution leave her unmoved, but the coming execution fills the Moors--"whose religious fanaticism is indescribable...with their accustomed joy." While Phoebe is taunted and execrated by mobs on the way to her death, even the fanatical and bloodthirsty Moors find her "meekness and devotion" touching, and her tomb is later venerated even by Moors as well as

Jews. Her parents are left distracted and the novel ends with two lessons:

> Learn, parents, by this example, that too much severity in rearing children often leads to the most dreadful disasters of life.
> Youth, imitate her virtuous constancy, and forget not that a faithless friend caused her destruction (no.11, p.82).

The pointedness of the novel's morals highlights The Jewish Heroine's extreme simplicity; there is one sole line of action, unlike the previous novel with its larger cast of characters. Phoebe is betrayed by her false friend and suffers continued humiliations and privations as the pressure on her to convert mounts. In one exchange after another, she is both tempted and threatened to convert, becoming more heroic and more resigned, a "Goddess of Virtue" and "Angel of Beauty." At the story's opening she is already a jewel and her suffering and martyrdom only brighten her luster. The falseness and cruelty of Israel's enemies in this novel is so apparent in the very first chapter that Phoebe's fate is never really in doubt. Each subsequent chapter is less a complication or extension of the story than an intensification of Pheobe's growing resolution to God-inspired martyrdom. Phoebe's temptations and sufferings increase, as does the weight of her parents' grief and the publicity and precariousness of her situation. Phoebe grows more resolute, more resigned, and more exalted in her rhetoric.

Wise's second novel is not only different from the first in terms of its simplicity; Wise relies far more here on dialogue than narration--so that the effect is of reading a play that has been

turned into a novel. One reason may be the setting, which Wise would only know from his reading. Though setting is by no means a key element of The Convert, there are enough touches like the green lamps at Moses' lodgings and the Mizrach (marking the Eastern wall, for prayer) at the Baums' to make that novel convincingly familiar. By comparison, setting is almost a cipher in The Jewish Heroine and in only one place is there an attempt to achieve verisimilitude. At the Emperor's palace in Fez, Phoebe is entertained as already stated, "in a magnificent saloon, decorated with extreme grandeur, in the Arabian style." No details are given.

Another possible explanation for the reliance on dialogue is that Wise was inspired by a play or plays. Jews were not only portrayed stereotypically in fiction of the period, they were also popular stage villains; this stage Jew, adopted from English drama, was unlike Jews in actual American life. Louis Harap has detailed the "almost universal and completely uncritical acceptance of the anti-Semitic portrait of the Jew on the American stage" (Harap, p.211). Three popular plays that Wise might have seen, read or heard of were set in the Barbary States and had stereotypic Jewish characters: Susannah Rowson's Slaves in Algiers (1794), James Ellison's American Captive (1811) and Jonathan Smith's The Siege of Algiers (1823).

Jews actually played an important economic role in the Barbary States, as witnessed by the American Jewish playwright Mordecai Noah, who served there from 1813 to 1815 as the United States Consul. Noah reports that Jews in the Barbary States are "the principal at the head of the custom house...control the mint and regulate the coinage of

money, they keep the Bey's jewels and valuable articles, and are his treasurers, secretaries and interpreters; the little known of arts, science, and medicine is confined to the Jews." Noah assesses them as possessing "a very controlling influence, and their friendship is worthy of being preserved by public functionaries, and their opposition is to be dreaded." Given their business skill, Noah concludes they will, "if not narrowly watched, avail themselves of opportunities to overreach and defraud." The first Jew in American fiction appeared in Royall Taylor's The Algerine Captive and was "based with some accuracy on the powerful Jewish banking families in Algiers, the Bacri and Busnachs" (Harap, p. 34).

Lingering as it does on Phoebe's suffering and fortitude, The Jewish Heroine seems a determined effort not just to praise Jewish heroism but to specifically counter the stereotype of rich, ruthless and grasping Barbary States Jew. Her father after all may be a trader, as many Jews there were, but he is by no means wealthy: "Fortune had not been over generous of her favours to Haim Hachuel." He is never more than a desperate and bewildered father, overwhelmed by grief, and the reader is often asked to sympathize with him and his wife or told that their suffering resists description. The villains are the Arabs, who can only be kind to deceive; they are otherwise "false," "fanatic," "artful," "crafty," "harsh," "capricious," "faithless," "treacherous," "ferocious," and "their religious fanaticism is indescribable." Phoebe is a victim of that fanaticism, the only Wise protagonist to suffer death, but she dies triumphant, a proud and unbowed Jew.

The Shoemaker's Family: Jaunary 5, 1855 to February 23, 1855.
Setting: a small village in Polish Austria, 1847
Themes: Christian infamy will not go unpunished. Reform offers the opposite of Jewish superstition and prejudice.
Characters:
Isaac Summer, Shoemaker and Sexton
Sulamith, his daughter
Simeon, her brother
Moses, their brother in America
Joseph Brauer, Simeon's Christian friend and patron
Baroness Lichtenfeld, Brauer's sister
Mr. Freiberg, Brauer's childhood tutor, his sister's lover
Mr. Lemech, Jewish busybody
Joseph Katz, wealty neighbor

In a violent December snowstorm, the family of "poor, simple but honest" Isaac Summer is unable to properly celebrate the coming Sabbath because "there was neither flour, meat, nor fish...even no oil was there to fill the Sabbath-lamp." Son Simeon arrives with the missing items, but will not reveal their source. A red-head, he will be the butt of jokes and folk sayings throughout the novel like "red hair grows on no good head." At a rich neighbor's house, Simeon and his sister Sulamith are reminded of their poverty by comparing themselves to Joseph Katz' French-speaking, piano-playing arrogant children. When Sulamith later laments her lack of "learning," her brother insists that they have learned honesty, industry and humility. Late that night a mysterious cloaked stranger goes off with Simeon. A letter comes from Moses with money in it and a note for Simeon praising his command of English. Sulamith is strangely overwrought to hear that her brother has secretly learned English and Simeon suspects that she must be in love with someone; only that could explain the intensity of her feelings.

Simeon's benefactor, John Brauer, lives near the village, in a Gothic home set in a cheerless stand of oaks. Brauer's home is feared by superstitious Jews and Gentiles. They claim to have seen all sorts of apparitions there and call red-headed Brauer "The Red Wizard." When Simeon shares his concern for Sulamith with Brauer and wonders how to help educate her, Brauer counsels giving Sulamith history and philosophy to read, but not fiction or poetry because they would only "gratify her vanity." At the Katz' Simeon later shows up the Misses Katz as ignorant by reading Victor Cousin to them which they mistake for Racine (when they aren't dozing). Impressed by his learning, Sulamith begs her brother to educate her so that she can master her "irressitable desire, a burning passion, to commit the worst and blackest of crimes." That night, their father believes he has seen a ghost, but it is only the same stranger who led Simeon off the night before with the password, "Watchman, what of the night?"

A large company celebrating Mr. Katz' birthday mocks and bedevils Simeon for being a mysterious loner, and Simeon rails against the synagogue he does not attend because of its "antiquated chants" and "unmeaning ceremonies." To his critics, Simeon delivers a plea for understanding and Reform:

> 'The synagogue is good enough for me, but I dislike to see hypocrites shake their heads when praying, and thinking evil of their neighbors; crying aloud the praise of the Almighty, and slander their fellow creatures; boast upon being the image of God, and degrade themselves by the meanest prejudice, the most ridiculous superstitions, and heap disgrace upon the Jewish name by uniting all sorts of follies to religious observances. I hate to see men talk words which they do not understand, believe that which they are unable to comprehend, and make whimsical gestures to please God, and still they style themselves Jews. I am a

> Jew, so help me God, I am a Jew, and therefore, I cannot go to your synagogue. Give me a synagogue in which I am instructed by a learned and pious teacher; give me a synagogue in which people pray; in which the praise of the Almighty, as my heart feels it, may rise freely on the pinions of sacred psalmody to the throne of glory. Give me a synagogue as our fathers wanted it, and I will be found the best Jew' (no.28, p.217).

When the "unusually numerous" company disbands, Simeon and a number of the young men go to Brauer's. Sharing the news of Louis Phillipe's abdication, Brauer predicts that Austria will soon be in revolution and when a newcomer announces that France has become a republic there is an uproar. Before Simeon returns home, Sulamith is bound, gagged, blindfolded and spirited off in a carriage. No one knows this, and when Brauer later suggests that she eloped with a lover, Simeon feels astonished and betrayed.

Sulamith is released in rich apartments, given beautiful clothes and introduced to a Baroness who claims to be her real mother, relating the following story: fleeing the failed Polish revolution of 1830, the Baroness left the infant Sulamith in the care of the Summers, and she has only just returned to claim her property and her child. The abduction was necessary to wipe away the stain of Sulamith's humble surroundings. Sulamith's confusion is tempered by relief that Simeon is not her brother and that her love for him is thus not criminal. Irate Isaac Summer, convinced that Simeon is somehow involved in Sulamith's disappearance, angrily reveals that Simeon is not his son, but adopted, and a bastard as well. However, Brauer tells the anguished Simeon that he is indeed legitimate and <u>his</u> son and that he (Brauer) is really Baron Eberfeld. Simeon reacts with "a strange mixture of surprise, joy, pain, fear, and hope."

Baron Eberfeld tells his complex story: the son of a German noble and a Polish Countess, serving in the Russian army, he returned from his own military service to find his castle barred to him because his mother had died and his sister had married an officer who sold the property. Eberfeld is then imprisoned as an imposter in Warsaw, but the testimony of friendly Jews from his village frees him. Seeking legal counsel in Brody, Poland, he stays with repentant converts from Judaism, Dr. and Mrs. Perles, whose daughter Elizabeth he marries after promising to raise their child as a Jew. Returning from Warsaw one day, he finds his wife, the Perles's, their servants and his son's nurse murdered. Eberfeld places his infant son with the Summers "that he might be educated as a Jew, unacquainted with the corruption of the church, far from the degradation and infamy of the wealthy and mighty." Eberfeld moved nearby so that he could become his son's teacher and mentor; his brother-in-law meanwhile poisoned himself in Paris and his sister and their childhood tutor returned to the area.

Moses returns from America--where he was studying "political institutions"--just as a mob erupts in the village crying "Down with Austria! Hurrah for newborn Poland! Down with the Germans and the Jews! Hurrah for liberty and independence! Down with the rich!" Simeon silences the crowd by speaking of liberty, and warning them not to fight among themselves because that is what the Austrian government wants: dissension among minorities. A note dropped by foolish Mr. Lemech, who has blamed Simeon for Sulamith's disappearance, reveals that he has been paid 100 guilders by Baroness Lichtenberg (Eberfeld's sister) for some "service." In her castle garden, the Baroness and

her lover Mr. Freiberg, the old tutor whom Eberfeld trusts completely, discuss their successful scheming of the past and plan to persuade Sulamith to convert to Christianity and enter a convent so that the Baroness' daughter can marry Simeon and the family fortune stay within her power.

Disguised as a friar Freiberg attempts to begin converting Sulamith, who manages to escape into the forest, mistaking him to have revealed that the Baroness is not her mother. Enraged, the Baroness attempts to stab Freiberg, who threatens to reveal their infamy to her brother (Brauer/Eberfeld) and then poison himself. Calmed and reconciled, they plot to bring the Summers to them by revealing Sulamith is there at the castle. The plan works and Freiberg tells the old couple that Simeon is her kidnapper and seducer, having falsely convinced the girl that she is the Baroness' daughter--a lie he says the Baroness was unaware of. At Brauer's, Simeon reveals that he suspects Freiberg of complicity in his mother's death, mention of whom always makes Freiberg uneasy. As a test, Simeon once lured him to her grave, which sent the tutor "off as if pursued by hungry wolves." Simon forces Lemech to reveal that he abducted Sulamith for the Baroness who promised Sulamith to him in marriage.

Sulamith flees five miles into the forest, but she falls asleep and is recaptured. When she regains consciousness back at the castle, Freiberg lies to her about Simeon, lasciviously claiming the youth seduced her. The village is meanwhile wild with rumors of the Summers' disappearance and a mob breaks into their home and plunders the box of money and jewels that Katz hid there for safekeeping. A

horse trader recognizes the horses Freiberg used as the Baroness' and Moses leads an armed and "enraged multitude" to her castle in search of the Summers and Sulamith.

The Baroness and Freiberg attempt to control events by planning to marry Sulamith to Lemech and giving him 20 thousand guilders so that as a rich man's wife, they tell her parents, "her character and honor would be restored at once." Driven to distraction, Sulamith cannot forestall the plan, but the mob bursts in to save her, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Freiberg's murders. Sulamith demands justice for the Baroness, preventing her execution by the mob. Freiberg repeats his story blaming Simeon to the crowd, which is aroused. Tumult results and Sulamith raves until Simeon enters with his father, Baron Eberfeld, and tells the truth, implicating Lemech. At midnight the veiled figure of a woman in a white blood-stained dress enters and Freiberg is frightened into confessing that he helped poison Eberfeld's mother, murdered the Perles's, their servants, the Baroness' husband, and hired the kidnappers and planned to poison Sulamith. Freiberg attempts to stab the Baroness and the "ghost" is revealed as the Baron's housekeeper. Freiberg and the Baroness are sentenced to life imprisonment; Moses becomes manager of the Baron's estates; Simeon and Sulamith are happy--and one would assume married though that is not stated--living in the Baron's house with the Summers.

While The Shoemaker's Family has a number of elements familiar from earlier Wise novels--the beautiful, noble and long-suffering

heroine, the bewildered and peremptory parents, praise for Reform, and the anti-Jewish violence--it is different in some significant ways. The plot is Wise's most complex to date, his villain is a self-conscious one and his hero is created with more detail.

It is not surprising that Abraham Steinberg's three-line plot summary of the book mistakenly says that Sulamith is of noble birth, and that Freiberg is a Jew. If Sulamith really was Baroness Lichtenfeld's daughter, then there would be no need to force her into a convent. But this story, and the various shifting tales that Freiberg spins, becloud the novel, as does Baron Eberfeld's chapter-long explanation of how Simeon came to live with the Summers even though he is the Baron's son and heir. Perhaps the plot convolutions were as interesting to Wise as was the plotting the seductive Baroness does with her corrupt lover Freiberg. In Chapter Five the couple practically lick their fingers over the deliciousness of their genius at playing parts in "romances" and they exchange fulsome compliments. The Baroness praises Freiberg for his "large fount of sweet words" that could even persuade her he was an honest man; Freiberg admires her "splendid abilities" in playing parts and the Baroness herself claims to have fooled not only people but the French and Russian governments.

Wise's Prior in The Convert seeks power over Moses Baum and enjoys demonstrating what he has, while the Moslems in The Jewish Heroine act out of a kind of madness in trying to seduce or terrorize Phoebe into converting, but Baroness Lichtenfeld is somewhat different. While she does have deep contempt for the "stupid" Jews

she is fooling and attempting to control, her villainy is in a sense more generally domestic than very specifically anti-Jewish (though one could hardly imagine a Jew in this novel acting similarly). The Baroness's trickery is motivated by lust for gain and for Freiberg: she coils herself and her words around him and Wise portrays her as enjoying her machinations in and of themselves. She even dons a wig to change her appearance for no very good reason in the last chapter--except to be more "romantic," perhaps. The staginess of her plotting is matched by the fury of entrances and exits in some of the chapters, but especially the last, and the secret signals exchanged by Brauer and others in the underground organization: a "W" made with one's fingers and a responding finger to the lips. There is almost an element of comedy, as well, in the Baroness' assertion that she simply "yielded for a moment only to an attack of ill temper" when she tried to kill Freiberg for having let Sulamith escape.

And Wise's portrait of Simeon is unusual. Like his predecessors, he is fond of books, and a Reformer, but he is by no means handsome or elegant as they uniformly are, and indeed has a "forbidden [sic] countenance crowned with a very ugly crop of red hair." It is thus not just his desire for a more spiritual and modern Judaism and his involvement in some kind of pro-revolutionary group that set him apart from the villagers. Redheads in Jewish tradition--because they are unusual--are linked with the devil, and said to be dishonest and tricky. They are grudgingly admired for their (in Yiddish) "Mamzeyrishn" brains--that is, the intelligence of a bastard. The implication is that bastards would have to be smarter than others to

overcome the circumstances of their birth. The "connection" of bastardy and red-headedness is also made in Chapter IV when Isaac Summer denounces Simeon as a shameful bastard conceived when his mother was menstruating (and thus ritually unclean)--a mamzer ben niddeh.

Simeon describes the effects of folk prejudice to his critics at the Katz celebration in Chapter III, replying to all those who wonder why he is so different, a loner:

> 'Are you aware how many superstitions are connected with the color of my hair? Do you know how the people are accustomed to think slightly of a poor shoemaker's boy? The world treated me with contempt, and I pay it with the same coin. Is this so unjust? The young ladies went out of my way, because my outward appearance did not suit them, and I learned to smile at their bitterness. Is this not natural? I was debarred of company, and I became fond of books. The more books I read the more I learned to be alone, and I sought solitary abodes' (no.28, p.217).

Simeon's subsequent cry for a synagogue worthy of Judaism is not just theory or rhetoric, but part of his entire being. The pathos and fervor with which he speaks about his loneliness and Reform make one wonder if there is a touch of autobiography in this character. While almost nothing is known of Wise's early years, poverty at home forced him to live with his grandfather at the age of six. When his grandfather died six years later, what followed was what a number of Wise's biographers call his "wandering." It is impossible to determine from the sources whether Wise himself was a redhead, but two other red-headed characters appear in his fiction, in The Rabbi of Bacherach (see Chapter Three) and in one of his German novels serialized in Die Deborah, Der Rothkopf oder des

Schulmeisters Tochter. The villagers may be afraid of Joseph Brauer and his home, and Freiberg is frightened by a "ghost" into confessing, but the real power of superstition here is in hurting an individual.

At one point in the novel Simeon and his brother are thinking of joining the Hungarian army and that enthusiasm matches Wise's own during the dramatic events of 1847 and 1848, at least as he records it in Reminiscences. The news of Louis Phillipe's abdication and of revolution in Vienna, Berlin, Hungary and Italy led him to expect "the proclamation of the European Republic." Wise says that he saw "the struggle of humanity against the stupefying element....I wished to participate in the war of emancipation." Sefton Temkin has observed that a constant thread in Wise's speeches and articles "is his passionate belief in reason, liberty and progress and a hatred of any institution standing in their way" (Temkin, p.301).

America, which offered Moses Baum freedom to be a Jew and whatever he wanted to be, makes a more direct entrance into this novel through Moses Summer's letter, read throughout the village, and his return. Marcus Hansen describes the impact such letters from America had in Europe. They were:

> not merely a family but a community affair. Neighbors assembled, the schoolmaster was pressed into service, and the letter was read amidst a profound silence that bore eloquent testimony to the profound interest. Often copies were made and sent to other communities...letters from departed friends and relatives contained not only information and advice, but also tangible evidences of a more abundant life--a bank note...(Hansen, pp. 153-54).

And Moses' letter does indeed include money and attract village-wide attention, but his most valuable token of living in America is his deepened commitment to liberty--liberty from scheming anti-semitic

nobility, mob violence against the Jews, and debilitating superstition.

Resignation and Fidelity, or, Life A Romance: April 8, 1855 to April 20, and May 4 to May 25, 1855.
Setting: Bohemia, around 1840.
Themes: Conversionists are motivated by Jew-hatred and are no match for pious, simple Jews. Congregational strife can often produce cruelties; arranged marriages are a mistake.
Characters: Joseph Hartman, wealthy Parnass (congregational leader)
"Long David," his son
Molly, Long David's betrothed
David Straus, teacher, in love with Molly
Daniel, his cousin
Samuel, a friend
Count L., David's natural father
The Shamesh (sexton), Molly's father
Hans Essig, the town's priest
Anselmo Altburg, the town`s minister

This novel is a fast-paced almost burlesque story of love and student life set in Bohemia around 1840, and Wise hints it is based on fact. Joseph Hartman, a wealthy Parnass (congregational leader), is host to a lavish entertainment in celebration of the betrothal of his son "Long David" (who is very tall) to the amiable and much-loved Molly, "belle of the town" and daughter of the poor Shamesh (sexton). Despite the general hilarity, Molly sighs and is silent, and David Straus, the teacher, is driven to distraction (rolling eyes, quivering lips) when the engagement is formalized. Straus comes to Molly's window that night with a ring inscribed "resignation and fidelity." She has consented to the marriage only to free her parents and talented younger brother from financial need; Straus decides to leave for the University at Erlengen to study "anything and everything, which was strong enough to claim his sole attention, and to make him

forget all events past and present." On his vacation, Straus is visited by his father, Count L., who has no legitimate heir and offers to make David his sole heir if he continues his succesful studies, and converts. The Count offers this argument:

> 'You know well...that in our fatherland the portals of public distinction are open to him only who is called a Christian. Conviction, faith and private views are no matter of consideration in this respect. A candidate for public office must be called a Christian. Who cares for the name? Is it your fault, that you are called David? or would it be any merit to you if your name should be Francis? Names are arbitrary and accidental things, and can be changed at our pleasure. You are now called a Jew, this excludes you from all public offices and the honor and wealth connected therewith. I desire my heir to be a man of high standing in the country' (no.39, p.306).

David refuses, they argue and after the Count leaves, David hears that he has received a prize for a philosophy essay, which leaves other students jealous of his success. The students believe that Count L.--whose brother is at the Russian court--is a Czarist agent, and Straus is warned to leave the university because of his connection with the Count, or face death. Returning "with a bleeding heart and wounded pride," he is visited by tearful Molly who bids him to remember her even though she will be Long David's bride.

Count L. has promises "large sums of money" to the town priest and minister if they can convert Molly to Christianity. Because David loves her, the Count hopes her conversion will convince David to convert too. The townspeople do not know this and speculate on the unusual daily visits of Father Hans Essig and Anselmo Alburg to the Shamesh's humble home. Essig is "a notorious opponent of the Jews" who

> never forgot to appear very religious, kind and even sentimental, if it served his purpose; but he could also play the despot, the reckless persecutor, the irreconcilable enemy, if he could not otherwise reach his purpose (no.40, p.313).

For all that, however, the priest is finally "too stupid to be dangerous to any body [sic], and too unskillful to play successfully the Jesuit." Feigning goodwill, Essig appoints Molly's father his steward. Altburg, on the other hand, is honestly goodnatured, even considered weak; pious and patient, he is "the opponent of none and prayed for all."

Count L.'s machinations extend further than seeking to convert Molly. He has interceded with the county judge (Landrichter) to prevent Long David from getting official permission to marry Molly and set up his home. Essig's servant brings her a letter from Straus in which he swears undying love, but she replies that their contact must cease. Long David arranges for Molly, her parents and her brother, who is headed for gymnasium in Wurzburg, to accompany him there, where he will use his money and influence to persuade the district governor to give him permission to marry. Long David handsomely outfits Molly and her family, giving her "rich jewelry, such as she never had, and never expected to have."

Straus returns to his mother in another village than Molly's, and at his homecoming celebration David tells much-applauded stories of student highjinks. Later, though, he confesses his heartbreak to his mother. Gendarmes and a constable arrive to take Straus, no longer a student, to military service at Wurzburg where Molly is sure she sees him in uniform. Believing that she has driven him to the drastic step

of enlisting, she retreats to her rooms, ill, where Straus finds her. Long David discovers them embracing and in the subsequent fight Straus is wounded and thrown down a staircase, and charged with disorderly conduct and imprisoned when he returns to his barracks. Molly rushes out to search for him, in vain, and Count L. visits him at the hospital, where he learns that Straus would return to his studies if released. David's mother arrives and orders her "seducer" to help their son, but the Count has already had him released from military service.

When Molly reveals her love for Straus to her parents, they agree that marrying Long David is wrong; he, however, is enraged and threatens to punish them with "the whole weight of his anger." At the Jewish meetinghouse two days before Rosh Hashanah a meeting is held to consider "several charges against the Shamesh [sexton]," and there is much disputation because the meeting is held during the day, when most members cannot attend. Molly's family is accused of being on the verge of conversion, Molly of "roaming the streets of Wurzburg with soldiers," and of "a base breach of promise." A majority agree to adjourn but Long David's father, the Parnass (congregational leader) and his friends vote to dismiss Molly's father and hire someone else. This action shocks the Shamesh, and Essig and Altburg claim that conversion is the only answer to Jewish hard-heartedness and divine displeasure. The Shamesh is not at all convinced.

Back in Wurzburg, Straus is studying medicine, which Count L. disapproves of because it cannot lead to status and power. In a discussion with another student Straus condemns "rascality and

mischief," while the other holds that trick-playing is part of being a student. David's cousin Daniel returns from delivering a letter to Molly and describes a fight at an inn in which he and his friend Samuel thrashed Rosengans and other supporters of the Parnass. A student informs Straus that Count L., ill in bed, is really being poisoned by student groups who believe him to be a Russian spy. Brandishing a gun, Straus forces his way past the Count's treacherous steward to reveal the plot. A dog given a large dose of his medicine dies, and the grateful Count calls a notary to have David made the gift of his Alsatian estates and one million francs.

Constables take away the sexton's moveable property because he lost a law suit brought by Long David, who wanted the money he'd spent on Molly's family for the Wurzburg trip. A mob of drunken Parnass supporters comes at night to hurl the Shamesh out into the street and fisticuffs result: David, Daniel and Samuel arrive and soundly thrash everyone several times. Molly and David and her parents move to Alsace with David's mother, his cousin Daniel and Samuel.

This novel is notable for its two kinds of comedy: a knock-about sort of burlesque with ridiculously-named characters, and strong mockery of Christianity and attempts to convert believing Jews. The pro-Parnass inkeeper's name is Narrhaus ("house of fools"), supporters of the Parnass have names like Blindfriend and Meshugah ("crazy"); and the priest is surrounded by "satellites" with names like Glaubnix ("believe in nothing"), Schnaps, Tumirnix ("don't bother me"). It is not surprising, then, that a number of the more foolish villagers are

soundly beaten up at least twice by the novel's end. The violence in other novels is generally deadly and directed against Jews, but here it has the effect of slapstick; its already laughable victims become more so.

Student life is also mocked and even condemned. In reporting to David about Molly's state, his cousin Daniel raves in a "poetic style" that seems Wise's satire on the effusions of lovers and pompous students. Speaking in "comic-romantic emphasis, " Daniel praises Molly as an angel and avers "if she would sit in the centre of Vesuvius, guarded by old Pluto with his Cyclops, I would drive the old boy into the sea, and his subjects would have to make the furniture, and build a house for me and Molly." Like Claudius demanding Polonious supply "more matter and less art," David presses his cousin for "prose."

Wise's attitude towards students' "pranks" is somewhat unclear; David Straus condemns them in Chapter IV but regales an audience with them in Chapter II and there is no clear indication that he is being deliberately hilarious to hide his grief. As we have seen, university students are not above threatening a fellow student's life and poisoning a man they believe to be an enemy of the state.

A different kind of comedy results from the visits of Essig and Altburg to Molly with the purpose of conversion, one villager joking that they are there to convert each other. The churchmen's efforts not only lead to strong theological rebukes by Molly and her father, but to squabbling between them over works versus faith or salvation in the world to come versus salvation in this world. Constant missionary

visits leave Molly and her parents "well versed in theological information" and "all points of the two churches"--with unexpected results. Molly is able to defeat one churchman with the arguments of the other. How is this possible?

> In the morning they were told, every one must read the Bible in order to be saved, but in the afternoon they were informed, whoever read that book is a candidate for hell. The one spoke of the divinity and purity of God's mother and his grand-mother, who were patronesses of all chaste women, about which the other made his sarcastic observations, maintaining, that such a belief was very sinful and foolish. The host of saints and their legends was a fertile theme to the one, and a matter of strong condemnation to the other. The one dwelt with particular delight on the doctrine of predestination and salvation by faith, while the other called these dogmas the fabrication of Satan. The pope was called by one the prince of darkness, and his mandates were named the commands of heresy and wickedness, while the other sent every one to hell and everlasting purgatory as a wicked heretic, who dared to utter such unchristian words (no.40, p.314).

In his previous novels Wise has attacked the Church for its ruthless persecution of Jews in contemporary Germany, but this is the first attack in his fiction on Christian doctrine itself. For all their pressure, however, both the priest and the minister are utlimately harmless fools who can make no headway in converting simple believing people like Molly and her parents. Furthermore, they reveal their underlying contempt for Jews when bested in argument, betraying their real nature.

To anyone familiar with Wise's career, and especially Reminiscences, this novel is surprisingly and strongly autobiographical. The Chapter V meeting in which the Shamesh is fired is almost identical to that Wise describes 20 years later of being relieved of his post in Albany's Beth El. In the novel, a

congregational meeting is held two days before the Jewish New Year when there is a fair in town. After unimportant business, a "manuscript" is laid before the congregation containing charges against the Shamesh, which when read create "a general uproar." One member objects because business meetings are always held at night so that working members can attend, and the "general meeting was always after New Year's Day." Concluding that the meeting and the charges were unannounced, he moves to adjourn.

The Parnass refuses to put the motion to a vote and Rosengans says the family is about to convert; Molly is guilty of breach of promise and consorting with soldiers and so the congregation does not want her father as Shamesh. The Parnass again refuses to allow a vote on adjournment.

> 'We are the majority who wish to adjourn,' one exclaimed impatiently. 'I will show you how much your majority is worth,' the Parnass remarked ironically. 'We will sue you before the court,' another vociferated. 'I can spend one hundred thousand guilders to outlaw you,' the Parnass replied. This was a firebrand thrown among the multitude. The most intense excitement ensued, hard words fell on each side and the last spark of order was gone (no.43, p.373).

When order is restored, the Parnass again refuses to permit a vote on adjournment, and the "second Parnass" (his assistant?) announces to the "outraged" congregation that the Parnass has "forfeited the chair" by his unparliamentary behavior. A motion to adjourn is carried by a majority and the Shamesh's friends leave. The Parnass and his supporters read the charges and dismiss Molly's father even though the meeting has been officially adjourned.

Wise himself was the subject of a similar meeting, the

culmination of several years of intermittent controversy, according to Reminiscences. His history with Beth El, which he served as rabbi and teacher from 1846 to 1851, was a rocky one even by his own account. Wise was resolutely against violations of the sabbath--"I insisted that one could not be a Jew unless he kept the Ten Commandments (p. 73)"--and he admits that he "chastised without reserve" on this issue (p.74). The subject of lampoons, Wise at one point created an uproar by tearing up his contract, which led to a three-year reelection at a higher slary. Other sources of contention were the choir he organized, Wise's approval of sending Jewish children to non-Jewish academies after their Jewish education, and removing women's seats to house the choir. "I was blamed for everything" (p. 118).

Wise infuriated members of his congregation by violating mourning customs when his daughter died: not letting his coat be cut, not sitting shoeless during the seven-day period of shiva. Wise does not allow that this might have been offensive, simply recording that he was "the subject of the most violent and bitter discussion on the street, in the saloons, at the gaming-table." Wise further enraged his congregation in 1850 by publicly admitting in Charleston (where he said he was invited to speak on Reform, but was job-hunting, according to Sefton Temkin) that he did not believe in a personal Messiah or bodily resurrection. He also accepted Charleston's offer of a position, which his congregation forced him to decline. Wise goes on to record that his Parnass, Louis Spanier, inexplicably came to oppose him and Reform. After Wise rebuked a board member who kept his store open on Saturday, Spanier ordered him not to preach because it was

assumed he would use his pulpit to bring up the issue. Spanier was accused in court of disturbing divine service and dismissed with a reprimend.

As controversy escalated, Wise's salary was withheld and some parents did not pay tuition for the school, further reducing his income. Wise says that he was formally accused of writing on New Year's eve, mocking the women's ritual bath (mikveh) and preaching "a God of Reason," rather than the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Wise says the first two claims were false and the third "incomprehensible" to him. A Board meeting sided with Wise and all this unpleasantness led to a near-riot on New Year's day when Spanier punched Wise as he took out the Torah scrolls for the Torah service. When Wise threatened to appeal to the law, Spanier boasted, "I have a hundred thousand dollars more than you. I do not fear the law. I will ruin you" (pp. 165-66). Police closed Beth El and Wise was led to the police station (the arresting officer died three months later, Wise notes without comment!).

Because Wise's opponents meant to discharge him legally and leave him "vanquished and made harmless for all future time," they had held a meeting before New Year's, and this is Wise's version in Reminiscences of what happened:

> A great fair happened to be held in the city during the week before New-Year. Business was good, and no one wished to leave his place of business. Spanier made use of the opportunity. Although the congregational meeting was always held after New-year and at night, he called the meeting two days before New-year and by day, in order that the business men could not attend it. And although the law required that the special business to be brought before the meeting should be indicated in the notices, he neglected to do this. The people attended the meeting nevertheless, because they

> divined trouble. Instead of proceeding with the regular business the Parnass laid the charges which had been brought against me, but had been dismissed by the Board, before the meeting....Since this proceeding was clearly illegal, the vice-president, Joseph Sporberg...declared that it was his duty to vindicate the law, and he put the motion to adjourn. A vote was taken, and Sporberg decided that the motion was carried. He declared the meeting adjourned, and left with his friends. After they had gone, Spanier declared that the meeting was not adjourned, and proceeded to business. First, our poor, sick, and efficient sexton was discharged, because he was one of our party; then new officers were elected; then it was resolved that the charges against me were sustained, that I was deposed from office from that hour, and that the back-salary due me should not be paid (pp. 163-64).

There are obvious and important similarities between the story told in the novel and that told in the memoir. The meetings are held at an irregular time to make manipulation easier; the chair violates correct procedure before and during the meeting; an outraged majority takes over, but the minority proceeds with its mission anyway, the Parnass boastfully defying the law. While the charges are not made specific in Resignation and Fidelity, Rosengans voices three objections to the Shamesh, the same number of formal charges Wise lists in Reminiscences. In each version a Shamesh is dismissed with financial penalties (Molly's father will have to give up his house), and in both cases, the "authorities" abuse their power and their congregants. The lawsuit against the Shamesh in the novel echoes a lawsuit against Wise; the shochet he fired sued Wise for libel. Wise claimed in Reminiscences that this ritual slaughterer drank and gambled and was thus unfit for the post according to Jewish law. The case was settled when Wise admitted fault; in the novel, a vengeful Long David deprives the poor Shamesh of all his property, seeking money, not to clear his name of a libelous charge.

A more complete version of the story of Wise's dismisal is offered by Naphtali Rubinger (45), who had access to Beth El's congregational records. Wise was indeed charged with heresy, but there was a complex background to the accusation. From the beginning of his tenure at Beth El, Wise's innovations and personality created "conflict with members...who resented these changes in their mode of worship, and, even more, the zeal with which the rabbi projected them" (Rubinger, pp. 161-2). At the heart of Wise's dismissal was a power struggle with Spanier, Beth El's president. Wise delivered a sermon against his wishes, discharged the ritual slaughterer and hired a replacement apparently without permission. Wise was also the subject of a libel suit and unpleasant publicity related to the incident in Charleston. Rubinger concludes that "Spanier was convinced that Wise had, by the willful, overbearing and intemperate exercise of his ministerial office threatened that already shaky peace and harmony of the congregation" (Rubinger, p. 183).

When Wise came to record the dramatic events of 1851 that turned him into a rabbi who "acknowledged no superior and was ready to fight for his position" (Temkin, p. 241), he had already created a version of those events five years after they occured. In Resignation his personal enemies seem even more meanspirited, single-minded and petty than in his memoirs because they seek to harm a poor, old and faithful servant of the congregation. One can easily imagine Wise's satisfaction at the repeated thrashings earned by some of the anti-Parnass villagers by David, Samuel and Daniel. Wise's most private bit of revenge is on Viest Traub, the shochet he accused of drinking;

one of the priest's hangers-on is named Viest Schnaps. Given this novel's strong autobiographical element, a comment Wise made about his fiction in 1859 takes on added significance: he said that it had "more truth than fiction" in it (quoted in Harap, p.273).

Conversion plays a somehwat different role in each of these four novels, though in all of them, a family is the context of an individual's struggle against overwhelming Gentile odds. For Moses Baum conversion is an entrance into Gentile society where he can establish himself and help his family. But because he has little understanding of Judaism, one cannot take his conversion as more than lip service to a dominant creed. Phoebe Hachuel refuses all temptations offered by her Moslem tormentors: finery, jewels, wealth, and power because conversion would violate her integrity as a Jew. Sulamith never actually faces conversion, but it is held in readiness against her. David Straus also refuses to even consider conversion, though it would make him a Count's heir. But he is not pressed as heavily as his beloved Molly, whose soul is courted by a Priest and a Minister. The inherently violent situation of The Jewish Heroine and to a lesser degree The Convert becomes almost ludicrous in Resignation and Fidelity with Hans Essig and Anselmo Altburg working at cross-purposes to convert Molly.

In Wise's first novel, Christianity is merely its outward signs of priests, a convent, and social acceptability and colored by Gothic elements of darkness, gloom, spies, bravos, poisoning and secret panels. Those elements recur in The Jewish Heroine and The Shoemaker's Family, including a Radcliffean explained ghost. But in

Resignation and Fidelity, Christianity is not just attacked and ridiculed through its representatives, its very doctrines and doctrinal controversies are mocked and derided. The struggle between Gentile and Jew thus moves from the temporal realm to the spiritual.

Of course, Jews are not angelic. As we have seen, mockery also extends to superstitious Jews like Moses Baum's father; pretentious Jews like the Misses Katz for whom French recitation is a potent lullaby; power-hungry Jews like the Parnass depriving an old man of his post. But the impact of Jewish knavery is generally comic and there is never any doubt who the real villains are. Pressure to convert is just one expression of the violence inherent in the Gentile perception of Jews. That violence is always present in these novels, whether in Sulamith`s abduction, the Prior's minions attacking Moses Baum, the students threatening David Straus' life, or the mob shouting "Death to the Jews!" that breaks into the Summers' house and plunders Mr. Katz' wealth.

CHAPTER THREE

HELL IN THEIR HEARTS

The most violent scene in any of the previous four novels discussed is Moses Baum's nightmare in which his entire community is slaughtered by vengeful Christians. It is primarily individuals in those novels who actually suffer Gentile persecution, but in the following novels, all set before the 19th century, Moses's nightmare is reality: whole communities are threatened, attacked or destroyed. Individual Jews facing coercion are not just members of a family, but of an endangered community.

The Catastrophe at Eger A Narrative of the Sixteenth Century: September 22, 1854 to October 27, 1854 and November 10, to December 1, 1854

Setting: Eger, Austria, near the borders of Bavaria and Saxony, 1559.

Themes: Jewish belief in the Cabbalah is ridiculous and debilitating; the only way to counter Catholic tyranny is by force of arms.

Characters:
- Hillel Oppenheim
- Samuel Oppenheim, merchant, his father
- Esther Loeve, Hillel's beloved
- Jacob Loeve, her brother
- David Loeve, their uncle, Samuel Oppenheim's social rival
- Dagobert Ernst, Hillel's Protestant friend
- Laibish Baal Shem, David Loeve's mystical son
- Marcus Lippold, Duke of Brandenburg's treasurer
- Zipporah Cohen, Lippold's bride
- Joseph Cohen, her father, wealthy merchant
- Count Turin, Eger's military commander

Eger in northwest Bohemia was the closest town to Wise's native village of Steingrub, and had already been mentioned in passing in Chapter I of The Convert. Near the German border and close to the meeting point of Bavaria and Saxony, Eger was the Imperial Army's headquarters during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648); Wise sets the novel in 1559.

In the novel's opening paragraphs Wise describes Eger's geographical setting, its history and its Jewish population, which "held there once a permanent position." Wise's story is based on "the chronicles of the city," set at a time when the Pope has ordered Hebrew and rabbinical books burned and soon after Jews had been expelled from Bohemia for a year.

Joseph Cohen's house is alight with candles and filled with music and dancing. The richly-costumed guests are there to celebrate the Duke of Brandenburg's treasurer, highly esteemed Marcus Lippold, marrying Cohen's daughter Zipporah the next day. After many years, the celebration has brought together the town's two rival Jewish families--the Oppenheims and the Loeves. Lippold offers the security of his Duke's realm should anti-Jewish hatred explode at Eger and this invitation is universally praised, except by young Rabbi Laibish Baal Shem, David Loeve's son, who is steeped in Cabbalah. Habitually expressing himself in extravagant metaphor and prophecy, Laibish predicts that angels will defend the Jews and defy the Pope, in response to which "many of the company could not withhold a smile at the heap of nonsense."

In the next room Esther Loeve, David Loeve's niece (and Laibish's cousin), "a perfect oriental beauty of about eighteen," is being eyed by manly and intelligent Hillel Oppenheim and his German friend Dagobert Ernst. In the dance figure, Hillel accidentally takes Esther`s hand and asks if they are enemies; she replies, "Never." Jacob Loeve, Esther's bright and brilliant brother, is outraged by their touching and demands satisfaction; Dagobert offers to be Hillel's second but Esther explains and drags her brother into the next room, when buffoons, "without whom no Jewish marriage was celebrated," are singing sarcastic rhymes to amuse the company.

With much festivity, the wedding of Lippold and Zipporah takes place the next day and Esther swears eternal love for Hillel. The buffoons rhyme about her marrying Laibish and in another room she embraces Hillel, swearing she will be his and no one else's. They are discovered by Jacob Loeve who draws his sword on the "seducer." Esther stops him and berates them both about the rivalry between their two families, whose roots are several generations old. Peace is restored and Hillel and Jacob swear brotherhood to reconcile their families; Esther's nurse Deborah mistakes their manly embrace for a struggle. The nurse's cries cause a melee which is heightened by a talmudic dispute between Laibish and an Oppenheim that has erupted into "utmost confusion," with arguments, oaths, threats, entreaties, disputations, until "in a few minutes the whole scene represented a storm-tossed ocean of human beings with excited passions." The officiating rabbi enters and silence results with terrible news from Prague:

> '...it is charged that we pray to Satan, and for the misfortune of the Christians. The priests and monks hold great gatherings, and preach long sermons again to excite the populace against us. While in Italy they continue to burn our books, the Emperor has commanded, that all our prayerbooks be brought to Vienna in order to be examined' (no. 13, p. 98).

In Ernst senior's garden near Eger, Dagobert learns from a family friend that Eger's monks and priests are plotting something against the Jews and Protestants:

> 'Nocturnal meetings are held at the Franciscan convent [sic], which are attended by a desperate class of laymen; ruined merchants, bankrupt mechanics, hungry quacks, impoverished artists, notorious ruffians, lazy journeymen ...who come night after night from the convent in a state of intoxication, and intense excitement' (no. 14, p. 104).

Dagobert decides to find out if Eger's authorities are in league with the monks.

Jacob sarcastically observes Laibish "healing" and helping superstitious people with a hodgepodge of prayers and "idle ceremonial." Laibish claims that Jacob's frivolity and scoffing prevent Esther's loving <u>him</u> and Laibish leads Jacob out of Eger into the countryside where he prays ("magic ejaculations") so that Esther will love him. Returning to Eger they find chaos in the Jewish quarter: troops are stationed outside the Loeve house. Dagobert is there and asks Esther to marry him, but she reveals her love for Hillel. When an army officer attempts to rape Esther, Dagobert kills him, and with "loads of Hebrew books" is taken away by the authorities. Only by midnight is order restored.

A synagogue debate in Eger over what course to take in response to the Imperial command to collect Jewish books ends with a compromise. Much respected Solomon Oppenheim, whose eldest son is the

Emperor's banker, will represent Eger's Jews in Prague, but the community will also fast and say penitential psalms, as Laibish advises. Hillel is informed at home by his talkative servant Hayim in an O! tempore, O! mores speech that Eger's Jews are gossiping about Esther, claiming that she has had two Gentile lovers and disgraced the Jewish community. Disguised as a doctor's assistant (because of family rivalry), Jacob comes to thank Hillel for his help, but Oppenheim senior interrupts their embrace, commanding an end to their friendship: "Fire and water may unite," he says, "but not an Oppenheim and a Loeve."

Hillel's lovesickness and jealousy drive him to his bed with a violent fever which the doctor cannot explain; in his raving, Hillel moans "of two lovers besides him," and "duels, murder, soldiers." In a parody of cabalistic reasoning, Hayim decides that if his master is in love it must be with his daughter, whom he thinks all men love. The Baal Shem has unsuccessfully tried to convince Esther that she loves him, and Esther disguises herself as a nurse to see Hillel; her tears, embraces and kisses restore him to health and his father sets off for Prague.

The prayerbooks examined by the Emperor's officials are returned and the Jews' innocence is to be publicly declared in Imperial offices and churches, as nothing was found "to testify against the humanity and loyalty of the Jews." Still, there is unrest and some Jewish and Protestant families leave Eger. David Loeve bitterly resents Oppenheim's role in Prague and berates Esther for praising him; Jacob swears that he will aid his sister if their uncle drives her away.

One hundred and fifty young Protestants and Jews meet in the forest late at night to swear to defend themselves against attack by Catholics. Hillel has learned of the priests' "diabolical" plan to kill Eger's Jews and Protestants from a priest-ridden woman with "degenerated passions"; Dagobert warns that "the priests are cunning, and their plans are as profound as their instruments of execution are blind, fanatic, violent and blood-thirsty." Jacob tries to explain the danger to Count Turin, who wants to know why Jews and Protestants do not trust the Imperial troops to defend them against the Franciscan-backed brigands. Enraged by Jacob's explanation, the Count demands all weapons held by Jews and Protestants to be delivered to him. David Loeve announces that Esther will marry his son Laibish the following Saturday night whether she wants to or not, because he has legal control over her. On the first day of Passover, Imperial troops search Jewish and Protestant homes for weapons.

Catastrophe strikes, meanwhile, that Easter Saturday during a glorious religious and civil procession from the Cathedral. Out of the Franciscan convent pour "a thousand infuriated ruffians armed to the teeth" who slaughter every Jew and Protestant in less than an hour:

> Neither the shrieks of the dying, nor the groans of the terrified survivors, neither the prayer of the innocent and unarmed, nor the silent petition of the dumb babe could arrest the fury of the assassins. All and each of them were murdered in cold blood. Large numbers of Jews of all ages and sexes were dragged into a narrow alley and there they were tortured and killed in the most cruel manner (no. 20, p. 154).

Solomon Oppenheim returns after the Imperial guards have regained

control of the city, and is reunited with his son at the castle where Count Turin blames himself for not having listened to Jacob Loeve, and commits suicide.

Hillel and his father find Esther with the dying Dagobert, whom she saved, at the Ernsts' home outside Eger. With rain falling on the blood-stained city, the murdered are being buried in mass graves. Solomon declares that he will have a hospital "for sick and wounded soldiers" erected in the garden and named after Dagobert. Hillel and Esther are married and Dagobert's father resides with Solomon; "neither of the two ever smiled or laughed again after this dreadful event." Wise ends by saying that he was well acquainted with a man married to the "last daughter of the house in Eger."

The Catastrophe at Eger is not only Wise's first historical novel, it is also notable for his use of some local color, his dwelling on Jewish ritual and use of comedy; his scathing attack on Orthodox Judaism as represented by Laibish; and his uniting the Jewish and Protestant "cause." Wise describes buildings and streets in Eger with more detail than he had used hitherto; after impressions of what its fertile valley looks like, we are shown reminders of the past of Eger's once-prominent Jews in:

> The scrolls of the law, as used in the synagogues, preserved at the city hall of Eger; the name of 'Jew's burial,' given to a district in the suburbs; the gravestones with Hebrew inscriptions constantly found in buildings, and dug up from the pavements; the buildings with the Hebrew inscription over the door, supposed to have been the Jewish college; the synagogue, at the rear of the Franciscan convent on Steiner street; the name 'Jew-street,' which a finely built thoroughfare is still called (no. 12, p. 96).

More grim is Mordgassel (Murder alley), where the Jews are slaughtered

in Chapter VIII. Wise even notes typically local weather--the November "sharp and bleak" breeze that is "very unpleasant in that region of Germany."

But Wise not only gives names of gates and streets to create sixteenth century Jewish reality, he also lingers lovingly on Jewish marriage rituals: the reading of prayers, the blessing pronounced upon Zipporah, the gold-embroidered silk handkerchief she dons after her hair is cut off, the candles carried by a female procession singing a hymn, the bridal canopy, the singing and festivity, the music and the traditional buffoons.

This positive portrayal sharply contrasts with Wise's characterization of Laibish. In a footnote, Wise explains that a Baal Shem (Master of the Name), "claims a species of prophetical knowledge, and intuitive perceptions beyond the usual requirements of the generality of mankind, speaking frequently in metaphor, and using allegorical figures of speech from cabalistical works." This note is neutral enough, but whenever Laibish spins out his metaphors, everyone laughs, and Wise says that he and all cabalists are ignorant of the literature they quote. Threatening the Pope, for instance, Laibish says in part:

> 'And the command will go forth from the Lord, to the seven times seven myriads of the Angels of Destruction, to fly through this nether world, and bring death to all the enemies of the celestial Queen, and to change the fire into water, and the water into fire, to change the river into a sun, and the sun into a river' (no. 12, p. 96).

Laibish's ludicrous outpourings are always accompanied by "fantastical gestures" and the Orthodox Jews' swaying of the torso (shokeling, in

Yiddish). Reformers found this synagogue behavior perhaps more distasteful than any other they condemned. Laibish is not only rhetorically and religiously grotesque, he claims the ability to heal and to solve mysteries, and seems most ridiculous in his ritual attempting to make Esther love him, which includes threading a needle with one of her hairs and burying it.

When Laibish is challenged by Jacob to use his powers to quell the riot, Laibish's superstitious reliance in prayers seems to be part of a larger problem in Wise's view--fasting rather than fighting when attacked. If Laibish's speeches were shorter (Wise says one is taken verbatim from a cabalistic source), they might be funnier instead of tiresome. The same is also the case with Hillel's servant Hayim who is clearly in the rather grim novel to provide comic relief; with Esther's nurse Deborah he rounds out the range of characters from rabbinical eminence to servant and the presence of a foolish servant and nurse heighten the very general resemblance to Romeo and Juliet.

The heroes of this novel are not only the Jewish Jacob and Hillel but Dagobert, of the "Gothic race," who may not win Esther's hand, but saves her from rape and leads the secret self-defense organization. He and all Protestants are presented as equally as threatened by Imperial and Church authority as the Jews, and in fact, all die in the same massacre. Priests do not appear in person in Eger, but hover menacingly at the edge of the action, orchestrating plots and violence. We hear that monks and priests are reported to be preaching against Jews in Chapter II; in Chapter III we learn they are plying Eger's riffraff with wine; Wise notes that priests are behind the

Imperial order to examine Jewish prayerbooks, and in Chapter V "any unusual commotion among the monks and their supporters" creates fear.

A forcibly converted "Jew" at one point describes the infamous priests who treated him well until he disagreed on religious questions. Then they sought total control over him, drugged him with opium, imprisoned him for six months on bread and water until he had to relent and become a priest: "My strength failed, my health declined, and no glimpse of hope penetrated the darkness of my prison." This unnamed youth declares that priests are "cool and calculated" and "care little about a hundred victims."

The Church is clearly the Jews' bitter enemy, but in a more encompassing way than in The Convert where its power is represented by a fat Prior, his blackguards and a shadowy network of spies. Eger seems to have been popular, perhaps for its more heroic portrayal of Jewish behavior and its blacker painting of the Church. When Wise skipped an episode due to illness, he noted, "We regret the delay although entirely unavoidable, as the novel has already excited considerable attention among our readers, it certainly treats of a portion of our chequered history that cannot fail to attract universal interest" (Nov. 3, 1854).

Romance, Philosophy and Cabalah, or, The Conflagration at Frankfort o. t. M. A Narrative from the Beginning of the last Century: July 13, 1855 to August 17, 1855, September 7 to October 12, and November 16 to January 11, 1856.

Setting: Frankfort, Germany, 1710.

Themes: When ignited, Jewish bravery cannot be defeated even by the Inquisition. Belief in Cabalah is not only debilitating, but dangerous, and trust in God is worth more than any philosophy.

d
t
w
&
P
m
D
&
a
f
p
i
m

be

Characters: Rabbi David Gruenhut
Deborah, his daughter
Judah, his son
Moses Kann, Judah's friend, a cabalist
Itzig Kann, his wealthy father
Samuel Kann, Itzig's nephew
Dinah Cordoza
Mrs. Cordoza, her mother
Elias Kulp, Frankfort's Parnass
Samuel Eisenberg, Jewish leader
Rabbi Naphtali Cohen, miracle worker
Jon-Jacob Schudt, pro-rector
Marcus Later, Jewish gossip
Dr. Shoyer
Alvarez, The Spanish Minister (also: Ambassador, Count)
Eugine, his daughter
Marquis Elpazo, her husband
Count Stahlenberg, Austrian general.

Israel Knox notes in his brief study of Wise, that given the didactic aim of his fiction, Wise's "titles had to be abstract, else there would be no uplifting and noble sound to them" (p. 96). But Wise shrewdly added secondary titles that were specific, which is certainly the case with this novel. It opens on the first night of Passover in Frankfort's Jewish quarter, which is equally noted for its many "excellent scholars" and its history of persecutions. Rabbi David Gruenhut's home, like all the others, rich and poor, is celebrating "the first declaration of independence." The proceedings are described with even more detail than the wedding in The Catastrophe at Eger, and Gruenhut is praised for his "broad principles and liberal sentiments...pious heart and enlightened mind, in the midst of superstition and pantheism, of the darkest bigotry and most criminal frivolity."

Superstition appears at his home in the form of Moses Kann, beloved of Gruenhut's daughter Deborah, who feels Kann is lost to

cabalistic belief. Kann is an "unfortunate lunatic," believing that the extra cup of wine in the Passover meal really is for the prophet Elijah and not, as the Rabbi insists, a sign of abundance. Moses Kann asserts that Frankfort's wonder Rabbi, Naphtali Cohen, has that very evening conversed with Elijah. Judah has been gone that evening, helping a "mysterious person" to the hospital, and returns to the hospital on the first day of Passover, instead of to synagogue.

Judah and Moses were at an inn the previous evening for "the traveling poor," Jewish Schnorrers, a place that fills Judah with contempt and shame at his own reaction to the poor Jews' obsequiousness. Moses brought him there to hear Polish Jews rave about the miracle-filled and angel-graced life of Rabbi Naphtali. Meanwhile, groaning in another room drew Judah's interest and he discovered the feverish young woman he later brought to the hospital, in the company of a majestic older woman who asked Judah for help.

Judah feels "an inexplicable reverence for the unknown and mysterious woman" (Dinah) he visits at the hospital, which increases when she recovers. With "the most beautiful countenance Judah imagined he had ever seen," she is also slender, sweet-voiced, graceful, and "interesting due to her grief." Judah receives a prayerbook from her with the phrase "Forget us not, our Father," marked for his attention. But a message inside convinces Judah that she is married: the folded paper reads, "Leave instantly this country, my beloved. I am lost. Your unfortunate Gabriel."

Moses pleads with Deborah to leave her house of "sinners" and she

gives back his ring because he has changed so much.

> '...how pale, how suffering do you look! Where once the tint of youth and health colored the cheeks, there is now the paleness of death. Your eyes once fresh and lively, are now dim and melancholy. Once the smiles of love and kindness played around your lips, now there is no trace of them. O Moses, you are seriously sick and the cause of it is your cabalistic studies. Give up this infertile and deadening theme. Live again in my love. Moses, for my sake leave the company of those who dig your grave, tear you from my hand, ruin you and kill you slowly' (vol. II, no. 4, p. 25).

Dinah tells her story to Judah in the Jewish graveyard. Her father, David Cordoza ("Gabriel" in the previous chapter), a high official in Spain, was a Marrano (secret Jew) who had to flee the Inquisition. In Vienna he was recognized and betrayed by Alvarez, the Spanish Ambassador; Dinah and her mother fled to Frankfort on foot. Outraged by this story, Judah vows to go to Vienna; if he fails to free Mr. Cordoza he or the Ambassador will die. Judah eloquently tells the whole terrible tale to the Parnass, Elias Kulp, who decides to send a Jewish emissary to Vienna with letters of recommendation to help free Cordoza. At the hospital Dinah gives Judah a diamond ring with a forget-me-not design and he decides that she loves him.

When Judah is chosen by the congregational board to accompany Samuel Eisenberg to Vienna, Dinah warns him that "Vienna is a dangerous place. The priests are almighty there, and their cruelty and fanaticism are proverbial." Judah is also informed by a nameless old man that it is too late to save Dinah's father. After Jews asked the pro-rector of Frankfort's gymnasium, John Jacob Schudt, for letters to help free Cordoza, Schudt warned the Inquisition, the old man claims; Schudt is also working "incessantly" to convert Moses

Kann; after all, "there is but one step from Cabalism [sic] to Christianity."

Schudt and David Gruenhut fiercely debate in the former's "large and well-filled library" in the presence of Moses Kann. Schudt holds that Kann should convert because Christian doctrines are substantiated by Cabbalah; Gruenhut presses the pro-rector to answer whether those doctrines are true because they are found in Cabbalah? Each utterly rejects the other's beliefs as nonsense while wild-eyed Moses Kann raves about demons. Faced with a jeweled crucifix, Gruenhut denies Jesus's divinity, a Jewish role in the Crucifixion, and Jewish punishment by God, concluding:

> '...who appointed you our judges? who made you the executors of God's wrath? who gave you a right to interfere with the divine judgment of the almighty? Are you better because you have more power? or are we worse, because we are trampled upon by presumptuous men?' (no. 9, p. 65)

Gossipy Marcus Later is meanwhile spreading rumors of Moses' impending conversion, and Mrs. Cordoza ferrets out Dinah's secret love for Judah, which she forbids: "...my daughter must not heap disgrace upon her family, in becoming the wife of a nameless and insignificant youth."

The same mysterious old man who told Judah that Cordoza was lost, says Cordoza has been sent to Spain. The griefstricken Parnass pleads for someone to go to Spain--where Jews are forbidden--to save Cordoza, and Samuel Kann is the only volunteer. When Rabbi Gruenhut consults Dr. Shoyer about Moses, he explains how he succumbed to Cabbalah. Moses is a young man:

> 'whose nervous system was not vigorous enough to bear unharmed an intense and lasting excitement. But the unfortunate fellow, surrounded by a credulous and superstitious family, having come in contact with our venerable Rabbi Naphtali Cohen, he was caused to believe in the Cabalah. The inquisitive young man possessed of a light and swift mind entered rapidly into the mysterious labyrinth of that oriental theosophy, and his nervous system suffered, was impaired and became incapable of being any longer a useful and adequate vehicle of the mind....He now pretends to be a prophet, is fanatical, intolerant and defunct for all the joys which life offers to the young' (no. 10, pp. 73-4).

The doctor has no hope of Moses recovering, but Gruenhut insists that philosophy and science are not the only source of wisdom in this case: "God will help yet."

In Vienna, Judah meets Eugine, a woman whom he saved from drowning two years before near Frankfort when her boat capsized. Judah had brought the woman to shelter and withheld his name; once again he refuses any reward for his action, out of "unrelenting magnanimity." Judah and Samuel Eisenberg are well received by Vienna's community as emissaries from Frankfort, but Judah finds out that Cordoza was indeed given up to his enemy, the Spanish Ambassador. Enraged, and maddened by a dream in which he sees Cordoza burning at the stake, Judah gains access to the Ambassador, whom he stabs after a brief struggle. Dazed, bloodied, beaten, Judah is imprisoned "as an infamous assasin [sic]."

Judah proudly admits to the Inquisition that he intended to kill the Ambassador if Cordoza could not be saved. In his cell, Judah reflects that there is justice only for Christians, but "the Jew must perish in anguish and torment, and his beloved are left to lament their loss, to despair." The woman Judah saved, Eugine, is the

Spanish Ambassador's only daughter, and to her father's horror, she pleads for Judah's life. Her servant offers Judah a passport to England and money, but Judah refuses, and vows to kill Alvarez because he must have revenge.

Many of Frankfort's Jews believe a rumor that Judah helped massacre the entire Spanish legation and has already been condemned to be "torn in four parts by four horses." Dinah's mother presses her to marry a man of money and position--the Parnass's son. Weeks of prison leave Judah unshaken, convinced "of having performed a sacred duty, and...determined to die heroically." When a monk comes to preach salvation to him, Judah is appalled by his face full of "bigotry, vileness, and cunningness," and launches this attack:

> Your countenance betrays your low character. Did you serve the Lord by the gratification of your sensual passion in which you indulged?--by profaning His tabernacles with hypocritical prayers and deceitful words? or did you serve Him with the cunningness and cheat which you practiced on ignorant and credulous people? Ah, you served Him by the desecration of female chastity, virgin purity and matrimonial fidelity! Please, pious man, inform me in which vices did you indulge most freely, which are your favorite crimes?' (no. 14, p. 105)

Stricken, the monk cannot proceed as planned, but without belligerance tells Judah conversion will free him. Eugine, who has continued pleading with her father for Judah's life, comes to his cell disguised as a monk and also counsels an expedient conversion. She movingly reminds him of all those who will suffer if he dies, and then, because she admires his "heroic consistency," reveals herself. Offering money, a passport and instructions, she presses him to don her monk's disguise and flee. When he refuses, she insists he kill her because she loves him and could not bear his death.

Freed by Eugine, Judah--like "an infuriated lion"--tries to kill Alvarez, but spares the undefended Spaniard after subduing his armed servants, and returns to the prison[!]. He tells his entire story to the enthralled troops there who decide to send this "devil of a Jew" off with Count Stahlenberg's army headed for embarkation at Venice to fight against France in Spain. At first objecting, Judah submits and becomes enthusiastic:

> he remembered the valor of his ancestors, of Jonathan and David, of the heroic Maccabees, the brave defenders of Jerusalem and Bythan [Bar Kochba's last fortress], against the overwhelming power of the Roman legions; the thought of those thousands who suffered death with heroic determination for their faith, and his youthful sentiments were inflamed for his new career, and [the] future assumed a brighter prospect before his imagination (no. 19, p. 153).

Eugine and her husband, The Marquis Elpazo, who enters the novel at this point, are sent back to Spain on the same ship as Judah; Eugine attempts vengence on her "merciless" father by throwing herself overboard.

On Tishe B'Av (The Ninth of Av), memorializing the destruction of the Temple by the Romans, Samuel Eisenberg returns to Frankfort with news of Judah's bravery. No one knows what has become of him, but rumors spread that he has eloped with Eugine. At the Jewish cemetery, Dinah links all her losses:

> '...if we had not sustained that loss, we would yet be a nation, independent, free and happy, and my father would not have fallen a victim of fanaticism and cruelty; but alas, sad is our prospect, I have lost my Jerusalem, my Temple, my father, the happiness of my heart....' (no. 20, p. 161).

Rabbi Naphtali Cohen's house catches fire and Cohen and his cabalists write magic words on paper to throw into the fire, but it

engulfs the Jewish quarter anyway. Then the quarter's gates are opened:

> soldiers and firemen with their apparatuses rushed in full fury; but instead of arresting the conflagration half of them broke into the houses, plundered wherever anything was to be found, abused and kicked into the street whomever they met in the houses, and in a few hours, the misery, terror, consternation and wretchedness had reached the highest pitch (no. 21, p. 169).

Only the Jewish hospital survives the devastation that leaves 6000 homeless. On the night of the fire, richly bejeweled Dinah was celebrating her betrothal to the Parness's son, before she went up to her room and gave way to a fit of madness, raving about her losses. When her husband-to-be, Elias Kulp, attempts to rescue her from the fire, in her insanity she throws herself out the window to her death.

Frankfort's Christians not only offer shelter to the displaced Jews, but even remove their crosses and holy pictures so as not to offend them, which Schudt and other priests condemn. Rabbi Gruenhut draws important lessons from the disaster, which has not solely "heaped misery and wretchedness" on Frankfort's Jews:

> 'but behold, it has exposed the impotence of imposters and self-deceived cabalists. In vain the angels have been conjured, and supposed rulers of the elements invoked. In vain they have exhausted their ingenuity and artificial delusions. They stand ashamed and disgraced as once did the false prophets on Mount Carmel. Behold the thousands of Israel cast out of their houses, and taken into the habitation of Christians. The old foes, fanaticism and deeply rooted prejudices, hatred bitter and inveterated--appear to have vanished at once, before the fire which the Lord has kindled' (no. 22, p. 177).

The fire has helped Moses Kann recover from "the impositions of obscure fantasies" and he relates how he sought to hurl Rabbi Cohen, the "imposter," into the flames, but was held back by Samuel Kann.

There is much speculation about Judah's fate, and Samuel Kann, who speaks fluent Spanish, obtains a passport so that he can find Judah.

Saved from drowning, Eugine tells her husband Marquis Elpazo that she has never loved him because he has been no more to her than a "traveling companion." She reveals that she wished to die in the Main River when her boat overturned, and that she fell in love with Judah when he saved her:

> 'before me there stood a young giant, his black eyes were fixed on me with delight, his whole countenance looked like a triumphal sun, and his words were the angelic sounds of a higher being' (no. 23, p. 185).

The Marquis shares his own secret, explaining why he has always been deliberately cold to her. At his father's deathbed, Elpazo learned that he was the son of a secret Jew, whose wife has died at the Elpazo castle fleeing the Inquisition; her "murderer" was Count Alvarez. The Marquis sought to deprive Eugine "of all joys of life, all pleasures of love," but he could not hate her even though he'd sworn an oath of vengence. The boating incident, he adds, was his attempt to kill the two of them, but now he is triumphant because Eugine will either pine away for love of Judah or marry the Jew and disgrace her father, Count Alvarez.

In Spain, Judah twice saves the Marquis' life in battle and rises to the rank of captain, while Eugine helps rescue Cordoza and send him to his family in Germany. Judah is torn between Dinah--whom he believes is alive--and "noble, brilliant and high-minded Eugine, with her passionate affections, excellent virtues, lofty aspirations, and incessant proves [sic] of fidelity and self-sacrifice." Eugine arrives to inform her husband that Cordoza is his father, confirming

it with a portrait of his dead mother whom he resembles.

Judah attempts to convince Eugine to reconcile with Elpazo, but she urges him to either condemn her to a living death as the Marquis' wife or tell the truth of his heart. They embrace and the Marquis bids Judah take her as his wife. Judah pleads with newly-arrived Samuel that Eugine's "humanity, self-denial, affection and kindness" could not exist in an "ignoble heart":

> '...if it is true that the religion of our fathers aims at the making of good, pious and happy men; if religious object is to rouse and cultivate the noblest affections of the heart and the divine capacities of the mind; religion has achieved its object in Eugine' (no. 24, p. 193).

Moses recounts his adventures to the Gruenhuts, but he does not know if Judah survived a battle that the Spanish lost. Marquis Elpazo and the Cordozas arrive at the Gruenhuts and Samuel Kann accuses Mrs. Cordoza of driving Dinah to her death. Guards surround the house in search of Eugine, who comes to beg Elpazo to help her free Judah from arrest for her reported "abduction." Alvarez follows with his priest, whom Cordoza accuses of killing the Marquis's mother and setting Alvarez against him. Count Stahlenberg appears with the valorous Judah and orders Alvarez and the priest arrested for forging the Emperor's signature to the arrest order for Judah and Eugine. Count Alvarez kills the infamous priest, explaining "I was always under the control of the order to which he [the priest] belonged; and he was not my priest but lord and master." Cordoza forgives Alvarez and Eugine rejoices in her father's pardon.

Granted a colonelcy in the Imperial Guard and permission to marry Eugine, Judah debates the question of marrying a non-Jew with his

father. Rabbi Gruenhut stresses the need for belonging to the community: "we need the love and attachment of all our sons, and especially of those who are well grown." But Judah wins him over by praising Eugine's virtue and their "platonic love" which is "not a burning consuming fire [an unfortunate phrase given the manner of Dinah's death], but a light soft as the rays of the moon....Far from actuating the passions it pacifies the storm-tossed heart, and pervades the soul with an angelic quietude." Judah concludes that Eugine is "a pious Jewess" for her love of man and God, and when Rabbi Gruenhut kisses Eugine and blesses her, she echoes the Book of Ruth with "Thy people are my people, and thy God is my God." The concluding lines of the novel relate that Judah, believed to be a convert, eventually becomes a general in the Dutch army. He emigrates to the Dutch West Indies as a general governor, his descendants taking the name Leon for the lion in his coat of arms (we are not told whether they stay Jewish or not).

While Romance is Wise's longest novel to date, its themes, villains and heroes are familiar ones, re-imagined here and given more treatment and intensity. Once again the Church and its minions are villainous; Jewish superstition is lamentable; a Reform vision of Jewish religion and ritual is the only sane and safe one; congregational strife is ludicrous and potentially dangerous. What is most new is the extremely positive view of intermarriage, the explicit discussion of God's role in the history of the Jews, and the strength of its aptly-named hero, Judah.

The Inquisition (always lower-case in the text), appears in Romance as a shadowy nemesis, threatening, kidnapping and imprisoning its victims, but it is churchmen themselves, as the foul expression of Church doctrine, that are most criminal. Count Alvarez is intemperate, grasping, unforgiving and cruel, yet his priest and his priest's order are really in control. Eugine and her husband, for instance, were sent off to Spain by the priest without Alvarez's knowledge or permission. This same nameless priest does not hesitate at forging the Emperor's signature, but he is a paragon of virtue compared to the monk attempting to convert Judah in his jail cell. That churchman seems a walking encyclopedia of vice, quailing as Judah accuses him of being steeped in hypocrisy and sin.

Wise mocked Christian doctrine in The Shoemaker's Family as we have seen, and when the minister and priest in that novel were hard-pressed they modulated from reasonable persuasion to Jew-hatred. The same happens in Romance: when stymied, the gymnasium's pro-rector, attempting to convert the cabalist Moses Kann erupts into condemnation of the Jews: "you are persecuted, hated and excluded on account of your sinfulness." Rabbi Gruenhut responds with unfailing poise and reasonableness, pointing out that they have vastly different conceptions of God: "my God is merciful and gracious. His punishment extends not to the fourth generation, nor does it overtake those who love Him and venerate His glorious name." The pro-rector is responsible for having Cordoza shipped from Vienna to Spain and he castigates Frankfort's citizens for helping the Jews after the fire. While soldiers cause destruction in the fire, it is not Gentiles

themselves here who are the incarnation of evil, but the doctrine they are taught that perverts their sympathies and understanding.

Wise wrote in Reminiscences that in America "No one could prevent me from being as angry as I pleased," but his rancor about Catholicism as displayed in this novel and others did not extend to bigotry against Catholics in America. Wise declined to print articles supporting the Know-Nothing Movement, for example, and was consistently opposed to its policy which he believed would eventually harm Jews. He believed the Movement was unpatriotically fanatical: "do not so badly slander and outrage republicanism, as to tell us the lowest and most despicable passions of man, religious fanaticism and intolerance are necessary to guard republicanism" (Korn, p. 69). Bertram Korn has concluded that those apparently few Jews who supported the Know-Nothing Movement did so as a way of allying themselves "with the dominant Protestant forces" and thus proving themselves Good Americans. Another reason was revenge on the Church for centuries of persecution and a desire to prevent Catholicism from becoming America's dominant religion. With all that, however, "the great majority of recorded Jewish opinion on the merits of the Know-Nothing program was strongly in the negative" (Korn, p. 65).

Christians were of course not the only ones who could be swayed into false beliefs and intolerance, as Moses Kann's case proves. Seduced into the mysteries of Cabbalah, he has become, as Deborah Gruenhut laments, not only wasted and depressed, but bigoted. All Jews who do not believe as he does are sinners in Moses's eyes, and deserve death. There is nothing romantic about his encounters with

mysticism; it is all folly and deceit, and thus close to Christianity. Moses and John Jacob Schudt both see Christian dogmas supported by cabalistic writings, and the story of Rabbi Naphtali Cohen`s life bears a general resemblance to that of Jesus: his house was "filled with light" at his birth, he was guarded by angels and could work miracles. Ironically, one of those miracles was stopping a fire, which Cohen could not do in Frankfort. While he and his supporters attempt their magic, more and more houses burn--though opening the gates earlier to let in the fire fighters would not have helped either.

All superstition, Christian and Jewish, enervates the mind; it is religion purged of the miraculous that Wise commends: Reform Judaism in other words. Elijah's cup at the Passover seder becomes a symbol of God's abundance, stripped of any supernatural taint. Aside from that note, the opening chapter describes the Jewish quarter`s celebration of Passover in unconditionally positive terms:

> Every window of their houses served as an outlet to a stream of light, which appeared to circulate through all their houses, and vie in excellency with the silvery rays of the moon. Song and psalmody coming from the proud mansion of the rich, and the humble cottage of the poor, sounded solemnly and melancholy through the silence of night. A sacred halo appeared to embrace the whole quarter undefiled and undisturbed by the interference of man (no. 1, p. 1).

Why is this so? Because Passover here does not solely celebrate God's bringing Israel out of Egypt, but an event with meaning for the whole world: "the first declaration of independence." Frankfort's Jews are thus celebrating a very American holiday in a way, and this broad view of Judaism is echoed in Judah's declaration late in the novel that

Eugine is Jewish because she loves man and God, and attempts to do good (which seems an echo of Micah's "do justly and love mercy, and walk humbly with thy God"). For those who may have been uncomfortable with an interpretation of Judaism that makes it sound like the--as yet non-existent--Ethical Culture movement, the novel seems to indicate that Eugine will convert to Judaism. Of course Jews are more tolerant than Christians: Rabbi Gruenhut assures Eugine that she can worship her God as she chooses.

Wise clearly differentiates between acceptable and inappropriate or outmoded beliefs. He notes that Frankfort's Jews "must have thought" that God would intervene again to liberate them "from the house of slavery, erected for them by priests and lords, superstition and violence, ignorance and crudeness." Wise is not entirely consistent, however, because Rabbi Gruenhut, the voice of reason and enlightenment and apparently Wise's mouthpiece in the novel, insists that God will heal Moses and save Judah, and that the fire was God's doing to expose the cabalists.

All of Wise's young heroes to date have been noble, intelligent, if not always handsome, but Judah's heroism outshines that of his predecessors. He shares the name of the Maccabean hero and the connection is made explicit when Judah is fired by the Maccabeans' example on his way to battle. Fueled by outrage over Cordoza's imprisonment, he instantly decides to rescue him, kill the Spanish Minister, or die trying. Given the chance to escape from prison offered by Eugine after his first assassination attempt, Judah returns to complete his mission. He can subdue armed servants,

but has no heart to slaughter an unarmed man, just as he wanted no credit or reward for rescuing Eugine from drowning. His bravery and heroism in the realm of action balance and complete Rabbi Gruenhut's intellectual bravery in standing up to the cabalists and the pro-rector, defying ignorance and hailing the truth of Judaism.

Wise left almost no papers at his death, so there is no way of knowing how he planned this novel, but it seems to have undergone major changes in the writing. The move away from a strictly Jewish focus is not at all implicit in the opening chapters, which resemble previous novels with their description of Jewish community life and ceremony. Indeed, before Eugine is introduced, it seems likely that Dinah and Judah might have ended up married with the fire as a climax; he could have returned to rescue her. At some point the idea of Judah's triumphing on a wider stage may have taken over and the novel enlarged in scope, though perhaps blurred in meaning. Of course, Wise may have simply been pressured to continue the novel because it was popular, because he had to fill space, or both. But what made Wise praise Judah's determination to marry a Gentile and conceive of Judaism in such broad and unspecifically Jewish terms that she is accepted as a Jew before she declares her willingness to share Judah's faith? Given the vitriol spewed at the monk and the pro-rector, Rabbi Gruenhut's assurance to Eugine in the last chapter that she may worship her own God is a curious one, especially since the novel praises Jewish solidarity in the face of persecution. It is one thing to commend Christian kindness to Jews, another to support

intermarriage.

The Wizard of the Forest: A Tale of the Thirty Years' War by the author of the Last Struggle of the Nation, the First of the Maccabees; and other novels: March 8, 1861 to June 28, 1861.

Setting: Prague and environs, 1638.

Themes: Jews, not Catholics or Protestants have a true religion of love, and despite Christian tyranny and stupidity, Jews cannot only triumph over their foes, but show them the light.

Characters:
Emanuel Edeles, Jewish meistersinger
Charles von Breitenstein, his Hussite friend
Breitenstein's father, the Knight
Amelia and Elizabeth, his daughters
The Wizard of the Forest
Hannah, Emanuel's aunt
Reuben, her husband
The Prioress
Caspar, the Wizard's former servant
Rebecca, a Jewish widow

Traveling to castle Breitenstein amid deep forests one moonlit night are Charles von Breitenstein and his companion Emanuel Edeles, a physician he met in Padua, who feels himself "a stranger everywhere." They are attacked by brigands whom the Merlin-like Wizard of the Forest disperses with fire and spells. Safely at the castle, Charles raves about Emanuel's wisdom and humanity to his Hussite father: "His motto is, the world is my country and love is my religion." Gypsy-like in looks, Emanuel attracts Amelia Breitenstein by his melifluous singing and lute-playing, and his appearance.

The old Knight deeply suspects Emanuel's belief that "love is the whole amount of revelation: and philosophy is a deceptive meteor." Edeles counters the Knight's belief in Hell and a punishing God, revealing himself to be a Jew, to Breitenstein's astonishment:

> '...all the Jews I have ever seen were either peddlars, haberdashers, brokers, or horse dealers, and thou are a student. Thou a Jew and eatest of my food, drink of my wine, and called the Christian a friend, must I not be

astonished' (vol. vii, no. 38, p. 297).

Edeles admits that Jews have little love for Christians because of centuries of persecution, and when Breitenstein vows to save his soul from sin, Edeles dismisses this vow along with Breitenstein's claims that the Jews are in a pitiable state:

> 'If we are punished for the sins of our fathers, who will punish your coming generations for the wrongs committed on us....You have no idea of the gratification which the Jew derives from his own belief that all religions and creeds will fall, and his will stand. You cannot tell that the Jew is miserable. There is a pride in him that never fails to give him new strength, a confidence which never would let him sink, and the exalted, inspiring and edifying moral conscience to suffer on account of his love of truth is of itself a world of happiness of which you have no idea' (no. 38, pp. 297-8).

Edeles' eloquent grief over the persistence of "the primitive serpant [sic], prejudice," moves Amelia to alter her negative views of Jews. The Knight, however, forbids Amelia and her sister to talk to Edeles alone, which "rendered his company only dearer to the girls." With Charles away, Amelia and Edeles reveal their love for each other in the forest. Convinced that Jews are sinners and that Edeles is a seducer, Breitenstein has Emanuel whipped, beaten and hounded from the castle. Bloodied and betrayed, Edeles roars, "Is this not the very same diabolic piety which crushed my ancestors for centuries to the dust? There is a God upon their lips, and a hell in their hearts."

Alone in the forest, Edeles meets the grandiloquent Wizard, who informs him that Amelia is pining away and will be immured in a convent. Emanuel can rescue her with the help of the forest brigands, whose loyalty the Wizard commands, but Edeles refuses to be involved in bloodshed. Returning to Breitenstein, Charles is outraged to hear

of his friend's expulsion. The Wizard tells Edeles his story: He is John, son of Adalbert von Breitenstein, a rakehell who used to run amok in Prague's Jewish quarter until he met the deathly ill Zipporah, her sister and blind father. He paid for a doctor and Zipporah recovered though she refused his gifts, and he decided to marry her. John's father would not accept a Jewish daughter-in-law and John hoped to die in battle, but returning after six years, found Zipporah faithful and they married, pretending she was a Protestant. Adalbert would not acknowledge her or their son, both of whom disappeared. John vainly searched for them for two years, discovering on his return that his cousin (the current Knight) succeeded him as heir. Taking to the forest, he became the Wizard, gathering around him freebooters escaping military service. He tells all this because the ring Edeles is wearing is Zipporah's--Emanuel must be his son!

The Wizard wants Emanuel to reclaim the rights of Breitenstein. They must therefore prove Emanuel is his son, and Emanuel must distinguish himself publicly, which he can only do as a Christian. Emanuel refuses--"again the miserable prejudices of princes, priests and mobs!"--because he could never feel patriotic towards a country where Jews "are treated as strangers and pariahs." He also refuses to make a name for himself as a military hero, because he will not

> 'lead forth innocent men to die or be killed, and warfare is scientific murder on a grand scale for the gratification of mighty men's ambition or private interest. My hand shall not be with the wicked' (no. 42, p. 329).

Charles finds Edeles and they swear devotion to each other; the Wizard offers Charles command of his "troops."

In a richly-ornamented Prague nunnery, the majestic Prioress not

only tells Amelia that she is there for life, but reveals to her the depth of prejudice and misery she would feel as the wife of a Jew, because pious men condemn Jews as unbelieving "vipers," who "live only to ripen for eternal damnation." With news of the Swedish army`s approach, a monk seeks to have the Prioress move her convent's people and wealth to safety, but she says that would cause panic in Prague, and that God will protect the city's fortifications. When she afterwards gives two grateful nuns passports and men's clothing so they can return to their parents, we learn that the Prioress is in contact with the Swedes.

Seeking his mother, Emanuel finds her sister Hannah in Prague, who cannot explain Zipporah's disappearance all those years before. Hannah's husband Reuben suspects Emanuel and Hannah refuses taking money from him. She considers Emanuel an apostate, countering his plea for less prejudice against Christians:

> 'Their priests were afraid the simplicity of our religion undermine their artificial fabric of faith, their princes dreaded our sentiments of freedom, their stupid mobs envied our energy, superiority and wealth; therefore their priests, princes and mobs erected the insurmountable obstacle between us and themselves. They attempted at all times to crush, silence, intimidate us by rude force, scorn, hatred and persecution. They threw us aside like outworn garments and wounded our hearts by cold derision, persecution and heartless murder. They bear the fault. Go to them and admonish them to be men' (no. 44, p. 346).

The loss of her brother and sister leaves Elizabeth ill and the doctor cannot help, but her nurse insists that the Wizard can. When he arrives, thundering at Breitenstein, weeping in the portrait gallery, his presence does indeed revive the girl. The frightened Knight wonders about the Wizard's curse--"Wo to the servant of the

Lord who sacrifices his children to Moloch"--and asks his priest for advice. But the priest will only read passages from Matthew without comment, and Breitenstein interprets "if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out" as justifying his actions. He ends up considering himself "a martyr of faith."

Wandering through Prague, Edeles is drawn to a shabbos service at which a congregant invites him home to his family for a shabbos meal. Edeles is struck by a family friend, the mournful and interesting matron Rebecca, and dreamily wonders if she could be his mother. Emanual and Charles plan to abduct Amelia from her convent and seek refuge with the Swedes. Asking Hannah's husband Reuben for help, Edeles offers 1000 guilders, but when Reuben tells his friends, they agree that Emanuel must be a spy, and a danger to the Jewish community because of his plans, deciding to turn him over to the authorities to protect themselves.

Amelia is completely unwilling to go to confession because she does not believe in the "artificial fabrication of priests":

> 'Long enough have I patiently listened to their sermons of love, while they treat me as an object of hatred. Long enough did I hear them preach of a mother of God, a crucified God, God who died and was buried, when there is no God in their actions, words or thoughts' (no. 47, p. 369).

The Prioress stresses the Church's power--"As far as the cross reigns there is no scope for arguments"--but Amelia is firm. When Amelia departs, a secret door admits Rebecca, who begs for help to have Emanuel freed from prison. The Prioress and her husband were Zipporah's best friends and years ago also had a son. Years ago, on the way to Castle Breitenstein at John von Breitenstein's [the

Wizard's] written request, their coach was stopped, Rebecca's husband killed and the two children taken away. Zipporah was placed in a convent, Rebecca jailed and tortured. Recovering from her ordeal only years later, Rebecca could not find her son or obtain justice. Zipporah was baptized and contempt for her oppressors fueled her diligent study of Christianity. Brilliant and beautiful, she became powerful, rising as high as a woman could in Bohemia. Commander of Prague's priests, Zipporah has accomplished part of her revenge: "They crushed the humble Jew and now I am their despot."

The night before, Emanuel found out that Amelia and Zipporah were in the convent opposite Charles's lodgings (Charles had had him taken from the guard house). His source of information was the Wizard's old servant, Caspar, who could not be tempted to talk by money, or swayed by feeling, but was scared into confessing when Emanuel threatened to summon demons. Then Emanuel is discovered sending a message to Amelia and is taken off to an Inquisition jail cell where Breitenstein has been placed as a heretic.

In the Jewish quarter, Charles asks Rebecca for help in releasing Amelia and finds out Emanuel is imprisoned with the Knight, whose wealth and lack of protection (Charles led the brigands into the army) had attracted his enemies. Charles seeks access to Emanuel and his father at the Strahofer Convent (which is the Prior's lair in The Convent), but is denied and warned to stay away. He returns with 500 troops and opens every cell:

> Out came the old men with ghastly visages, young men reduced to skeletons, insane women, sick and declining youths, all classes of unhappy wretches incarcerated in behalf of the

religion of love (no. 49, p. 385).

Emanuel and Breitenstein are not among them, however, and in a stand-off with a military commander and civil authorities, the Wizard appears to much cheering from the brigands, advising Charles to seize control of the heavily fortified, well-stocked and strategically important convent.

The Prioress counsels the monks holding Emanuel and the Knight to give the prisoners opium and bring them to her convent where they will not be sought for. At a hearing, Emanuel preaches a God of love (whom Christians have "misunderstood and misrepresented"), who will save them, and envisions a glorious future:

> "The day will come...when the nations will be healed of their madness, healed by self-inflicted lashes, their priests and despots will be shaken off like dust, the chains will break, crowns, scepters, thrones and churches will be crushed into fragments, and upon these ruins freedom, truth and justice will unfurl the glorious banner of humanity, and the God of love will reign in everlasting justice' (no. 50, p. 393).

At this same hearing Breitenstein renounces his Christian beliefs while Edeles stands firm and accuses his judges of being "priests of Baal." Blindfolded, the two men are led to a carriage and are taken to a "subterranean chapel" where a priest tries to convert them. After a meal, Emanual realizes that they have been drugged and administers himself an antidote, which as a doctor, he has handy. Coffins are brought and the conscious Edeles is subdued by six armed men.

Disguised as a Dominican, the Prioress visits Emanuel and the Knight, but Emanuel will not talk to "him" and Emanuel's threats make the Prioress reveal her identity. Charles and his men arrive with the

Wizard, who has learned the full story of Rebecca's abduction from Caspar: the plot was arranged by the current Knight 25 years ago who supplied the (forged) letter summoning Zipporah to the castle. It is explained that Charles is Zipporah's son, and Emanuel is Rebecca's. Troops arrive to arrest Charles and his men at the prison, but the Swedish army begins attacking Prague and the Jewish quarter suffers heavy damage and loss of life in the subsequent siege. The Prioress knows the Swedish commander and has all nuns and priests expelled from the city and their wealth confiscated. Under Swedish escort, the Prioress, Emanuel and the Breitensteins leave for Castle Breitenstein and find Amelia there (Elizabeth has since died). Everyone lives in peace at the ruined castle which Charles inherits, and though Emanuel and Amelia cannot legally marry she inspires his song writing and the Wizard stops believing in his own magic.

More so than previous novels, Wizard ridicules Protestantism, here represented by Breitenstein who is obsessed by the Bible and denies the validity of any but the "Words of God." The Knight vigorously enforces the sabbath, wearing slippers on Sunday, for instance, because putting on boots would be manual labor, and prohibiting any speech but prayer. One servant comically gets around this last restriction by falling to his knees in the kitchen and "praying" for food to assuage his hunger. Thoroughly imbued with stories from the Bible, the Knight chides his daughter as "obstinate Vashti, disobedient Dinah who brings shame on the house of Jacob," but for contemporary Jews he has only pity and contempt.

The Wizard has so much local influence because Breitenstein's servants are just as credulous as their master. Wise vaguely attempts to explain the Wizard's "powers" by references to electricity and a camera obscura, but his presence fades after the opening chapters and at the end he is portrayed as no longer a victim of his own impositions--much like Frank L. Baum's Wizard of Oz. Fear of demons is a weapon both the Wizard and Edeles can use, however, to elicit information from the superstitious. There is not much difference, ultimately, between their magic tricks and empty threats and Prague's priests being bidden to make holy statues "weep" blood to manipulate the populace--except that the Wizard and Emanuel are on the side of justice.

The Wizard's virtual disappearance from the middle of the novel that bears his name and his fairly unimportant role when he returns is also linked with a change in style and focus. A first the novel seems set a few centuries before the seventeenth, with its castle, dense forest, lute-playing mysterious meistersinger, knight and fair daughters, faithful comrades, brigands, thee's and thou's, and Merlin-like figure. It reads almost like a pastiche of a medieval romance. And while Emanuel Edeles' name seems Jewish there is no specifically Jewish content until he reveals his background to the Knight. That content takes over as Emanuel, expelled from the castle, learns he is the Wizard's son and the son of a Jewish mother (apparently his foster parents were Jews), and then more familiar elements enter the story. There is pressure to convert, mockery of Christianity (the "religion of love"), and violent attacks on Christian hypocrisy in the treatment

of Jews. Did Wise's readers feel uncomfortable with what seemed a rather "goyish" novel and ask for something more like previous ones, or did Wise himself tire of his literary conceit and switch to more familiar fictional territory after a few chapters?

Set primarily in a non-Jewish milieu, the novel does not target Jewish superstition or criticize any negative Jewish characteristics; there is no community squabbling, for instance, no gossips or fools. The assault is unrelenting, however, on Christian persecution. As we have seen, Emanuel charges Christians with having perverted a God of Love into one of vengeance, whose primary target is always the Jews. He tells Breitenstein:

> 'We suffer not for our sins, but for yours. It is the struggle of light and darkness, of truth and fiction, as old as mankind. We have brought you the truth and you wanted the error' (no. 38, p. 297).

One by one, characters in the novel echo those general sentiments. Forced into a convent, Amelia who has already found her father's religion deadening, and had changed her critical opinion of Jews--reacts with contempt towards priests: "Long enough have I seen them kneel before croses, images, and smile at their own folly." Hannah takes up the refrain when she blames Christian intolerance and persecution for building walls between the religions, and even Breitenstein comes to change his convictions. In prison he decides that his religious obduracy led to one daughter's death, the other's death-in-life, and a son's despair, and he can challenge the Inquisition seeking his recantation:

> `I changed my mind on the religion of my father....I have discarded all additional doctrines of all Christian sects

> and believe in One God of Love, who is my Rock and Savior, now and forever. Amen' (no. 50, p. 393).

The Knight ends up feeling so spiritually close to Emanuel that he adopts the young man in the last chapter. With Breitenstein regenerated and forgiving, he, Charles, Amelia, Emanuel, Rebecca, Zipporah and the Wizard can all live together as "one family, one heart, and one soul."

Wise has previously had Jews forced to be Christians use their special knowledge against their oppressors. In his first novel, rage at persecution led one forcibly converted Jew to become a police spy, another was forced into the priesthood in The Catastrophe at Eger. The first capitalized on his position to aid Moses Baum and ensure an escape to America; the second used his knowledge of priestly cunning to warn Eger's Protestant-Jewish underground. In this novel, the kidnapped and converted Prioress goes even further. Robbed of her child, her family, and her religion, she turns rage and contempt into a drive for revenge that is so skillfully concealed she is universally admired and respected by Prague's nuns and priests whom she controls and eventually humiliates and despoils. Her triumph adds even more weight to the indictment against Christian hypocrisy. If so many monks, priests and nuns can be fooled into believing that she is devout, how many of them are hypocritical too?

Though a doctor (and Moses Baum was one too), Emanuel is not quite Wise's typical hero. Some of his poetic effusions grace the text, and his singing and lute-playing make him Wise's first really "artistic" protagonist. His poetry is a great resource, the narrator tells us, because it gives him "a world in his own bosom, a world full

of consolation, satisfaction and happiness to recompense him for the intensity and vehemence which causes him thousandfold to feel every slight pain" (this sounds like a distillation of many of Wise's own comments on his sensitivity in Reminiscences). Emanuel is also physically unlike his predecessors, with a beard, and long hair--in other words, "genius with all its external peculiarities." In response to these peculiarities, Elizabeth dismisses him as a gypsy, while admiring Amelia finds him "an apostle of the Muses."

Emanuel is no less adamant than any other Wise hero tempted to convert for expediency, but his refusal to lead troops is new--after all, Judah in the previous novel discussed was a military hero--and seems motivated by events outside the novel. Days before the chapter appeared in which Emanuel condemns slaughter, the Confederates fired on Fort Sumter and Emanuel's "my hand shall not be with the wicked" is very close to sentiments in that same issue's editorial, "Silence, Our Policy":

> The excitement runs high, very high, wherever we turn our eyes. They say civil war is commenced. We are the servant of peace, not of war. Hitherto we sometimes thought fit to say something on public affairs, and it was our ardent hope to assist those who wished to prevent civil war; but we wasted our words. What can we say now? Shall we lament and weep like Jeremiah over a state of things too sad and threatening to be looked upon with indifference? We would only be laughed at in this state of excitement and passionate agitation, or probably abused for discouraging the sentiment. Or should we choose sides with one of the parties? We cannot, not only because we abhor the idea of war, but also we have dear friends and near relations, beloved brethren and kinsmen, in either section of the country, that our heart bleeds on thinking of their distress, of the misery that might befal [sic] them.
>
> Therefore silence must henceforth be our policy, silence on all the questions of the day, until a spirit of conciliation

> shall move the hearts of the millions to a better understanding of the blessings of peace, freedom, and union. Till then we might stop publishing The Israelite if our friends say so, or continue as usual, if we are patronized as heretofore. But we shall be obliged to abstain entirely from all and every commentary on the odd occurrences of the day.
>
> In writing these lines we feel as sorrowful and disheartened as we only once before felt--on leaving our native country. The land of our choice and adoption thus in a destructive commotion is much more than common misery to us. Still, the will of our God be done!

The Civil War thus makes a first brief appearance in Wise's fiction; near the end of the War it will play a much more prominent role. It is no exaggeration to say that The Rabbi of Bacherach fairly bursts with references to the war and contemporary conditions: poor generalship and official corruption not the least of these, as we shall see below.

The Rabbi of Bacherach, an Anti-Romantic Romance by the American Jewish Novelist: September 2, 1864 to February 3, 1865.
Setting: mid-15th century Bacherach and Frankfort, Germany
Themes: Christian treachery will stop at nothing when Jews are its victims, but Christian superstition can be used to outwit the oppressors. Contemporary American conditions of cruelty and corruption find parallels to the 15th century Germany.
Characters:
- Abraham, Rabbi of Bacherach
- Sarah, his wife
- Gheetle, his niece
- David Raphael, doctor, Gheetle's betrothed
- Hans Sturmbach, Baron
- Peter Anselm, priest, Sturmbach's friend
- A Christian shoemaker
- Dumb William, his son
- Schnapper-Elle, Jewish inn-keeper in Frankfort
- The Bishop of Bacherach
- John of Basle, Franciscan, his friend

From the first chapter this novel is quite unlike any of the novels discussed thus far. The narrative is frequently broken by direct

addresses to the reader, sarcastic asides on contemporary issues, and meditations on the nature of women and mankind in general. Quotation can only suggest the richness of contemporary references in this novel.

The German city of Bacherach was not always "decayed and dilapidated" with "teethless battlements and blind watchtowers"--but was a bustling, rich town originally founded by the Romans. Drunken Pater Anselm and Baron Hans Strumbach are part of the city's intense hierarchical power struggle in which each class is "continually striving after superiority." The knights and nobles spend most of their time eating, plundering, and whipping their dogs and servants. The priests fall midway between nobles and citizens--in ignorance:

> In solemn darkness and with a holy mien they swayed a powerful scepter, and apparently obedient to all they ruled all, and fasting two days weekly their bellies increased in circumference and their faces in scarlet hue. Hearing so many confessions of so numerous sinners, they, of course, know best all the ways and means to a lucrative life, and walked in humble obedience before the Lord (vol. 11, no. 10, p. 81).

After abusing a poor shoemaker who is rushing through the streets in search of medical help for his wife, Sturmbach reveals to Anselm that he is in love with two Jewish women--the Rabbi's wife and her niece--both of whom he vows to enjoy. Together Anselm and Sturmbach plot to create a pogrom, during which the Baron can kidnap the women, for which Anselm will grant him absolution in advance.

The Rabbi of Bacherach, his wife Sarah and Gheetle, their niece, live in Bacherach's Ghetto, which like all ghettos was as much "Bazaar and Wall Street of Europe" as "center of domestic affection, fraternal union, and unusual piety" and repository of centuries of great Jewish

literature. This essay on the Jewish ghetto abruptly shifts centuries at a number of points when Wise notes that printers were "as scarce then, as honest men in Washington"; that medicines were not war contraband or books, periodicals and newspapers articles of trade; that cannons were not used or known, nor were "Manufactured teeth, hair, paint for ladies and fops, wooden legs and arms, patent medicines, pious tracts, and cheap diplomas for doctors and professors." In passing, Wise also attacks the abolitionist Parson Brownlee, and the writers Sylvanus Cobb and Fanny Fern who would both "write much better stories" if they were acquainted with real Jews. Such Jews are the loving Rabbi Abraham and his charitable wife Sarah, who joke about their scriptural namesakes. Their good humor is shared by Gheetle, cheerily contemplating her betrothal that night to the physician David Raphael.

Wise dilates on the medical profession, which he considers "a necessary evil" at best. Raphael is respected by all Bacherach's citizens, however, at a time when the "worst evils which physicians counteract are superstition and ignorance." Redheaded David is not at all prepossessing, but believed to have great skill, and even magical powers; it is his bedside manner that effects cures, not his knowledge (his name slyly suggests this: "Raphael" is Hebrew for "God will heal" or "God is a healer").

The betrothal festivities are described with unusual detail for Wise; as for instance, the women surrounding Gheetle who wear

> gold lace caps glittering like so many stars, heavy silk dresses of gay colors with large flowers of silver and gold threads interwoven, gold chains, pearls, corals, and

> Prussian amber adjusted tastefully around lily necks and arms, and covering heaving bosoms under grenadine bodies with golden buckles, diamonds glittering on little round fingers, white silk slippers pointed at the toe, trimmed with gold and saphires [sic] (no. 17, p. 89).

The jocular festivities, during which David sings with manful "soul and sentiment," are interrupted by the shoemaker that Anselm and Sturmbach had abused, and David instantly follows to the man's ailing wife whose inflammation of the lungs he is able to treat.

Pater Anselm agrees to create "confusion, terror, dismay, and despair" so that Hans can abduct Sarah and Gheetle whom the priest can convert and baptize--but he must have money first. Hans and other drunken knights at an inn later swap boasts and ghost stories, and attack the Emperor. They mock Frederic III for his military failures against the Turks. Wise compares the Emperor to Lincoln and finds both historical periods similar:

> Pope Pious II's agents and holy peddlars, they say, did just as lucrative a business in selling indulgences for the living and the dead, for sins committed or to be committed hereafter, as the custom-house and revenue officers, post commanders, contractors, quartermasters and the generals of Uncle Sam, with the slight difference that the former sold indulgences for a trifle and the latter charge awful prices for their permits, acceptances, rations not delivered, and medicines not bought (no. 13, p. 113).

Purim festivities give Sturmbach the opportunity to join the other masked and clowning visitors at the Rabbi's house where he professes his love for Gheetle. She teases in response, thinking it is only David. Sturmbach returns unmasked, gets drunk and acts "as coarsely, as his nature was," drawing his sword on David Raphael, and is thrown out of the house. Rabbi Abraham warns David that Sturmbach has evil intentions.

The Purim story is retold for the novel's "kind reader," but it is not the Book of Esther's version (46). Wise interweaves the traditional story with contemporary references, attacks the President, restrictions on civil rights, politicians and anti-Jewish agitation, comparing Ahasuerus to Lincoln, the former having less trouble reigning "over 127 provinces as Abraham Lincoln has by governing 23 states." Ahasuerus's courtiers are officers, wire pullers, and newspaper reporters "who kneel in the dust before him." Ahasuerus imprisons his wife Vashti because "the writ of habeus corpus was suspended"; the traditional drowning out of Haman's name at Purim when the Book of Esther is read is "as disagreeable a noise as the paid clamorers at a political meeting"; Jews are ordered slaughtered because of interfering with "cotton speculators."

Foaming with rage, Sturmbach can "only think of bloodshed and vengence" after being kicked out of the Rabbi's home, but he is dissuaded by Anselm from acting prematurely when he can get "tenfold revenge" later. Anselm explains to Rabbi Abraham that Sturmbach is too ashamed and stricken by his behavior to personally beg forgiveness. Though Rabbi Abraham is forgiving, he suspects Anselm as much as David does: "this pater has not an honest feature in his wine-colored face, his looks are unsteady, and his voice is faltering, as if he was afraid of giving utterance to his thoughts." David does not sleep that night, dwelling on "the misery and affliction" Jews have continually suffered.

Anselm and Sturmbach plan to use Abraham's writings against him.

Anselm will claim that in translation, the Rabbi's books advise:

> 'the Jews to desecrate hosts, spit on crosses, poison the wells from which Christians drink, bring the black death and pestilence upon us by their enchantments in connection with the devil, cheat, impoverish [sic], and degrade us; here it is in black and white that he [the rabbi] says "Jesus of Nazareth was a bastard and his mother an adulteress"' (no. 5, p. 93).

Anselm forces Sturmbach to pledge him 1000 guilders "of the spoil"; these "demons in human form," "benighted with fanatacism and prejudice planned rebellion against God and his laws."

By the first night of Passover the plotters have "spread malicious slander and kindled the fire of fanaticism in the dark recesses of ignorance and crime" until Bacherach is "as dense and impregnated with rascality as the New York Herald and the streets of Washington." The shoemaker whose wife David cured warns the Rabbi that his life is in danger, but the Rabbi vows, "I shall not flee like a coward, before I see the danger." This seems to be a reference to Lincoln. Soon after the First Inaugural address, The Israelite "published a bitterly partisan letter from a correspondent in New York...branding Lincoln a coward for his trip by stealth from Harrisburg to Washington" (Korn, p. 134).

Havdalah (the service marking the end of the Sabbath), the Passover plate and the beginning of the Seder are described in some detail and in response to the traditional call to the hungry to come celebrate, two strangers join the Rabbi. He discovers they have placed a dead infant under the table, and he manages to flee with Sarah to the river where William, the shoemaker's deaf and dumb son, has been ready with a boat in anticipation of just such danger. Rabbi

Abraham believes he is the only target and the Jews will be safe without his presence. A woman running through Bacherach crying for her lost child incites a riot which the Burgomeister and the Bishop attempt to quell; the dead child is "found" by Sturmbach and ruffians and he abducts Gheetle; David faces down the mob, blaming Sturmbach and accusing him of attempting to steal the people's "municipal rights" under cover of disorder. David and twelve Jewish hostages are taken into custody.

With terror still reigning in the ghetto, David vows to report his suspicions of Sturmbach, but his fellow prisoners urge caution--though no one knows how to prove their innocence. The shoemaker tells David that Rabbi Abraham and his wife are safe, but he doesn't know Gheetle's whereabouts. The seder of liberty and love interrupted by "bloodthirsty and greedy lusts," is continued in prison: "their voices re-echoed from the low arch of the prison sounded outside like songs from the grave; but to [the hostages] it sounded like consolation and satisfaction." Well taken care of in Sturmbach's forest castle, grief-numbed Gheetle is told that all of Bacherach's Jews are dead, and her tears are "not the first and not the last which suffering hearts, tormented by vile oppressors, wept." Traveling down the peaceful Rhine to Frankfort, meanwhile, Sarah is lost in idyllic childhood memories of Sabbath, Succoth and her early love for Abraham.

Bustling Frankfort amazes Sarah, and the narrative is rich with descriptions of different sorts of people--doctors, soldiers, fencing masters, loose women, priests--and costumes, like those of the young men who

> wore impertinent feathers on the small black caps like an inclined plain, and silk cloaks of variegated colors, mostly green on one side, and red on the other, or striped like the rainbow (no. 18, p. 137).

The Rabbi and his wife, who have traveled on a holiday only because of danger, obtain entrance into the Ghetto and attend services at the shul. When called to the Torah, Abraham recites the traditional thanksgiving blessing for those who have escaped danger (which Wise translates as "praised be the Lord who hath done me all that is good"), calling forth the congregational response. Listening to gossip up in the women's gallery, Sarah faints at her husband's "unmistakable expression of a great danger just passed through" and all their news spreads through the Ghetto "long before the close of the synagogal service."

Staying at Schapper-Elle's inn, the Rabbi tells his story to the horrified crowds seeking information, who spread it even further, asking for help from the community's rabbis and elders. The rabbi creates a different kind of stir when he invites a dirty, ragged but noble-looking man to dine with him and his wife. Later, the rabbi joins Frankfort's rabbis in their gothic hall teeming with law codices, the product of Jewish history and genius "in countries perfectly lawless." The rabbis

> looked as venerable and dignified as the Senate of the United States did two deceniums ago; and the younger portion of the assembly were as lively, restless and loud as the lower House of Congress, when Alexander Short delivered his seccesion [sic] speech (no. 19, p. 146).

The rabbis agree that someone must go to Bacherach to investigate, before the Emperor can be asked to intervene, but "who should go to a city where an infuriated populace plunders and murders, and hell has

spit out its worst demons--avarice, fanaticism, and bloodthirst?" The pauper of the inn volunteers, proving the Rabbi's belief in his nobility, and making others suspect that he is really the Prophet Elijah.

Told that the forests are being combed by Bacherach's citizens seeking escaped Jews, Gheetle is even more afraid and isolated, plagued by visions of the massacre. "She dreamed of death and destruction and waking she could think only of deceased friends and slaughtered companions." Pater Anselm bids her to trust Sturmbach, whose good looks and attractive clothes do please her, but whose manner she finds more and more repellent. Anselm presses her to consider conversion and the powerful position of a noble's wife, but Gheetle is revolted:

> 'I would prefer being an humble Jewess among my equals to being the lady of a thousand hapless slaves. Those thousand serfs were not born to be the noble lady's footstool, as little indeed as the Jew was set into the world to be the object of scorn and pity. My uncle taught me to be benevolent to all, and govern none' (no. 20, p. 153).

Angered, Anselm accuses Sturmbach of ruining their plot by attacking the Ghetto too early, and demands money, which Sturmbach will only pay when he gets "the Jewess no. 2," later adding David Raphael's corpse as part of the bargain. A mob in Bacherach meanwhile seeks to free Raphael because the people need his medical skills, and he is carried off from prison "in a sort of triumphal procession."

Grateful for David having saved his wife, the shoemaker reveals that it was John from Basle, a Franciscan, who urged people to free the doctor. The shoemaker praises Gheetle and Sarah's charity to his

family--food, money, clothes--and David is not at all surprised by their kindness or by Sturmbach's plotting because "the enemies of the Jews at all times were rude and heartless barbarians, or refined, cunning and remorseless demagogues." Returning to the prison, after "attending faithfully to all the patients who had been waiting for him," David urges a reward of 1000 ducats be offered by the Jews to find out whose child was killed, since no one can identify it. The Bishop makes clear to David the power struggle between the city of Frankfort and the knights who seek to curtail municipal rights: "the Jews and their wealth were exposed to remorseless ruffians to attain the...extension of power." The Bishop also asks David if he can determine the manner of the infant's death and the nature of the wounds, an idea suggested by Rabbi Abraham in a letter.

Because Gheetle will not talk or eat, Anselm and Sturmbach plan to head off the rumored offer of 1000 ducats by forcibly baptizing her, marrying her to Hans and claiming she sought both. No one can controvert their story, the Pater gloats: "they are Jews after all, and we are Christians." Gheetle resists Hans' eloquent pleas "for a brilliant future," feeling "intimidated, almost horrified in his presence," declaring that she will never feel joy again. She is unswayed by Sturmbach's offer of riches, jewels, clothes, prestige--and himself:

> 'No more!' Gheetle interrupted. She rose and assumed the attitude of a commanding and angry Goddess, her pale cheeks colored; her eyes darted forth penetrating looks. Like a higher being, the timorous maiden stood before the astonished Hans. She had lifted up her right hand, and commanded, in an almost manly voice: 'No more!....I will rather die a thousand deaths than wed one of the murderers of my lamented friends....Many of you have killed, murdered

> in cold blood, slaughtered the innocent Jews of Bacherach and I should wed the Christian?....I hate the murderers of my people!' (no. 22, p. 170)

Sought in Bacherach as the infant's murderer, the Rabbi turns himself in to the Count of Wurtemburg, not in an appeal to justice, which "was an appeal to the wind at those days of rude and brutal force," but to the Count's "known clemency." The Count suggests that the dead child can be "made" to speak its killer's name, thus clearing the Rabbi. "Stories of this kind were told and believed by illiterate men, and were used by persons of higher standing...for the advantage or disadvantage of the community." Schapper-Elle has meanwhile been spreading hourly news about the whole situation, without, however, forcing on her public "all the enormities of modern newspapers begotten by ingenious heroes of the quill for electioneering purposes."

David's suggestion of a reward is dismissed by Bacherach's Jews as too great a sum, but younger men eagerly agree to arm themselves in defense against further outrages. The shoemaker's son, Dumb William, brings a letter to Frankfort reporting that only two Jews died in the riot and Sarah sends back a letter to David sharing her suspicions of Sturmbach, and bids William observe the knight and discover Gheetle's whereabouts. Sturmbach thrashes William for following him through the streets and is pummeled and scratched so badly that all Bacherach hears of it and assumes, because William is so peaceable, that "the knight must be guilty of some hideous crime." Fear of exposure pushes Anselm to suggest that one hostage Jew be tortured until he confesses killing the child: "One Jew burnt and the whole matter is settled."

And because popular opinion is turning towards the Jews, Sturmbach must marry Gheetle and then place her in a convent where she cannot be reached by the Jews.

When Hans offers to take Gheetle to Bacherach for new clothes, she sees this as her only chance of escaping the impregnable castle and plans to seek refuge with relatives in Coblenz if she can flee. In the guise of offering them a blessing of safe travel (and there is such a blessing in Jewish tradition: tfilat ha-derech), Anselm marries them. Gheetle has no comprehension of Latin and suspects nothing. David is "stupified" and "crushed" to hear that Gheetle has married the knight, wondering if she could have been dazzled by wealth, position, and Hans' "beauties." Hans and Anselm are arrested for kidnapping by the Count of Wurtemburg's guards, but Gheetle is inaccesible to the Jews in the convent of St. Ursula.

Gheetle is as unlike the ugly, mannish nuns as "a lamb among a herd of wolves," but despite "the crosses, crucifixes, sculptures and pictures of saints and patrons," she initially thinks that she is in some sort of "inn for travelling females." Overjoyed in the morning to view Bacherach from her windows, she resists a call to the chapel: "...I cannot pray with you to the saints, patrons, or the mother of God, I am a Jewess who prays to God only." Gheetle denies being Hans' wife or baptized as "one wicked mass of falsehood." Her growing despair is countered, however, by David's appearance with Father John at night, disguised as a monk. David reveals his identity, and that her uncle and aunt are alive, only after being sure that she has been deceived by Anselm and Sturmbach into believing him dead. John

promises to do what he can for her.

While the Imperial judge and commissioner sent from Frankfort to determine the fate of the twelve Jewish hostages are at first tempted to find them innocent, hearing that 100 ducats will be theirs, Anselm protects himself and Hans (who has been confined to his castle) by telling the investigators more can be bilked from the Jews. While David is cleared, the hostages are not, and he once again unsuccessfully presses for a reward to be offered. Because David is attending Sturmbach's ill mother, Father John urges him to appeal to her husband, but David knows that this knight wants to use the Jews against the city and refuses. The Bishop insists Gheetle must have a hearing, at which he orders her to remain in the convent for six months seeing only John, who will be her "spiritual advisor," and a physician (David, of course). Gheetle's charm and renewed high spirits are meanwhile making her the convent's favorite, though the Bishop's decision displeases her.

The Bishop causes a sensation by condemning the mob, announcing that he had found nothing objectionable in Rabbi Abraham's books, and that an examination revealed the infant was dead two days before it was found, and wounded after its death. All good Christians, he declares, should seek the child's real murderers. The imperial representatives obtain a confession from one of the Jewish hostages through torture, but an old beggar claims he is the murderer,and is thrown into prison. All this "unnatural excitement," described to Rabbi Abraham in a letter from David, brings him back to Bacherach which is under curfew and patrolled by armed guards.

The arrested old beggar turns out to be Father John in disguise, and he confesses in the next chapter to an inveterate hatred of Jews:

> 'For years I thirsted after an opportunity to hurt them, to administer a crushing blow on their heads....I was pregnant with evil a whole lifetime without finding a proper place to give birth to it' (no. 29, p. 226).

John claims that he is behind every stage of the plot, though now he is repentent. When he and David are alone, however, John swears him to silence and makes a second, "real" confession that reduces David to tears. John's reading of Jewish literature and history led him to admire:

> 'the fortitude, the moral courage, the tenacity, the heoric resignation, the indestructable confidence, the unconditional fidelity, the incomparable character which the Hebrew people exhibited a thousand times in joy or affliction, in spite of a whole world given to prejudice, superstition, ignorance and hatred. Thousand times I wept hot tears over the misery and affliction of Israel....Thousand times I thought of means to make atonement for the wickedness of humanity' (no. 29, p. 226).

The only way to save Bacharach's Jews, John says, is to die for them.

Rumors spread that the Rabbi arrived in Bacherach on "the chariot of the storm" to speak to the dead child's spirit which accused its real murderers. Eyewitnesses testify to the story that David and the Rabbi have spread, and claim to have seen the two slain Jews' ghosts at St. Ursula's. Terror results when St. Mary's picture disappears from the convent and appears at the Jews' gravesites (William and his father were responsible). David visits the "ill" Gheetle at St. Ursula's and hints at her coming release while brave Sarah sets off alone after the Rabbi, "a dangerous enterprise in those days of barbarous habits," and Hans and Anselm are arrested. With the town ablaze in rumors and reports of "all sorts of demons and signs in the

streets," Hans and Anselm are sent off to Frankfort for beheading, John and the Jewish hostages are released and Gheetle freed.

> Order, law and security were restored and Master David Raphael married Gheetle. What more do you want to know? Dumb William did not learn to speak. The shoemaker was no unknown prince. The Monk John and the Bishop were no secret Jews. There is no romance in the anti-romantic Rabbi of Bacherach, except that Master David Raphael married Gheetle, and a fine wedding it was (no. 32, p. 251).

Wise wrote in Reminiscences that he continually struggled against writing works that were "too sarcastic and satirical" (p. 333). If that is true, he seems to have lost the struggle in this novel where he sharply criticizes the government, politicians, journalists, writers, women's shallowness and the very temper of the time. That appears to be why he calls the book an "anti-romantic Romance," though it might just as well be subtitled "The Rabbi of Cincinnati" because Wise's opinions are at least a third of the novel's content, and integral to its purpose.

Because so much of the novel refers to the American Civil War or war-related conditions, it is worth summarizing Wise's stance outside of the novel. He was a Peace Democrat opposed to extreme abolitionists and extreme secessionists. While not in favor of slavery, he "never supported it as a reason for going to war with the South," and was "horrified at the thought of a reopened slave-trade" (Korn, p. 128). He hated Abolitionists for four general reasons: they were fanatics breeding destruction; as ministers, many abused their office; they lacked concern for other minorities; they sought to make the United States a Christian nation. Wise supported war efforts in a "mild fashion": his "interest in and sympathy for southern Jewry

remained steadfast."

Wise protested against the ban on circulation of newspapers to the South and vigorously attacked the outbreak of anti-Jewish libels on both sides: "the war now raging has developed an intensity of malice that borders upon the darkest days of superstition and the Spanish inquisition." Jews were accused of "draft-dodging, the purchase of officer commissions, war profiteering, bribery, smuggling and black-marketing, speculation at the expense of the government, and many other types of foul disloyalty" (Korn, p. 143). Wise published attacks to expose the falsity of these charges, believing them to be a "smoke-screen, to draw attention away from the activities of the financiers, profiteers, incompetent and dishonest office-holders, and bribe-taking politicians" (Korn, p. 145).

In general terms, Wise strongly attacks throughout the novel th nature of man, whom he accuses in Chapter III of spilling "more blood than tigers and hyenas drink." What causes such violence? "Phantasms which they call honor, patriotism, religion and justice....Selfish interests and brutal passions assuming the garb of fairness to deceive the crying conscience." More blood has been shed since 1800, Wise says, "than during any previous century and...prejudices, superstitions, crimes and vices, live and sway a despotic scepter over mankind." It is an age of "the most disasterous rebellions" throughout Europe and Asia, while in America, "the most sanguinary combat is raged, thousands of champions sanctify the soil with their gore." But the world is not by any means plunged into mourning over this devastation--luxury and entertainment are more popular than ever:

> 'We are philosophers, we know how to live and enjoy the charms of life; we do not care for [a] hundred thousand slain persons and legions of imprisoned hostages. Three cheers for modern enlightenment and high-toned levity. If we progress in this fine art as we did, we will change our mourning custom. When a relative or friend dies, we will dress him in costly attire, place him in a golden coffin in the center of a hall, dance and sing all night and bury the dead in the morning. Then the open house, the visitors, the parties, picnics, excursions, all in state and gala, must follow in regular routine of the bon ton. We will come so far that good-natured fellows will hang themselves, just to give their friends an occasion for festivities, exhibition of dresses, jewelries, carriages and parlors. Hurrah for progress and greenbacks! They are the unreedemable redeemers of all the world, and no Jew will crucify them' (no. 24, p. 185).

Wise lambastes "speculators" and "contractors" and all who profit from the war many times in Bacherach, in passing and in some cases specifically. Bacherach's burgomeister, for instance, "after holding his office for twenty years was not able to build as costly a private residence" as Cincinnati's customs officer "after being in office one or two years." Politicians come under attack not only for being liars and corrupt, but boring as well. Journalists are no better. They will say almost anything "for electioneering purposes" and overwhelm their readers with tripe: "what Jeff Davis's coachman, an intelligent contraband, a reliable gentleman, an officer from the front, a lady fugitive, a deserter or somebody else said, was going to say or not say."

None of Wise's previous narratives is as personal or punctuated by so many addresses to his "fair" or "kind" reader and transitions and conclusions like "Well then, having introduced to you the principal actors in our story, you must allow them now to drop the curtain, it being 3 P.M." Initially these intrusions seems to slow

the story down, or even supersede it, but the further one reads, the more contemporary barbarism and that of fifteenth century Bacherach seem analogous, certainly as Jews are concerned. In both cases, they are the victims of the powerful who use them for their own ends. In Jewish tradition, Haman, the villain of the Purim story, is not just an individual, but a type or symbol of all Jew-haters, all plotters and murderers. Wise in his own way is making a similar historical connection, but his intent is also to focus on individual villainy directed against the Jews. That is clear from the very first chapter. Wise has generally shown his priestly and other villains in relation to Jewish characters, that is, as seen by Jews or from a Jewish perspective. But here, the noble Hans Sturmbach and Pater Anselm, are center stage, preening, drunken, vicious, hypocritical from the first chapter.

This is Wise's first novel in which the villains appear before the heroes, and their plot is also the most vicious of the "enemies of Israel," involving as it does not only a pogrom, but the abduction of <u>two</u> women, which later develops into the more familiar forced baptism--but stays surprising with the marriage. Wise is also far more specific in creating Hans Sturmbach, who is a dim-witted, single-minded, voluptuary, the vengeful and boastful representative of his despicable class. And Jews are not the only ones horrified by Christian persecution. Father John is Wise's most noble Christian character, who believes that he must sacrifice his life in personal atonement for the sins committed against the Jews. Reading of John's growing love and respect for Jewish heroism and integrity, one almost

expects him to seek conversion--but that might have been too "romantic" for this anti-Romantic novel.

If Christians are generally more barbaric in this novel, more contemptuous of human life, they are also more superstitious, and disgustingly so for David Raphael. When he first attends Gheetle in the convent, his light reference to a curative "magic spell" excites the nuns who eagerly press him for it. The townsfolk for their part believe any rumor that is spread with the help of a few gold coins and can quickly be manipulated into a frenzy of superstition, seeing ghosts and vision everywhere they look. The nobles are just brutish and ignorant, trading ghost stories over their beer. The Jews in this novel are above such nonsense and even a bit reluctant to play on the townspeople's credulity, but it works, David has to admit, when "the rabbi outpriests the priest."

Wise is not just critical of Christian belief in the supernatural, his description of St. Ursula's nuns is highly sarcastic:

> There was a group of nuns about [Gheetle], some of which covered the surplus of rear under a wide black cloak, others pinned their shawls right under the chin, to hide forty per cent premium of neck and throat, three of them had four eyes not to see the vanities of the world, one was somewhat lame and traveled through this vale of woe with the aid of a crutch, and the rest bore a strong similarity to beardless men...except those who were actually blessed with a considerable portion of beard (no. 26, p. 201).

By comparison, of course, Gheetle, who is very like other Wisean heroines, is even more charming and fresh, and she is equally as resolute in defying those who tempt and oppress her. Wise commends her heroic fidelity to her faith, but she is his first heroine to be

swayed by a villain. "Hans was a fine specimen of a Teutonic knight" and his clothes are described in great detail, from ostrich-plumed hat to "heavy silver spurs." Despite her love for the less dramatic David, Gheetle's "eyes were governed by the general laws of feminine vision," which laws David suspects her of obeying when he briefly thinks she has married Hans freely.

In the same chapter describing Gheetle's weakness for a fine figure and beautiful clothes, Wise expresses a deeper misogynism, declaring that for women, being alone is "an impossibility and a torment" that leads to all sorts of frivolities, including reading "the novels in the New York 'Weeklies,' because they can put up with almost any sort of company." Are the emphasis on clothing, the "explanations" of Jewish life, and the occasional slighting references to women's deficiencies a sign that Wise was more directly appealing to a female audience than before--or that he resented having to do so? After all, Gheetle may be heroic, but she is not particularly bright, less so, in fact, than previous heroines. Why else would Wise have her not realize that she was in a convent when the realization seems so obvious and would actually heighten the situation, when her not realizing serves little dramatic function but only makes her seem somewhat dim? Why else bid his readers to model themselves after Queen Esther--who was surely not a fool--and condemn a contemporary taste for entertainment that is an expression, primarily, of women's activities?

Wise not only shows us Gheetle's frailties, but sets up another model: Sarah, who is the most loving and affectionate wife Wise has

created. Generally what holds Wise's spouses together is their children, but the Rabbi and his wife seem bound by respect and love that does not preclude teasing. There are echoes of Wise's own relationship with his wife. Throughout Reminiscences, Wise records not having shared his troubles with her, to avoid causing her grief. In Bacherach, Sarah does not fully appreciate the depths of the danger she and her husband have escaped, despite their headlong flight to the river, until they are in shul. Sarah and Abraham are cousins, as were Wise and his wife, who appears in Reminiscences much like Sarah: an ideal helpmate. We do, however, get past the image and enter her experience in a way that is unusual for Wise's novels. Sarah has a striking reverie as she floats down the Rhine to Frankfort, in which she remembers favorite fairytale figures, "stories of bewitched princesses, singing trees, glass palaces and golden bridges." And she remembers her father on Shabbos, little Abraham showing off his knowledge of Torah, sharing Succoth with him, imagining herself then in Jerusalem's Temple court with her father and all her friends. There is a melancholy sweetness to the details that makes the reverie intensely personal and affecting. Women may be idle or too easily swayed by appearances like Gheetle, but they can be as heroic as she is in subduing Hans by her rhetoric and bearing, as Queen Esther is in saving her people, as Sarah is in setting off after Abraham "with a firmness, determination, consciousness of strength and pride," determined to "live or die with her husband."

What sort of world is created in these eight novels? The

Christian world is a cruel one, despite instances of kindness, even on a large scale as in Frankfort after the fire in Romance, Philosophy and Cabalah. And there is something barbaric, fanatical and almost crazed about the relentless persecution Christians inflict on Jews. The effort to convert them seems less an act of mercy than a form of extermination. Throughout the novels, churchmen and other villains grow more and more monstrous, culminating in Pater Anselm and Sturmbach who coolly plan abduction, rape, murder as if it is their right to do so, a droit de Chretien. Perhaps Wise's point is just that; in Europe, in Christian societies, Jews are completely at the mercy of their Christian masters and the religious-political structure in which they are always at the bottom. The novels thus seems to have a subtext: "It is not like this in America, so be thankful, but be on guard, remember how we have suffered."

Countering literary traditions that present a "predominantly unfavorable image of the Jew as the figure of the cunning pawnbroker or merchant" (Steinberg, p. 225), Wise's heroes and heroines are almost unfailingly noble, generous, kind, and brave. Their characters are "presented in terms of an idealized answer to implied derogation," (Steinberg, p. 267), counter-stereotypes, in other words. Jews are by no means saintly, they have their share of fools and gossips like the much-thrashed Marcus Later and power-seekers like the Parnass in The Shoemaker's Family who cause individual pain and congregational strife, and are often superstitious and religiously backward. Yet for all those negative characteristics they are not as sunk in backwardness and superstition as the Christians, and they ultimately

have no power to deter the "better" Jews from their paths. At their most "primitive," these minor Jewish characters are close to Christians--so that even their failings seem a product of oppression.

Wise at first seems to condemn anger in response to that oppression. Compare, for instance, the spy in The Convert, who seems driven, to the cooler Moses Baum. But by The Wizard of the Forest, seven years later, the Jewish Prioress is a heroine for having bided her time and then triumphed over all of Prague's nuns and priests. Revenge in that novel is very sweet indeed. As the anger grows from novel to novel, so does the focus on Christian villainy. Wise's first villain, the Prior in The Convent, does not even appear until the fourth chapter of the five-part novel and is rather shadowy compared to Sturmbach and Anselm in The Rabbi of Bacherach who are riotously central to that novel's first chapter and delineated with far more individual and social detail.

Nothing proves the Jews' courage and integrity more than their resisting intense pressure to convert. Moses Baum is the sole hero who gives up his religion (which he understood poorly anyway), even temporarily. All the other major characters will defy imprisonment and terror in what is almost a type-scene. A monk, an Emperor, a priest or Minister counsels or threatens, and a solitary Jew defies the hypocrisy, the fear, the blandishments. It is not stubbornness that fuels the Jewish rejection of conversion, but moral and ethical superiority: being right. A "conversion scene" appears at least once if not more in almost all of the novels, and The Jewish Heroine is in fact a series of variations on that heroic theme. Not surprisingly,

Wise shows himself in Reminiscences as tempted to convert. Before Wise's congregational trouble in Albany boiled over, Wise says New York State's chief justice urged him to convert, which he could do with "great pomp," and be reborn "at the head of a rich congregation which will consider itself fortunate in possessing such a prominent apostate" (p. 119). While defeats have previously made Wise consider other careers, like the law or medicine, conversion is out of the question:

> 'Had I been willing to take such a step, I could have done it in Austria, and to much better advantage [he replied]; but I came to America in order to be able to live as a free man in accordance with my convictions' (p. 119).

It is a scene worthy of one of his novels, and a page later Wise reminds his readers that with missionaries swarming through America in 1849, the Jews were a "helpless multitude."

CHAPTER FOUR

FOR GOD AND ISRAEL

In Reminiscences, Wise quite understandably says a great deal more about his three novels set in Ancient Israel than his other fiction. They are his longest works and were apparently popular enough for two to be reprinted in book form from the pages of The Israelite (using the same plates): The Combat of the People (1859) and The First of the Maccabees (1860). Wise mentioned raising subscriptions to the longest of the three, The Last Struggle of the Nation (see Appendix A), but it never saw independent publication, perhaps because of its great length.

The Jewish people in these three novels are anything but a "helpless multitude" as they rise in rebellion against the Roman and Syrian Empires. Wise writes in Reminiscences that he returned from a trip to St. Louis, Chicago and Milwaukee in August 1856 with sketches for these three novels. But the dramatic possibilities of those subjects had occurred to him as far back as 1853. In the introduction to History of the Israelite Nation Wise refers to Israel`s struggle against foreign domination. First the "lion of Judah" rose to vanquish Syrian armies, then it fought Rome's "gigantic power" until the Jews were "crushed, but not annihilated" (History, vi-vii). And as we have seen in Chapter Two, when Judah Gruenhut in Romance is sent off to war, he is inspired by the heroism of the Maccabees and the defenders

of Bethan (i.e.: Bethar, Bar Kochba's last stronghold).

Wise said that his aim in writing these three novels was "to familiarize the reading public with the brilliant periods of Jewish history in fictional form, in order to appeal by this means to the growing youth so as to awaken in them Jewish patriotism" (Reminiscences, p. 332). In these periods, oppression against the Jews that he treated elsewhere as an individual's or community's problem is here set on a national stage. The Jewish people fight against being stripped of their religious, cultural and social identity. Jewish characters in the novels dramatize various responses to the overwhelming pressure at times of national crisis: outright resistance, neutrality, accommodation, and treachery. The action is thus not simply on the battlefields--the war here is a continued kulturkampf. Long history-crammed monologues and self-justifying soliloquies seem at times to take the place of action, but are really integral to it.

Because the plots are so complex they will be summarized more generally than heretofore in the following discussions.

The Last Struggle of the Nation, or Rabbi Akiba and His Time, A Historical Novel from the Second Century, by the American Jewish Novelist: August 22, 1856 though January 29, 1859, with many breaks.

Setting: The Gallilee and Bar Kochba's home of Bethar (placed by Wise on the Mediterranean, through contemporary scholarship puts it 11 miles southwest of Jerusalem), 132-135 Common Era.

Themes: The Jewish warriors are able to defeat the Romans not simply through force of arms but because God is on their side. Jews are far superior in justice and humanity to the brutal Romans. Long past any armed struggle or national Jewish state, the spirit of Israel--God's laws--will live on in the world, carried by the Jews.

Characters: Rabbi Akiba, the era's greatest teacher
Hannah, his daughter
Bar Kochba (Cochba in the text), "Messiah-prince

of Israel"
Abigail, his wife
Ruth, their daughter (also: Beruriah)
Mair, brilliant student, in love with Ruth
Elisha ben Abua (or: Acher), Traitor
Sanbelat, Samaritan warrior and traitor
Tunis Rufus, Palestine's military commander
Tunius Rufus, general, his brother

The successful revolt against Roman rule led by Simon Bar Kochba ("son of the star") in 132 C.E. established an independent state for two years. Its catastrophic demise brought over half a million Jewish deaths, Hadrian's prohibition of Judaism and the banning of Jews from Jerusalem, whose Temple site was plowed under. Torah study was forbidden and punishable by death, and "Judea lay in ruins, its population almost annihilated by the war and wholesale enslavement which followed" (47). This profound catastrophe marked a shift from armed struggle to concentrating on the spiritual survival of Judaism.

Bar Kochba, a gigantic, brave and wise warrior, "the terror of his enemies" is proclaimed Messiah by Rabbi Akiba at a secret gathering of Israel's sages, who swear allegiance to the rebellion. Because Akiba is the country's greatest teacher, his proclamation is electrifying. Akiba goes on to enflame crowds against the Romans by reminding them of Rome's recent bloodcurdling atrocities against the Jews participating in the Diapsora revolts of 112-115, and the Emperor's broken promise to rebuild the Temple.

In the first battle, Akiba's wife Abigail, in men's clothing and armor, is victorious and becomes a commander. Not all voices and arms are raised against Rome, however. Rabbi Elisha ben Abua holds that

the "earth is given to Rome...no nation can successfully resist their power." Mair, a pupil of his and Akiba's agrees. A brilliant scholar in Latin and Greek as well as in Torah, Mair cannot fight:

> `Israel's nationality is lost, the Romans have dissolved it. Our spiritual treasures only are ours, only those we can save. If you fight, thousands and miriads [sic] will be killed, others made miserable; but you cannot save the nationality of Israel' (vol. III, no. 8, p. 58).
>
> 'God entrusted to our care the law, His sacred will, and gave a land to our forefathers, that we should study the law, appreciate it, and go forth and teach it to the world. The time has come for us to go forth and teach the idolatrous nations the words of our God; we needed [sic] no longer a home and a particular country; we should go forth to make the world our home, gain mankind for our sacred treasures' (no. 12, p. 89).

Such views make Bar Kochba refuse Mair as Ruth's suitor. The two lovers swear an oath of fidelity anyway, and Ruth frees Mair when the rebels place him under protective custody. Taken prisoner by the Romans, Mair faces General Tunis Rufus like an angry prophet, urging the Romans to abandon the attempt to crush Israel. Rome will win in any case, so clemency now would create good feeling among the Jews rather than deepen their hatred of the Romans. Mair's pride, nobility, descent from Nero and his perfect Latin make the general want to take him to Rome as his scribe, but Mair refuses.

Also in the Roman camp is one of Mair's teachers, Elisha ben Abua, who has become a traitor. The Jews call the Rabbi "Acher" ("other") in sign of his treachery. Ben Abua's great love for Mair will bring even more suspicion on the student's head. Though Mair sets fire to the Roman tents during a Jewish attack, turning the tide of battle, he is still suspected by the Jews for his stand against the rebellion, and sent off to an ascetic sect in the Galilee after

eloquently asserting that Rome "cannot be defeated in its present zenith of power" and that "there is more heroism in forbearance than in warfare," even warning against the restoration of the monarchy.

Mair at first finds some comfort in the wilderness life of denial and spiritual study and striving practiced by the ascetics. His joy in the mountain folks' simplicity turns to ecstasy when Ruth reaches him there and dreams of them joining the shepherds and shepherdesses. "In the embrace of Ruth there was for Mair a world without cares, life without trouble, and joy, pure and unadulterated."

Defending himself against charges of treachery to the victorious Bar Kochba, Mair entreats and then orders the general not to succumb to the seductions of power and become Israel`s ruler. Mair rises to the heights of oratory in this confrontation, prophesying national disaster despite the present success:

> 'Behold! before my eye, the future of Israel stands black with mourning and affliction; its garments spotted with the blood of our slain heroes....I behold the Roman triumphing maliciously over the daughter of Zion; behold he crushes her scull [sic] here, there he fetters her arms, chains her feet, drags her into the land of woe and misery. Wo! wo! she bleeds from a thousand wounds; wo! wo! she sighs and suffers in vain, her strength is broken, the paleness of death disfigures her countenance, the heart is sore....Wo! wo!' (no. 43, p. 338).

After two years of independence, the new Jewish state faces the amassing of Roman armies from all over Europe and beyond the Euphrates. Though the first battle is won by Mair's friend Bar Droma, the odds are terrible. Mair has meanwhile rejected the mystical doctrines of the ascetic sect without rancor, but still will not fight. His visions of disaster intensify, but he begins to see much

more clearly that Israel will survive:

> 'Providence, kind and benign, has chosen [us] to promulgate the doctrine of salvation among all nations and tongues, and no earthly power can set at naught the councils [sic] of the Almighty....Israel's nationality is the mere embellishment of its mission; the shell of the kernel....This inheritance will undermine the altar of the heathens, will overthrow their Gods and their temples. On the shattered fragments of idols and imperial thrones Israel's divine banner will float in the air, and invite the nations to fraternize in the light of truth, under the protective wings of justice, before the eternal God' (vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 1-2).

Overheard uttering such sentiments near a mass meeting, Mair is publicly accused of treason and almost stoned to death, but Rabbi Akiba saves Mair and sends him back to the Galilee. Captured by Romans once again, Mair impresses the Proconsul, Tunius Rufus, with his bearing and becomes part of his household. Mair will tutor Rufus's daughter Domitilla in "the language, history, religion, customs and usages" of the Jews because she has "a particular reason to desire after that knowledge." Mair discovers Domitilla is actually his sister, and they flee the Roman camp for the mountains. Domitilla explains there that she learned to see her father as cruel because "his gods are revengeful, despotic and merciless!":

> '[Mair] convinced me of the folly and crime of Roman paganism, taught me the beauties of virtue, purity and piety, caused me to condemn all that is low, vicious, vulgar or impious' (no. 10, p. 57).

Bar Kochba is still inspired by a cause that is larger than that of the Jews. Israel's victory over Rome will avenge "the bloody wrongs Rome has inflicted upon innocent and liberty-loving nations." Realizing that military defeat is certain, Akiba gathers Israel's greatest teachers and students to plan the nation's spiritual survival. To guard against the coming disaster, Akiba urges wider

transmission of Judaism's sacred writings and the ordination of more rabbis: "The Light must be put into a lantern, and this must be enveloped into a thick cloak...that it be not quenched" (no. 18, p. 97). Mair's responsibility in these heroic efforts is to "abstract from the existing traditions and the manuscripts, the general theories of [Israel's religious] laws and usages."

Mair objects to any continued military struggle--"let the bloodshed be stopped"--but Akiba, who respects Mair's "tremendous and truthful omens," explains that the Jews cannot be convinced to give up until they are defeated. Captured by the Romans after praying for the last time at the Temple ruins, Akiba is forced to watch as six great rabbis are brutally executed and he faces his own horrible death calmly. Mair is exhalted to hear that Akiba's last words were the Shema ("Hear, O Israel ...").

Through complicated plots, the Samaritan Sanbelat (once Bar Kochba's steward) has made the Messiah-prince suspect Abigail, Ruth, and Bethar's spiritual leader, Rabbi Eliezer, of treachery. Bar Kochba kills the Rabbi, and the disease-ridden, famine-reduced garrison takes this as a terrible omen because Eliezer had become a talismanic figure of hope for the troops. In flames and great slaughter, the weakened city falls, and Bar Kochba and Abigail die amid the general destruction. Taken prisoner by the Romans, Ruth kills Sanbelat and is given to the slave traders. She is saved by Bar Droma pretending to be a Greek and reunited with Mair in the Galilee, Israel's least devastated region. Mair will become the "most celebrated sage of his time" (all anonymous opinions in the Mishnah

are attributed to this great preacher of the second century) and his wife will be renowned for her learning as well. Amid inconceivable disaster, there is triumph, Mair sees:

> Israel is free, and no chains can enslave it. Israel is free...and goes forth to redeem mankind, to bring to all truth, justice, liberty and love (no. 30, p. 33).

Struggle is Wise's longest and most ambitious novel, giving him unparalleled scope for developing new and familiar themes. Once again, the Jews are far superior to their enemies, the Romans in this case. Rabbi Gruenhut's faith in God's intervention (in Romance) here becomes the urgent and sustaining faith of an entire people. What is new is the persistent message of Israel's glorious mission in the world and the prophetic voice with which Mair articulates that vision.

The Jews had good cause to hate the nation that had controlled or occupied their land for two centuries. The Romans defiled and ruined the Temple and despoiled the countryside. They glorified war, a value completely inimical to the Jewish tradition. And "Roman culture was disfigured by degrading slavery, infanticide, human sacrifice, judicial torture, cruelty to animals--features which had been banished from Jewish culture" (48). Throughout the novel, the Romans are invidiously compared to the Jews.

Oaths play an important part in that comparison. Early in the book, after Bar Kochba is displeased by Mair's refusal to fight the Romans (quoted above), the warrior involves his daughter Ruth in an oath. Prior to the battle to oust Bethar's Roman garrison, Bar Kochba

vows that Ruth will marry the day's greatest hero. His wife Abigail takes that honor, and so Bar Kochba settles on the next bravest warrior who is unfortunately in love with another woman and declines. The oath will cause Bar Kochba, his wife and daughter a great misery, but he will not go back on his word--as a man, a Jew, and a prince. To most Romans, however, an oath is judged merely by expediency. Emperor Hadrian absolves two Roman commanders who swore in a truce not to reenter the field against the Israelites. The oath may have saved their lives, but it is invalid, because Hadrian declares it so.

A rabbi accuses the Romans of having "no character, no principles, and no generosity," and that condemnation echoes through the novel. Bar Kochba denounces "a haughty, avaricious and despotic Rome, who knows neither justice, honor, nor humanity." Defeating such a base enemy will be a triumph for all "innocent and liberty-loving nations." Compared to Jewish laws which are "the rays from the light of justice," Roman laws "are compacts of convenience, and dictations of Power" that benefit only the patrician class.

Nowhere is the difference between the two people clearer than in their treatment of prisoners-of-war, whom the Romans routinely slaughter by the thousands. A Jewish commander is driven wild by this butchery:

> 'We [the Israelites] have treated our prisoners with justice, kindness and humanity; we never use our swords against the defenseless; but they...have no pity for the hoary head, no mercy for the feeble, no respect for the great and excellent, in their estimation we are all dogs, wild beasts who must be hunted down, frogs, mice and serpants [sic], which must be trampled upon' (vol. 4, no. 23, p. 177).

When Bar Kochba releases some prisoners he declares (somewhat wistfully) "Let [them] go back to their homes and say they found a just and humane people." Israel is the work of God, "and Rome stands on the power of the sword," Akiba tells the Roman Proconsul.

The novel is not so claustrophobic as to omit the Romans' views of their Israelite foes. Jewish resistance strikes the Romans as foolish and pernicious, and their religious defiance curious to the point of being maddening. The cultural disparities offer one amusing encounter. Tunius Rufus's spoiled daughter Domitilla sulkily nags her father to let her see a captured Jew (Mair) because "it would be a shame for me [to] return to Rome without having seen the different races of the barbarians." And Rufus is astonished to hear that the Jews are led and inspired by a woman: Akiba. "If he is a man why is he not called Akibus, like a man?"

That is one of the few comic touches in a book whose defiant and mournful tone is set in Akiba's chilling indictment of Roman slaughter, rape, and treachery that spans two chapters. His catalogue of "diabolical crimes...Satanic atrocity" is obviously in part a history lesson for readers of The Israelite, but it also ably serves as a breathtaking call to arms. The Israelites did not join in the Diaspora rebellions Akiba refers to. Scholars hold that Bar Kochba's messianic war enjoyed massive national support because the Jews thought that the biblical paradigm of sin, punishment, destruction, suffering, atonement and reconciliation was about to be fulfilled by victory over Rome (49).

Mair does not share this vision and his mounting despair is the

novel's most gripping motif. At first Mair's doubts about Jewish triumph are seen in the context of his love for Ruth. He cannot approach her father because of his dissident views and Bar Kochba does indeed reject him. But as the novel progresses Mair's woe transcends his individual fate. Criticized and suspected by all but the ascetic Jews who shelters him, Mair flirts with withdrawal from active life.

> 'I have but one hope, once to co-operate with my brethren in maintaining and preserving the sacred inheritance of Israel, and in carrying out its divine mission among the nations on Earth, as God promised our father Abraham, "And there shall be blessed through thee all the families of the earth"' (no. 24, p. 180).

No one believes that failure is possible even though "the Jews were unrealistic to dream of freeing themselves from the all-powerful Roman war-machine" (Maccoby, p. 53) and Mair's hope is for a long time a solitary vision.

Bar Kochba is convinced that "During the two centuries of our struggle against the Roman beast of prey, we never occupied a position more favorable than we do now"--but he is clearly wrong when Jerusalem is retaken and Mair, with "so many and so ardent friends among all classes of Jews," is gruesomely right. Unfortunately, until Rabbi Akiba gathers the nations' great scholars and rabbis to plan spiritual survival, Mair is just a voice crying in the wilderness, overwhelmed, grief-stricken by the darkness of his own visions, which have the flavor of Lamentations. Like prophets before him, Mair is unafraid of the powerful and can impress both Bar Kochba and Roman generals with his deep-felt eloquence.

Mair is clearly Wise's spokesman in the book. While this sage is

commonly referred to as "Meir" elsewhere, Wise spells the name with an "a" which makes it more closely resemble his own middle name, Mayer. Mair's vision of Israel's mission in the world is also Wise's. Mair's metaphor of kernel vs. husk was a standard one with advocates of Reform Judaism. It referred to the "oriental" manifestations of Judaism Reformers felt obscured Judaism's core of ideals. Other characters in the novel use the metaphor of kernel and husk before Mair transmutes it into a more exhalted image at the novel's end. Lamenting the inconceivable destruction and devastation, Mair vaunts Israel's unrivalled stand against Rome and bursts into an inspired vision of Israel's ultimate triumph: "The body fell," he exclaims again and again, but "the spirit is free!"

Mair's dissent through the book is heroic, and despite his mounting despair, his Latin learning, and his descent from Nero, he never even considers going over to the Roman side. Tunis Rufus's offer to take him to Rome as a scribe is reminiscent of all the seduction-conversion scenes in Wise's fiction, and Mair's response is typical:

> 'Never!' Mair roared; 'I cannot serve the enemy of my people. Here I stand before you chained, miserable, wretched, and I am but the meanest son of my nation--yet hear it, Roman Proconsul....Thou art the enemy of my people, the fiend of justice and equity: kill me, but I cannot serve thee' (vol. 3, no. 15, p. 114).

Heroism is by no means limited to the men in Struggle, rhetorical or martial. In battle, Abigail's sword "fell heavy and destructive upon the enemies, [and] struck panic into the hearts of the bravest, and they fled on perceiving her." Her gentle loving daughter, Ruth, who longs for the life of a peaceful shepherdess in the mountains, is no

less valiant than her mother in the siege of Bethar. Her bravery excites "the admiration of the warriors" and remarkable deeds are performed by women and men. But Struggle's women defend themselves more often against rape than any other danger or assault. In a welter of subplots, Akiba's daughter Hannah is pursued by the traitorous and ugly Elisha ben Abua who twice tries to rape her. Leah, a warrior's wife, holds off a roomful of drunken, lustful Roman soldiers with a sword, and Ruth kills the Samaritan traitor Sanbelat when he finally gets her in his clutches near the end of the novel.

Rape is also a national humiliation. Rabbi Akiba brings it up constantly in his denunciation of Roman barbarity. And indeed Tunis Rufus threatens Abigail with rape when she is his prisoner at one point:

> 'Thou shalt pay for the outrageous conduct of thy husband....I will as soon as the attack is over, expose thee to the lusts of the soldiers who shall abuse thee as long as a spark of life animates thy frame; then I will send thy naked body to the slave, whom thou callest thy husband' (vol. 3, no. 28, p. 213).

Rape is more than once the expression of Mair's worst fears for Ruth when they are separated: "Yesterday the favorite of heroes, a heroine herself, to day [sic] a slave without volition, subject probably to the brutal propensities of a voluptuous master." With this piling up of fears, attempted rapes on all the heroines (and even one young Jewish spy disguised as a woman!), and denunciation of past violations, rape becomes a terrible metaphor for the fate of Israel, which is consistently called "the daughter of Zion." Mair's prophecies are steeped in the language of violation and the situation

of violence and coercion Wise has created in other novels gains a new magnitude and power here.

Perhaps to balance the violence, love assumes more importance than in previous novels. There are several romantic couples and Mair and Ruth's love especially is surrounded by elements of the pastoral: warbling birds, shepherds and shepherdesses, little lambs. All the lovely women are described as having "fairy forms" and fairy is the consistent adjective to describe anything sweet, delightful, or feminine. Ruth herself is the apotheosis of grace: "With the swiftness of a youthful gazelle the fairy form moved noiselessly through the winding walks, her feet touching but slightly the leaves on the ground." In a brief introduction to the novel (see Appendix A) Wise noted it would not only present great characters from history and do them justice, but also "romantic occurrences and high-minded females." "The ladies" were therefore bidden to prepare themselves "for a grand fete...a characteristic novel."

The novel is indeed characteristic of Wise, with many familiar elements. They include misunderstanding parents; separated lovers; snarling villains; secret passages; drugging; hidden identities (a helpful shepherd is discovered to be Mair's grandfather, for instance); and disguised identities--men as women, women as men, Jews as Greeks. But all these elements are subordinated to the novel's emotional and thematic richness, and seem less contrived than elsewhere in Wise's fiction.

Abraham Steinberg mistakenly calls Struggle long and drawn-out. The novel's weakness is not its length but its language. Thee's and

thou's clutter the dialogue, occasionally producing tongue-twisters like "Thou better bridlest thy infamous tongue, and insultest not these men." Perhaps because they are great historical figures, many of the characters speak about themselves in the third person and address others that way. Here is one of Bar Kochba's rebukes to his wife:

> 'Abigail, the ambitious and heroic wife of Bar Cochba, is unhappy. He has realized all her wishes, has slain the enemy, avenged the blood of her ancestors on overbearing Rome, elevated her to the pinnacle of glory and honor, to the head of a free and great nation, yet she is unhappy' (vol. 3, no. 38, p. 298).

In a novel attempting to humanize great military and religious figures of an age without its Josephus, such language tends to distance these characters from the reader--as if they were memorializing themselves as they spoke.

The Combat of the People: Or Hillel and Herod. A Historical Romance of the time of Herod I. By the American Jewish Novelist: September 17, 1858 to April 22, 1859 (50).

Setting: Herod's court at Jerusalem, Jericho.

Themes: The Jewish people cannot long countenance Roman-backed injustice and tyranny. Duty and honor are important to all real Jews.

Characters:
- Hillel, the era's greatest sage, Pharisee noted for his lenient interpretations of Torah
- Simon, his son (alias Aurion, Essene physician)
- Herod, Rome's client-king of Israel
- Sabion, his Sadducee minister
- Helen, Sabion's daughter, in love with Simon
- Mariamne, Herod's Queen
- Salome, Herod's sister
- Alexandra, her mother
- Shamai, sage noted for strict Torah interpretations, Hillel's Sadducee "rival"

This novel's plot is perhaps Wise's most convoluted and difficult to decipher. It is linked first to international tensions and

scheming involving Rome and Egypt (which controls Jericho in the novel). Herod's court is a tangle of intrigues that involve assassination attempts, poisonings, abductions, attempted rape, false conversions, concealed identities. The national context is "hatred and bitterness" between pro-Herodian Sadducees, who thought they were "acting in the best interests of the Jewish people," and the Pharisees.

At a time when "Blood, assassination and violence cry from every corner" of Israel, plots are afoot to rise up against Herod's rule. Simon ben Hillel is part of the secret group, Sons of the Servants of Solomon, that meets in a hidden chamber under the Temple. He has vowed to kill the vicious Sabion (a leader of the Saduccees who have sworn allegiance to Herod), who is served by a "ruthless and reckless band of spies and assassins." But he is also in love with Sabion's daughter, who swears to die or prevent the murder of her father.

Despite the pressure to revolt, Hillel, "the man of a thousand virtues," first counsels restraint:

> 'Mourn over the dead, console the bereft parents, and return each to his house, God will judge and punish the guilty. Wait, my people, wait patiently until the day of divine vengeance comes, then the wicked will be punished, and the righteous will be triumphant' (p. 34).

Shamai, "the mighty antagonist of Hillel and his school," also counsels against violence, despite Herod's cruelty because Herod has maintained peace for Israel, which is beginning to prosper again. Worship goes on in the Temple, and sages are free to teach in Jericho, therefore Shamai urges "Let every political ambition slumber...and

let us wait patiently for the help of God."

But at a meeting of the Sanhedrin in Jericho (Herod has a puppet Sanhedrin backing him up in Jerusalem), Hillel changes his mind. He becomes outraged cataloguing Herod's crimes against the law, his murders, and his attempts to Hellenize Israel: "I see death, blood, destruction." Hillel's son Simon tries to avert bloodshed by gaining access to Herod's court, disguised as an Essene physician. Herod is impressed with "the exquisite beauty of the young man, his open, manly and intelligent countenance, his firm and penetrating look, and his proud and firm bearing." Simon (alias Aurion) begins a one-man campaign to urge Herod to ease the Israelites' suffering--his weapon will be unrelenting truth. His father does not approve of the deception, however noble its purpose:

> 'Disguise and cunning are the crutches of baseness on which the vile man, for a while, passes through the world, until they break, and he lies prostrated in the dust. But virtue makes no use of those crutches, nor can the man with sound limbs advantageously handle the support of the lame....Cast away the disguise and the mask' (p. 77).

Hillel predicts that Simon's attempt to save Israel by "saving" Herod will fail, but Simon cannot turn back from his mission.

Herod is attracted to Simon's honesty, but resists attributing any noble qualities to the people he rules: "This treacherous and malignant race must be ruled with an iron hand. Blood and terror only can bend their proud necks and make them submit to law and order." Herod is moved enough by Simon-Aurion to send the youth to distribute alms after a devastating earthquake, but no one can believe Herod could be that kind, and anti-Herodian feeling paradoxically spreads with the charity.

The rebels demand that Herod exile his sycophants and spies, establish a new and truly independent Sanhedrin with Hillel at its head, and permit freedom of speech, writing and expression. Herod is tricked into believing the ex-king Hyrcan, deaf and doddering, is a threat to his reign, and has the Sanhedrin try Hyrcan on perjured testimony and order his execution. This act sparks the revolt that forces Herod from Jerusalem on Passover.

The novel bears some general resemblance to Struggle, particularly in its central contrast of Romans (and Romanized Jews) with Jews. As a client-king of Rome's, Herod was hamstrung by having to keep "his kingdom in good order and loyal to Rome," as well as "ready to repulse any attacks from Rome's enemies on the borders of the Empire" (Maccoby, p. 31). Though he rebuilt the Temple, making it one of the wonders of the world, and championed Judaism's antiquity and purity, he was not Herod the Great but Herod the Wicked to the Jews. They hated him for murdering so many prominent sages and members of the Hamsonean dynasty; for his ubiquitous spies; his Hellenizing; his economic favoritism of pagan over Jewish towns in Israel. Herod's misrule is the main cause of Jewish rebellion in a country overwhelmed by duplicity and wickedness. In a brief respite from the corrupt and confusing court, Simon is struck by his country's tragic situation, while musing over a picturesque view. He cries:

> 'God! must this beautiful land be the prey of ravens that feed on our living bodies? So beautiful a land, and so misruled by a despotic hand; so fine a country, and so exposed to a system of espionage, such as God has not destined it to bear. Land of my fathers, graves of our

prophets, I feel your woe, I weep your tears' (p. 116).

While the novel's title links Herod with Hillel ("What a contrast!" Simon exclaims at one point), Simon's fiery honesty and integrity are the real counterweight to the King's villainy. In his role as an Essene physician, Simon consistently, in Hamlet's phrase, "speaks daggers" to the king who welcomes the change from general sycophancy, but is finally too cruel, too "Roman" to be swayed by Simon's rhetoric. For his part, Simon cannot be swayed by Herod's power. Late in the novel the King offers to make him Jerusalem's governor, after which "the way to the highest dignity of the state is open and leveled." Like Wise's other heroes offered power or freedom in exchange for their integrity, Simon refuses:

> 'I am well satisfied with what I am....I would not for any price in the world be an officer in a state built upon the murdered bodies of innocent men, cemented with the blood of its best citizens, cursed by the thousand widows and orphans, hated by its patriots, and feared, dreaded by its own King" (p. 119).

Hillel may be presented as the soul of patience and piety, but his role in the novel is circumscribed compared to his son's rebellion and accepting the Sanhedrin's leadership at the end.

Wise makes interesting use of a famous Talmudic anecdote comparing the moderate Hillel with the more rigid Shammai, both of whom led "schools" of followers. Clashes between the two schools were "often extremely heated and sometimes even violent," but both "fell within the traditionally accepted framework of Judaism" (51). A Gentile is said to have approached both sages asking to be taught all of Torah while he stood on one leg. Shammai angrily sent the man off, but Hillel's response was "Do not unto others that which you would not

have them do unto you. That is the entire Torah; the rest is commentary. Now go and study." In Combat the same story takes place with an unexpected twist. The rude and obnoxious Gentile seeking knoweldge of Judaism is actually an assassin hired by Sabion to kill Hillel, and this Greek is overwhelmed by the kind sage, calling Hillel a "noble, generous demi-God." Hillel's humility, wisdom and hard work, thus win a convert to Judaism. Hillel is elsewhere reported in the Talmud to have settled a question of ceremonial law elders could not decide by leaving the decision to the people--and in Combat Hillel is equally as trusting of the Jews. This trust makes a vivid contrast with Herod who rules by terror and has no faith whatsoever in his subjects.

Herod's villainy would not operate as smoothly without the cynical Sabion, a rich Sadducee with a phalanx of spies "who lurk in dark places and listen after every secret word, to provide the scaffold with new victims, the prisons with afflicted hearts, to bring misery to peacable families." He dismisses his daughter Helen's concern over the regime's death toll as over-sensitivity and plots at various points against Simon, Salome, his own daughter, the ex-king and even Herod. Completely amoral, he is at home in Herod's court because the King "has an excuse for every crime if the perpetrator is a useful instrument." The corruption and cruelty of this phil-Roman court is almost dizzying and can best be typified by Salome. At one point, she plots to have Helen raped so that Simon will reject the dishonored girl. Early in the novel, she has a young man, Buruch ben Menahem, put to death because he would not yield to her seductions.

Buruch is Mariamne's supporter, so the death satisfies Salome's wounded pride and her lust for power over the Queen.

In contrast to the layers of scheming and hypocrisy is the value of one's oath and the importance of duty--for Jews. The novel's noble characters frequently discuss their duty and their vows. Simon and Helen are separated by conflicting duties--his to kill Sabion because he has sworn to, hers as a daughter to protect her father no matter what kind of man he is. When Helen offers to flee with Simon from Israel and this murky situation, he cannot be tempted:

> 'I dare not leave my country....Whoever deserts his people in days of affliction, shall not behold Israel's salvation. I cannot, I dare not leave this unhappy land, even to save my life, not even for the prize of the unutterable happiness smiling in your embrace' (p. 8).

When Queen Mariamne's mother Alexandra tries to convince the long-suffering wife to escape Herod's grasp, Mariamne puts honor first: "If I must die, I shall die worthy of the last daughter of the Asmoneans [sic], consoled and sustained by a stainless conscience." Such a death would be infinitely preferable to "living covered with shame."

The novel thus pivots on a running comparison between honor and pragmatism, truth and treachery, cruelty and kindness--between Roman versus Jewish values--again reinforcing one of the major themes of Struggle. Combat assumes the nature of an extended and sometimes desultory debate, broken by colorful and somber religious processions, an earthquake, swordplay, threats and plots, and a great deal of theatrical behavior by especially Herod. When angered or surprised, he foams at the mouth, raves, rolls his eyes, pulls his beard, beats

his chest, roars, storms about, gnashes his teeth, clenches his fists and becomes lost to communication. This extravagance permeates Wise's last novel set in Ancient Israel discussed below.

The First of the Maccabees. By the Author of "The Last Struggle of the Nation," "The Combat of the People," "The Shoemaker's Family," etc., etc., etc.,: November 11, 1859 to April 6, 1860, April 20, 1860 to August 10, 1860.

Setting: Israel under Greek-Syrian (Seleucid) control, circa 168 Before the Common Era, and Damascus, Syria.

Themes: Victory for the oppressed Jews will be a triumph for all who love justice. Judaism is a religion of humanity.

Characters:
Matathia, priest
Miriam, his wife
Jonathan ("The Eagle"), their son
Judah ("The Lion"), their son
Menelaus, phil-Hellene high priest
Iphigene, his daughter
Jose ben Joezer, priest, head of the Sanhedrin
Amram, Jew of rich Hellenic family
Rebecca, Matathia's daughter, Amram's beloved
Aleymos, Menelaus's "favorite"
Ptolemy, Syrian governor

If Struggle pictures one of Israel's darkest periods, this novel highlights one of the grandest. The Maccabean-led Jews revolted against Greek-Syrian rule because of Temple desecrations ("the abomination of desolation") and the Syrian King's rescinding of the laws of Moses. Rites like circumcision were banned and made capitol offenses; Jews had to worship Greek gods, which included sacrificing and eating pigs--the detestable symbol of paganism for the Jews. Their successful revolt created the Hasmonean dynasty that ruled Israel for almost two hundred years.

The novel opens in "an age of misery" with a call to arms when news of Syrian carnage, desecration and massacres in Jerusalem reaches Matathia's mountain home in Modain

> where devout patriotism, a zealous love of liberty and independence, and an indestructible attachment to the national laws, religion and rights of Israel, inspired every heart to bravery, steeled the manly arms to heroism, and excited every breast to acts of valor and vengeance, in behalf of liberty and independence (p. 3).

Matathia and his sons are inspired by the tale of Hannah and her seven sons who all accept martyrdom rather than pay homage to Pagan gods. Amid the marshaling of warriors, rich Amram, whose Hellenist father was a friend of King Antiochus, cannot fight. He swore a deathbed oath to his father not to take up arms against the Syrian King's troops. Matathia's daughter Rebecca rejects his love because of his lack of heroism: "An Asmonean woman marries a hero only."

From the first destruction of a pagan altar, the cry is "Let Israel be free once more." Matathia is unrelenting in his demands to drive out the Syrians and apostates, and destroy all pagan "temples, altars, statues, and idols."

In Jerusalem, which has become a "polluted, abandoned city," Jonathan falls afoul of Aspasia, a "lubric" and "contemptible" woman smitten by his physical beauty who reveals that his beloved Iphigene is in a temple of Venus. Loyal to her father Menelaus, the high priest, Iphigene protests that she is not a worshiper of Venus, but simply an admirer of the Greeks' personification of beauty. Venus is just a lovely idea to her, but Jonathan disabuses her of her notions that serving as even a figurehead high priestess does not conflict with her duties as a Jew.

Enthusiasm mounts daily for the Maccabean cause and every battle is not just preceded by councils of war but stirring prophecies and

psalms sung en masse: "Almost every man was gifted with the spirit of prophecy, or at least with the genius of poetry, to sing or chant new psalms." Disguised as a fool, meanwhile, Amram installs himself at the high priest's court where he can spy on Menelaus and the treacherous Aleymos who becomes a double and even triple agent in this book. Amram also confronts Aspasia, warning her that he knows where her abducted child is and that it will be killed if she harms Iphigene or Jonathan.

In response to growing rebel successes, the Syrians decree even harsher penalties against the Jews: simply speaking of Israel's religion, laws or customs will be punishable by death. But thousands more flock to the Maccabees:

> Everywhere prophets rose and predicted the end of oppression. Signs were seen in heaven and expounded as the revealing finger of God, that victory and triumph was certain. Peasants and shepherds either prophesized or took up arms, any kind they could find, and singing psalms or shouting songs of victory they followed the victorious banner of the great [Judah] Maccabee (pp. 71-72).

After a truce parley in which Jonathan tells the Syrians that the revolt cannot be suppressed because the Jews and their ideals are inseparable, Syrian goals change. Victory will no longer be enough; now they want annihilation of the Jews. All cities are to be razed, all resisting Jews killed or enslaved: "The orders are to extinguish entirely the nation, language, religion, laws, customs, habits...every trace or mark of Israel" (p. 89).

Jose ben Joezer, saved from execution by Jonathan in a daring raid, is given the chance of addressing his cause to Ptolemy in Damascus. The sage presents the case for justice and freedom for the

Jews, while the phil-Hellene Aleymos mocks Judaism for its "old superstitions," "stringent laws," and "morbid conception of justice which equalizes all men, the king and the beggar, gives power to none and anarchy to all." Ben Joezer argues that Judaism is not exclusive or rigid, that it is open to all inclined to do good and that the practice of its laws is humane and generous.

The Maccabean campaign spreads across the Jordan and then nears Jerusalem, unstoppable because the Greeks use strategy but the Jews are divinely inspired when they fight. After Jerusalem is retaken, the novel ends with the Temple's rededication, whose sacred implements have been guarded by a group called the Sons of the Servants of Solomon. Iphigene and Jonathan are married.

Though Maccabees has more battle scenes than Combat and hinges on each successive military victory, it is in many respects almost a twin of that novel (and both of course are spin-offs of Struggle). Like Combat, this novel champions duty and makes Israel's struggle a universal fight for liberty. There are martial heroes and religious ones, foaming and scheming villains like Aleymos and Aspasia, and a Jew acting as voice of conscience for a misguided ruler, Amram. The occupying power is presented as cruel and debauched and the Jews represent freedom and humanity. The chief difference is the character of Menelaus, who is villainous but more and more in conflict over the path of accommodation he has chosen. Women also play a lesser role in this novel. Rebecca fights in only one battle when Judah orders her to be "a virtuous woman and no warrior" and Iphigene is little more

than a pawn in other people's stratagems.

Early in the novel, the sage Jose ben Joezer, unafraid of death, urges Jonathan not to forget that it "is better to die content [having done one's duty] than live to be tortured by a guilty conscience." He has done his duty by resisting the imposition of paganism, therefore "Let each do his duty and Israel will live again." Jonathan goes on to urge Iphigene to turn against her father, Menelaus, because he has betrayed Israel: "No man must sacrifice his manhood on the altar of vile expediency: he must do right in the sight of God and Israel, careless of all consequences" (p. 23). Iphigene is ultimately swayed to reject the highpriest and her co-optation by the Greeks: "To have done our duty signifies to have lived." Ironically, the Greek general Appolonious also praises duty: "To reduce [the Hebrews] to obedience by any means is our great duty....Terror must reign...and dismay restrain them."

Jewish duty transcends upholding the independence and purity of Israel's religion and laws. The fight against the Greeks is in a very real way a global conflict and not just "for God and Israel." Sages and warriors alike proclaim that the Jews are standard bearers of truth and justice. Seeking an end to the conflict, Jose ben Joezer tells Ptolemy:

> 'We guard the heavenly fire for all mankind, which Antiochus Epiphanes [the Syrian King] wishes to extinguish forever. God, truth, justice and liberty are the sacred heritage, over which to watch God appointed us--Not for us alone but for all mankind...Upon our mountains the redeemers stand and with the unfailing power of the thunder they call the nations from darkness to light, from error to truth, from despotism to justice and liberty' (p. 142).

The future of mankind is at stake, Judah Maccabee asserts: "Shall

Greece or Palestine impress her spirit on humanity?"

"Expediency" is at the center of charges leveled against Greek culture. Though the Greeks may be refined and possessed of a great literature, their God is expediency, "and selfishness is the only motive of their actions....Morals, honesty, uprightness and truth are words used only to deceive." These debauched pagans are also foolishly superstitious, but the good and bad in their culture is hopelessly entangled. In a rare moment of honesty, Aspasia explains the pernicious impact of Greek culture on Jews like herself:

> '...with the theaters, gymnasiums and games, we learned also the corruption, the impurity, and immorality of Grecian society...our stringent and strict morals were a matter of ridicule to the witty and enlightened...our chastity was the object of scorn...corruption is universal' (pp. 25-26).

Not only are Jewish values mocked, but Jewish resistance to a superior culture and superior military might brands them as lunatics (Abraham Steinberg notes this view was characteristic of the 19th century's Christian biblical novels). Menelaus shares this conception of Jewish resistance, but he is not as cruel as Herod; the rebellion deeply troubles him: "my heart bleeds when I think of the bloodshed and horror that are sure to come over my people." And Menelaus even tries to convince the rebels that their cause is hopeless. He sees Israel's survival as a question of waiting out the storm and his stance thus somewhat resembles Hillel's before he is galvanized into resistance in Combat. Menelaus's love for his daughter Iphigene humanizes the highpriest, especially when he thinks she will fall victim to one of Aspasia's plots, but his despair never approaches the level of Mair's

because Menelaus enjoys his power.

Perhaps because this novel features Wise's most heroic figures, the dialogue is frequently more elevated and formal than in the other two novels set in Israel. At Matathia's deathbed, for example, his wife Miriam cries "Die not, hero Matathia!" and she calls him Father Matathia before that. The following exchange between Amram and Rebecca is typical of the novel at its stateliest:

> `Be of good courage, my beloved,' he responded, 'I am no Helenist.'
>
> 'Thank heaven he is no Helenist,' the damsel exclaimed enthusiastically' (p. 14).

The martial events also animate the way in which characters speak--they "vociferate," "roar," "exclaim," "implore," "admonish," "cry" and "ejaculate."

The Jews in these novels are far more endangered than those in Wise's 19th and other pre-19th century fiction. They face ruthless enemies who are so powerful they seem to represent vast, faceless and inimical principles of history. And their attempts to wipe Israel's name "from the nomenclature of the nations" are chilling and very modern-sounding. Submission is not enough for Rome and Syria--though even that is too much for most of the Jews. The spine of Jewish resistance, its laws, must be broken.

Wise is not of course making an argument for the conservative "sanctification" of tradition. It is the spirit of Judaism, its ideals that he praises, and in these historical novels he has another opportunity to link Judaism with America. We have seen in Chapter

Three how Passover, stripped of the miraculous, becomes a very American holiday, celebrating "the first declaration of independence." In Struggle, Combat and Maccabees, Wise makes arguments he would always make in The Israelite, associating "the struggle for Jewish rights with the struggle for human rights, and both with the principles and postulates of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution" (Knox, p. 89). In this connection Wise is following his model, the German legislator Gabriel Riesser, who consistently linked freedom for German Jews with freedom for all Germans (53). At the end of Struggle, Wise convincingly grafts onto Rabbi Akiba's vision of Israel's survival the 19th century Reform Judaism vision of Israel-in-the-world. The novel's emotional power makes this propagandistic leap inspiring and not specious.

Wise considered "the American Jewish Novelist" to be an expert historian, and the novels are certainly loaded with historical facts and events, sometimes to the exclusion of clarity. Though set in Ancient Israel, Wise creates those settings once again in only the most generalized ways. There are rooms decorated in "oriental splendor," that are described at their most specifically as follows:

> a low sofa [rested] on a silk carpet heavily interwoven with gold and silver, under a canopy held by the festoons, of a golden eagle, and decorated with gold embroidered flowers, fringes and heavy tassels, all of which were reflected tenfold by the metallic mirror which covered the walls, richly ornamented with glittering mosaics (Macabees, p. 101).

Perhaps appealing to "lady readers," costumes receive a bit more attention than in other novels, described in the manner quoted above. Wise notes in Reminiscences that he was careful to put some of the

historical characters' own words into the novels, but occasional anchronisms creep into the fiction: a Roman sitting on his "easy chair" or a Jew not wishing to "throw pearls before swine."

The characters appearing in Wise's first novel reappeared in these novels with not a great deal of variation, except that their context gives their actions greater resonance. The villains, for instance, plot at more than a riot or a rape: the destruction of cities and the rape of a nation. The heroes resist not just conversion but the destruction of their people. And those heroes face danger at times from being misunderstood by the Jews themselves; Amram and Mair are both almost killed because Jews suspect them of treachery. The women in these novels have a chance to prove themselves possessed of more heroic virtues than patience or a gift for bold rhetoric. Abigail and Ruth join the battle with their men against the Romans; Hannah and Leah are unafraid of taking up swords to defend themselves. But such boldness puts these women under more risk, and the possibility of rape inherent in all the abductions and threats of other novels is here a brutal reality, though none takes place onstage.

Moses Baum's decision to convert to Christianity and thus accommodate himself to his society hurt his family and endangered his life at one point, but accommodation to the enemy in these three novels is plain treachery, or has the effect of it. Menelaus may hope that some sort of reasonable relationship can be worked out between Jews and their rulers, but that is not possible, given the

Jews' resistance and its maddening effect on the Greeks and the Romans. During the appearance of Struggle in The Israelite, Wise was also joining the protest against the treaty between Switzerland and the United States that guaranteed Swiss anti-semitism. His call to American Jews to protest in mass meetings has all the fire of that novel, as if the threat were the same.

Wise made his greatest claims for these three novels as a group, and he was right about one of them, Struggle, as we shall see in the next chapter.

CONCLUSION

I-THE NOVELS AS LITERATURE

Wise's novels fit into the Antebellum category of the "advocacy novel," one that made the case for social or religious reform. Critics objected to such novels as hybrids whose "argumentation cut across and spoiled the story" (Baym, p. 215), however popular they were. One typical critic complained in Literary World (1847) that

> preaching rather than practice seems to be the mania of the day...[but] the vocations of the novelist and the polemic are so at variance, that it is not to be expected that they can ever be united in one person, and we do wish those excellent people who think they can make the world better by the inculcation of doctrine, would offer it pure, leaving the personal application to the sagacity of the reader; while the few who are gifted with the power of interesting the imagination and the heart by the delineation of character, may safely be trusted to draw pictures of real life, from which the most obtuse reader can divine abundant lessons of virtue and religion, if he chooses (Baym, pp. 217-218).

Wise's novels did advocate Reform Judaism, sometimes as specifically as praising a certain composer's liturgical music (and introducing music itself into the service was of course a reform). Wise's heroes are the explicators of Reform in its battle against backwardness. Simeon in The Shoemaker's Family cries out for synagogue worship that is not just modernized, but meaningful and understandable for the congregation. Rabbi Gruenhut challenges Moses Kann's traditional interpretation of Passover in Romance, Philosophy and Cabalah. But the chief target of Wise`s heroes' rhetoric is Christian oppression,

and Rabbi Gruenhut as well as others majestically rebuke Christian laymen and priests for their inveterate Jew-hatred. At the center of such confrontations between Jewish hero and Christian villain is the question of guilt. Christian claims that the Jews' degraded state in history is God's punishment for the crucifixion of Jesus are cut to pieces. Rabbi Gruenhut and others maintain that the real guilt belongs to the Christians for their relentless persecution of the Jews. Even simple Gheetle in The Rabbi of Bacherach becomes heroic when she denounces Hans Sturmbach as a Jew-killer.

Wise's advocacy was often more general and by implication. The more unpleasant Jewish characters (who appear peripherally or in subplots in his fiction) are pictured as wedded to the past, superstitious, mystical, knee-deep in congregational chicanery, or simply foolish or gossipy. Those traits are never associated with reform-minded characters by Wise. The unpleasant Jewish characters seem to justify in a broad way a rational approach to Judaism. Wise's mode in presenting these characters is satire, but none of the novels is essentially satirical in tone. Throughout the novels there are a number of minor characters who seem to exist only to cause trouble by gossiping, and to be thrashed by more commendable characters. The fools are almost like the wasps and hollow-eyed poodles of Wise's epic dream quoted in Chapter One: a terrible nuisance, but ultimately powerless. Wise's biggest fools are the religious ones like Laibish Baal Shem in The Castatrophe at Eger whose religious beliefs are presented as a jumble of babbling visions and ludicrous acts. While the more sophisticated Jews in that novel laugh at Laibish, simpler

Jews come to him for healing and advice. Wise's worst fool is Rabbi Cohen in Romance, Philosophy and Cabalah who attempts to put out the ghetto's fire by tossing bits of paper with magical spells on them into the flames.

What comes across most strongly to a modern reader is Wise's deep and abiding anger at Gentile, and mostly Roman Catholic, oppressions. Perhaps here he was most in tune with his audience. For first generation German Jews, the memory of European anti-semitism would have been made more vivid by the contrast with their present American freedom. The anger coursing through these novels that bursts out in tirades like Hannah's in The Wizard of the Forest may account for the "astonishing popularity" his novels are vaguely credited with by Israel Knox and James Heller. Baym suggests that "a partisan, quarrelsome spirit" might indeed have been the strongest attraction of religious advocacy novels (p. 219).

How can one summarize the characteristics of this fiction as literature? Wise's characters are generally one-dimensional representations of traits or ideas; the plots are sometimes wildly complicated with unbelievable twists, and often involving hidden identities; the writing is generally undistinguished in terms of style. There are simple sentences, an overall lack of metaphor and simile, frequent unidiomatic expressions and a limited vocabulary; setting is created in terms as general as those used to create the characters.

Wise's greatest limitation is in writing believable or at least interesting characters. His heroes, heroines, villains and fools are

all very much variations of a type, with standard repertoires of action and dialogue. His heroines pledge their undying love, like Molly in Resignation and Fidelity, swear allegiance to their faith as Phoebe does in The Jewish Heroine, boldly resist their oppressors like Ghettle in The Rabbi of Bacherach--but resemble one another so closely they are all but interchangeable. Even when Abigail and Ruth in The Last Struggle of the Nation fight the Romans, they do not break out of the conventional mold. Battle does not distinguish them and Ruth is even more delicate and womanly than her fictional clones--a "fairy form."

Their opposites, like Salome in The Combat of the People, have three defining characteristics: hunger for power, lustfulness, and a bad temper which is triggered when either of the first two desires is thwarted. If the heroines cut through dissimulation with their sharp rhetoric, the female villains radiate a kind of sensual dishonesty--they are "lubric" and "serpants" and "scorpions." But while Wise's heroines are defined by the men they are in love with and are of secondary importance, the female villains may rely on men to instrumentalize their schemes but are more fully created (see Part II).

Wise's villains seek absolute power over Jews, are maddened when they cannot obtain it, reduced to foaming and raging. All the plotting of men like The Convert's Prior or the Hellenist Sabion in The Combat of the People seem as theatrical as the heroism of their counterparts, the Judah Gruenhuts and Jonathans. One of Wise's most interesting heroes is his least typical, Simeon in The Shoemaker's

Family, who expresses real pain and real feeling. Pressing for a synagogue he can believe in, he also reveals the torment of being physically unattractive, moody, and ridiculed for being a redhead. The emotional quality of his dialogue in that novel is surprising, as if a different writer had taken over. In only one of Wise's novels is that kind of depth of feeling sustained, The Last Struggle of the Nation, discussed below.

Considering that Wise had only spoken English for six or seven years, his novels are surprisingly clear and readable on the most basic level. The syntax is rarely complex and there is never a straining after refined, polysyllabic "Victorian" diction. Unidiomatic expressions occur throughout, as one might expect, but there is no way of knowing the typesetter's role in these gaffes (commas and semicolons are often used interchangeably, for instance). Characters generally look "on" one another's faces rather than "at" them or "thrust" looks "on" one another, or look "in" countenances that can sometimes be "muscular." Characters driven almost to madness "lose the use of" their "brains" or are "sick in the brains." "Cowardly" always appears as "cowardish" and "bloodthirstiness" as "bloodthirst," "lubricious" as "lubric." Adjectives like "manly" and "friendly" are sometimes used as adverbs: "they were received very friendly." Nouns occasionally have articles as they would be more likely to in German; "such an insolence" (eine Schweinerie, perhaps?). The high seriousness of the novels occasionally backfires because of awkward usage:

> 'I cannot go from here,' Aaron cried, 'my heart is fettered to this soil.'

> 'And thy blood will surely crimson it ere long,' Matathia said, indignantly. 'I bid thee go. If thou refusest and the embittered men kill thee, thy blood falls on thy own head.' (The First of the Maccabees, p. 10).

That last threat is certainly an unusual one, as is Aaron's imagery.

A striking characteristic of Wise's prose is the lack of variety in his vocabulary, due no doubt to his being a non-native speaker. Adjectives are often repeated in the same paragraph, possibly with the intent of emphasis, but the effect is flatness instead. In The Combat of the People, for instance, "Toward morning the Queen's disease became alarming" is followed two sentences later by "The physicians said the disease of the Queen was alarming...." Many such examples can be found throughout the fiction.

By and large, Wise's prose is not at all "unreadable," simply bland, serviceable. There are few images beyond the most obvious ones of villains being called ravens, snakes, hyenas, scorpions, and heroes compared to lions or eagles. The most vivid turn of phrase is Simon's comment to Salome that jealousy is a snake eating "its own excrement."

But simplicity does have its power, however, as in the opening description of a snow-covered town in The Shoemaker's Family where the unadorned prose seems appropriate to the images it is creating:

> The ground cracked under the footsteps of the few human beings who ventured to walk around the village. The snow, lately fallen, was driven about by a strong wind, filling up each footstep as soon as the traveler had passed (vol. I, no. 26, p. 201).

If Wise's style is quite simple, his plots sometimes verge on incoherence, and frequently pivot on unbelievable acts. Romance, Philosophy and Cabalah is a prime example. There are points in the

novel where even an attentive reader will wonder what exactly is going on or why a character is actually someone else. The Cordozas for instance, turn out to be the De Solis family, although it is unclear what purpose the change serves. It leaves Wise calling Mrs. Cordoza "Pseudo Mrs. Cordoza" afterwards.

Judah's decision in that novel to kill the Spanish Ambassador--confusingly also called Count, Minister and Alvarez--may be motivated (stretching one's imagination considerably) by outrage at the Jewish condition, and by his love for Dinah. But his return to prison after his second attempt at assassination, his refusal to kill the Ambassador because he is unarmed, and his refusal to escape when he can, completely lack credibility. His return seems forced by the churning plot which is about to spit him out in the direction of Spain. Also highly improbable are the relationships between Simon and Herod in Combat of the People and Amram and Menelaus in The First of the Maccabees. Perhaps Wise meant to show Herod's human side, but the King's patience for Simon's moral hectoring, which begins to seem self-righteous, is greater than one would reasonably expect from a murderous tyrant. The same is true for Amram spinning cynical jingles at Menelaus, but his situation is even more unlikely. We are asked to believe that he can fool Sabion and Salome who have seen him as Amram, by contorting his face to look "idiotic" and walking that way as well.

Despite all these glaring weaknesses, Wise did produce one novel that does not deserve obscurity, The Last Struggle of the Nation. It has its share of shallow characterizations, solecisms, unbelievable coincidences, but transcends them for two reasons. First, there is

the historical situation, the most enthralling Wise chose. The Jews' surprising victories against an overwhelming opponent and the subsequent collapse and extirpation of the last independent Jewish state are completely compelling and made more so by Mair. Like his people in the long run, he is powerless to change events and naturally enough driven to a believable and moving despair. The emotions in this novel are generally not melodramatic but congruent with the situations that give rise to them. It is a deeply felt book, with scenes that linger in one's imagination not for their extravagance, but their simplicity. One such scene is Akiba's last visit to the ruins of the Temple, where he has pretended to be from "Hispania" because Jews are forbidden the site. His grief at the destruction of Israel erupts: "Go, my God, let me live no longer since my eyes have seen thy glorious name blasphemed in thine own house!" Discovered by Roman soldiers, he recovers himself and faces them calmly: "Why do you hesitate...are you afraid of an old and defenseless man? Romans, do your duty."

Because we are sympathetically involved with Akiba and Mair, their burning vision of an Israel rising from defeat and disaster to instruct and liberate the world does not feel like repellent propaganda. This vision is Wise's own, and is persuasive due to Struggle's general excellence in comparison to Wise's other fiction. As Robert Glenn Wright has pointed out in discussing 19th century Social Christian Fiction, "the better a given novel [of this type] was in a literary sense, the better it was as propaganda for the author's thesis" (53). Considering how much and how positively Wise wrote

about The Last Struggle of the Nation (see Appendix A), an additional source of the curious ambivalence about his fiction seems clear. Israel Knox maintains that Wise inexcusably ignored the inadequacy of his fiction (Knox, p. 99). But it seems more likely that Wise did realize that Struggle was a richer, more meaningful and more successful work than his other novels when he looked back on his fiction writing career. How then could he have been anything but ambivalent when the quality of his novels was so uneven?

There is no way of determining how much impact any of Wise's theses had through the medium of fiction and sales figures of his two published novels are unfortunately unavailable. But the impact on Wise's critics and biographers has been clearer, as demonstrated in Chapter One. Their generally negative and dismissive judgments, mediated by Wise's own ambiguous praise and disparagement, are certainly substantiated to some extent if we look at the novels as literature. But their lack of literary excellence or even competence (with the exception of Struggle) does not mean that their content should be ignored. And part of that content, the attack on Gentiles, is strangely familiar. In pondering why Portnoy's Complaint was such a controversial book, Philip Roth concluded

> '...going wild in public is the last thing in the world that a Jew is expected to do--by himself, by his family, by his fellow Jews, and by the larger community of Christians whose tolerance for him is often tenuous to begin with...'(54).

In a sense Wise was going wild against Christians and Christianity, free to be as "angry as he liked" at a very tenuous historical moment for American Jews: the great Protestant Revival of the 1840s and 1850s with its attendant missionary societies and

conversionist literature. Jewish spokesmen for the interests and rights of American Jews were sometimes defensive in "their desire to legitimize Jewish belonging in the Gentile world" (Cohen, p. 118). A widespread Jewish anger, for example, in response to the many Thanksgiving Day proclamations by governors and mayors asserting the United States was Christian showed "how increasingly defensive the Jews had grown in response to the protestant Crusade and to the growing popularity of the concept of a Christian nation" (Cohen, p. 74). Sunday laws that restricted Jewish economic activity and state restraints on Jewish office holding were also targets of Jewish criticism. Perhaps it is really the anger in his novels that made Wise and later writers dismiss or ignore his fiction. More successful and more established Jews--including Wise--might have been embarrassed by his earlier tirades and contempt.

II-WISE'S GOTHIC IMAGINATION

Wise's novels may be viewed as advocacy novels in a general sense, but there is a specific genre they resemble more closely, and surprisingly--the Gothic Novel. Not only does his fiction teem with typical Gothic paraphernalia, its very core is Gothic. At the center of the Gothic mode is the image of man as victim (55) and "endless persecution" (56) is a hallmark of the genre. Almost every one of Wise's novels creates, dramatizes, and embellishes the situation of persecution, whether of individual Jews, communities or the Jewish nation itself. Richard Chase has shown how Charles Brockden Brown "naturalized the Gothic" by staging it "in the American countryside"

(57). Wise makes no such transposition, perhaps because America was too foreign and the Europe he had left too conveniently frightening.

Devotees of the Gothic may object to the above classification. After all, where is the sine qua non of the Gothic novel, the Gothic castle:

> ...that formidable ruin...phantasmagorically shifting its outline as ever new vaults extend their labyrinths, scene of solitary wanderings, cut off from light and human contact, of unfamiliar menace and the terror of the living dead (58).

That "passive agent of terror" (Varma, p.19) does appear in Wise's fiction but almost always in an attenuated form, chiefly because setting is so generalized in his fiction as to often be nonexistent. Still, castles do appear in curious places--Simeon Brauer lives in a "Gothic" one in The Shoemaker's Family, and Sabion has one in The Combat of the People. When Helen is sequestered in her father's "country estate," his home is more than once called the "castle in the forest." Begging to be released, she could be any Gothic heroine. In the following passage there is no sense whatsoever that she is a Jew in Israel of the first century Before Common Era.

> 'Why should I be...buried alive in this lonely forest, where the hours grow into years and the days appear to last an eternity? Why must I be separated from all who are dear to my heart, and pine away in this dark grove...where I see but strange and suspicious countenances, and every one regards me with a watchful eye?' (pp. 96-7).

She could just as easily be Anne Radcliffe's distressed Emily St. Aubert as Sabion's daughter.

Where one would expect Wise to use words like fortress, castle substitutes, a glaring anachronism at first glance, but a clue to the Gothic influence on his work. Wise's first novel, The Convert, is

transparently Gothic, but not until its fourth and penultimate chapter. There we meet the Prior, Moses Baum's patron and persecutor at the gigantic Strahof Convent:

> On leaving the reception room, a narrow and somewhat dark passage, guarded by a whole company of petrified saints...led to a...large gothic hall with narrow and high bow-windows....Costly paintings by the hands of the first masters graced the ancient walls. The thick silk tapestry curtains were penetrated by just sufficient light to give to the hall a subdued mellow, yet gloomy appearance (vol. 1, no. 4, p. 25).

This same hall, it will be remembered from Chapter Two, has a secret panel that admits three of the Prior's myrmidons. The key word in the passage is "gloomy." Gloom is "the characteristic atmosphere of the Gothic novel which contains elements directly associated with Gothic architecture: castles, convents, subterranean vaults, grated dungeons and ruined piles" (Varma, p. 17).

There are "castles," secret chambers, and passages in the three major novels set in Israel, and also in The Catastrophe at Eger, The Convent, The Shoemaker's Family, The Rabbi of Bacherach, Romance, Philosophy and Cabalah and The Wizard of the Forest. Admittedly, Wise does not often use them to great effect, or even to especially Gothic effect. The secret chambers under the Temple in Jerusalem where rebel groups meet are the scenes of oaths, sword waving, complex numerological passwords, and debates over the future course of action against Herod, or the Greeks. They are splashes of Gothic color.

But Wise does employ his castles and dungeons for a typically Gothic purpose--the imprisonment of noble heroes and pure heroines.

Phoebe's situation in The Jewish Heroine recurs in a number of the novels and is typical. Flight, imprisonment and persecution of the heroine, a carryover from the sentimental novel as Leslie Fiedler points out (59), is another key component of Gothic novels. Sulamith in The Shoemaker's Family is abducted to a "castle" and escapes into some vague Polish "forest," only to be captured and then tormented by Freiberg's lies. While the heroine's plight is central to the Gothic novel, in Wise's fiction the heroes generally take center stage. His one-dimensional heroines are so weakly individuated because their Gothic counterweights--the villains--are deprived of significant treatment. The power and attractions of darkness and villainy fuel the excitement of Gothics, but Wise obviously cannot present his villains as attractive or compelling. To do so would undercut his propagandistic aim of exposing and attacking Gentile cruelty and hypocrisy.

Wise seems to have been consciously avoiding the creation of magnetic villains. The only comment in the novel on the nature of fiction addresses this point, and is made by Wise's spokesman in The Shoemaker's Family, Simeon. Asked why he dislikes a book of Eugene Sue's being read by one of the Katz'--Sue was an "immense best seller" in the mid-1840s [Harap, p. 110])--Simeon says, "I hate all books in which human nature is misrepresented, and crimes exceeding human infirmity are uncovered to our view, in a manner [that excites] the mind to imitate them." But Simeon will only say that he likes "good" books when pressed (Vol. I, no. 26, p. 201).

Simeon's beloved Sulamith is not the only heroine of Wise's to

flee or contemplate flight and the villains these women flee are typically Gothic monks and priests. Devendra Varma says the villain is the Gothic novel's "active agent of terror...born as adjunct to the ruinous castle...to frighten the heroines, to pursue them through the vaults and labyrinths of the castle, to harass them at every turn" (Varma, p. 17). The Gothic castle has been seen to function as a symbol of dread, but for Wise setting is so weak a fictional element that dread exists interpersonally more than through the atmosphere. His heroines are harassed to abandon Judaism by monks and priests, Pater Anselm cozening Gheetle in The Rabbi of Bacherach for instance, or the Moslems threatening Phoebe. Other Gothic elements are the presence of the Inquisition (as in Radcliffe's The Italian or Maturin's Melmoth the Wanderer) which Judah Gruenhut battles in Romance, Philosophy and Cabalah, and the incest motif and an explained ghost in The Shoemaker's Family.

In considering foreign influences on the English Gothic, Montague Summers lists some of the contributing elements discussed above as found in German romances of the late 18th century. Others are "the wicked rival" [of the heroine], a malignant and licentious woman of quality who upon being rejected by the hero involves him through her acts in trouble and captivity" (60). That description fits two of Wise's more striking characters, Salome in The Combat of the People and Aspasia in The First of the Maccabees. Salome is attracted to the handsome Simon ben Hillel and attempts to use her "beguiling and lubric arts" to win him for her "sensual propensities." One of her methods is to pretend a desire for repentence, discerning that Simon's

ruling passion is moral uplift: "He shall have it as often as he pleases, and I will climb up the whole ladder of Jacob, if I can reach him." Later, spurned, she will plot--among other things--to have Helen raped so that Simon will quit loving the girl.

Aspasia is even more "lubric," bringing Jonathan to her Temple of Venus after having sensually admired the handsome youth from afar. She offers him the position of household steward, and herself, but he despises her and the vision of power she holds out. Wielder of "poison and hellish devices," she plots to keep him and his beloved Iphigene separated--or to kill them, and ends in foaming madness and suicide. Both women are partially motivated by the need to find and protect their lost illigitimate children and are in a sense fallen women. Aspasia has clearly been overwhelmed by Greek culture (which even attracts the pure Iphigene) and though explaining her villainy this way to Jonathan is of course self-serving, she is in part a victim of the kulturkampf between Israel and the Hellenistic world.

If Wise's novels are full of Gothic characters, devices and motifs, the natural question is, are they good Gothic novels? Unfortunately, they are not. Wise never creates the brooding suggestive atmosphere essential to a Gothic, which relies so heavily on setting. Nor is there sufficient suspense, mystery or terror. Max May's biography of Wise claims that Wise read Schiller and Goethe, becoming "absorbed in the best German literature of the day" (May, p. 29). Perhaps then the weakness of Wise's Gothic elements is due in part to his influence by German writers like E.T.A. Hoffman for whom,

"castles and moats and twilight, so much a staple of the traditional Gothic novel, were irrelevant or incidental" (61).

The nightmare landscape through which the Gothic heroine flees "the perils of the past" has been transmuted by Wise to the Jews' historic landscapes of persecution. And the role of the persecuted heroine has been given to the Jewish people. That his imagination is essentially Gothic or influenced by the Gothic is clear in the disparity between what Wise says about his fiction and what his fiction says about his fiction. He may have intended to create a new Jewish consciousness and stir Jewish patriotism (see Chapter One) but with few exceptions what he creates is fear of the recent and distant past in which Jews were victims of abduction, imprisonment, coercion, murder, rape, massacres and annihilation. It is as if his fiction is fighting the murderous crowds surging through Germany and Austria in the Hep! Hep! Riots during the year of his birth.

Though Wise's novels are never set in America they are profoundly American in a way D. H. Lawrence describes: "in the progressive American Consciousness there has been the one dominant desire, to do away with the old thing" (62). Wise's first independent published work was a fiery lecture entitled "The End of Popes, Nobles, and Kings" which vaunts the principle of progress and castigates the Church for the slavery it created. The lecture ends with an oratorial trumpet blast: "Progress, no Authority! Literature! General Education! Liberty! Victory and Humanity!" Lawrence notes, however, that shouting about freedom is actually "a rattling of chains" (p. 12).

Before the Civil War Wise agitated ceaselessly for all the signs of union that were eventually created after the war: a congregational union, a rabbinical college and union of rabbis. But he was "so wrapped up in his zeal for activity" (Korn, p. 38) that he did not realize America's Jews were more interested then in establishing themselves, and at most, as congregations. Questions of national Jewish organization were simply not pertinent to their daily lives: "they were too unsettled, too inexperienced, and too heterogeneous" (Cohen, p. 117). Here again Wise was intensely American. A belief in dynamic and immediate change was at the core of social reform movements of the era, which were determined "to make American society over through the power of education" (63). For Wise, The Israelite's primary role was teaching Jews and non-Jews about Judaism and Reform (Cohen, p. 141).

Wise's self-supplied title of "American Jewish Novelist" may strike us as quaint today, especially when major novelists like Roth and Malamud have sought to be considered "American." The attempt to create an American Jewish literature did inaugurate a successful and influential newspaper, but was otherwise unsuccessful. Set against his other activities before the Civil War, this attempt fits with the general failure and setbacks he and other Jewish leaders suffered. But Wise's fiction-writing is a fascinating episode in his career and in American-Jewish history nonetheless, and part of an unrelenting attempt to fight Antebellum Jewish apathy. As Bertram Korn has movingly documented, the period saw high rates of intermarriage, low religious identification and "no general popular demand for strong

Jewish leadership." Yet Wise and other leaders "took it upon themselves to do battle with the forces of dissolution" and his fiction in The Israelite was one weapon in that battle.

NOTES

Notes

(1) Some of the fiction is book length, some closer to what we would call novella-length, and a few of the novels are really the length of short stories. Most of the critics, and Wise himself, call the fiction "novels" and I shall do the same for the convenience of the reader.

(2) Aryeh Rubinstein, "Issac Mayer Wise: A New Appraisal," Jewish Social Studies 39, no. 1-2 (Winter-Spring), p. 53.

(3) Lucy S. Dawidowicz, "When Reform Was Young," Commentary 42 (July 1966) p. 63. Review of James G. Heller's Isaac M. Wise: His Life, Work and Thought (New York: The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, 1964).

(4) Abraham Steinberg, Diss. The University of Michigan, 1954.

(5) See for instance Leon A. Jick, The Americanization of the Synagogue, 1820-1870 (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1976), pp. 217-218.

(6) Heller, p. 705.

(7) "Autobiography and the American Myth," American Quarterly, vol. xvii, no. 3 (Fall, 1965), pp. 501-519.

(8) Isaac Mayer Wise, Reminiscences, 1901 ed. David Philipson (Reprint New York: Arno Press, 1973), p. 314.

(9) Naphtali B. Rubinger, "Dismissal in Albany," American Jewish Archives, November 1972, p. 314.

(10) David Philipson and Louis Grossman, Selected Writings of Isaac Mayer Wise (Reprint New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1963), p. 375.

(11) Dena Wilensky, From Sinai to Cincinnati (New York: Renaissance Book Company, 1937).

(12) "Isaac Mayer Wise" in The Papers of Isaac Mayer Wise, a Guide to the Microfilm Edition (n.p.: Bell & Howell and the American Jewish Archives, 1981), p. 14. This guide includes Wise's autobiographical "World of My Books," two important articles by Jacob Rader Marcus and an article assessing Wise's theology. Future references to articles collected here will be to "Guide."

(13) Bertram Wallace Korn, Eventful Years and Experiences (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1954), p. 125.

(14) Max B. May, Isaac Mayer Wise. The Founder of American Judaism (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), p. 195.

(15) "Pioneers of American Jewish Defense," American Jewish Archives, November 1977, p. 150.

(16) Nina Baym, Novels, Readers and Reviewers, Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984), p. 31.

(17) Carl Bode, ed. Midcentury America, Life in the 1850s (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), p. 126.

(18) Quoted in Louis Harap, The Image of the Jew in American Literature (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1974), p. 251.

(19) Vol. I, no. I, p. 4. Baym points out that the terms "novel"

and "romance" were used interchangeably and quite idiosyncratically in the Antebellum period.

(20) Published in Leipzig and Berlin from 1837-1922, this German-Jewish journal championed moderate Reform, Jewish emancipation, and closer ties with non-Jews.

(21) September 1847, quoted in S.D. Temkin, "Isaac Mayer Wise, 1819-1875," Diss. Hebrew Union College, 1964, p. 164.

(22) The sole writer I have found who makes any claims for Wise's liturgical poetry is Abraham Cronbach, "The Sprout that Grew," American Jewish Archives, vol. xxvii, no. 1 (April, 1975).

(23) See, for instance, Martin Ryback, "The East-West Conflict in American Reform Judaism," American Jewish Archives, vol. iv, no. 1, (January 1952) and Maxwell Whiteman, "Isaac Leeser and the Jews of Philadelphia," Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society, vol. XLVIII, no. 4 (June, 1959).

(24) Julian Barnes (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1985), p. 33.

(25) Solomon B. Freehof, intro. to David Philipson's The Reform Movement in Judaism, revised (New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc.: 1967), pp. xi-xii.

(26) The official position of Reform in America until 1937 rejected Mosaic laws that were not appropriate for "modern civilization" and any national identity for Jews, considering Judaism to be "a progressive religion, ever striving to be in accord with the postulates of reason."

(27) It began appearing a year after The Israelite.

(28) Temkin, p. 3.

(29) The Jewish Heroine appeared in volume I of The Israelite directly after Wise's The Convert from August 18 through September 22, 1854. It is subtitled, "Translated from the Spanish" and listed as Wise's work, that is, a translation, one assumes, by May and Heller. While Wise mentioned expecting translations from German and French (which appeared in other journals) he never mentions Spanish literature as a source and none of his biographers credit him with knowledge fo the language. It is safe to assume the work is his in entirety.

(30) Marc Lee Raphael, Profiles in American Judaism (San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc.: 1984), p. 14.

(31) Quoted in Roger B. Rollin, "Against Evaluation: The Role of the Critic of Popular Culture," in Theories and Methodologies of Popular Culture, eds. Ray B. Browne, Sam Groog, Jr., Larry Landrum, np., n.d., p. 359.

(32) Steinberg, p. 257.

(33) As Yesterday When It is Past (Cincinnati: Isaac M. Wise Temple, 1942) p. 73.

(34) Wise wrote two German plays which were serialized in Die Deborah; one was published in Cincinnait in 1858: Die Maskierte Liebhaber.

(35) Heller has "shoaming" for "foaming" and speculates that the German for foam (Schaum) is its root, but the newspaper page clearly reads "foaming."

(36) Selected Writings, p. 169.

(37) Henry L. Feingold, A Midrash on American Jewish History

(Albany: State University of New York Press, 1982), p. 28.

(38) Nina Baym, Woman's Fiction: A Guide to Novels by and about Women in America, 1820-1870 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1978), p. 17.

(39) Lorman Ratner, "Conversion of the Jews and Pre-Civil War Reform," American Quarterly, Vol. xii, Spring 1961, no. 1, pp. 43-55.

(40) Isaac Mayer Wise, (New York: J. Muhlhaeuser, 1852).

(41) Wise notes that "old Jews" believed spirits could enter a household if the Mezuzah scroll, which among other biblical verses blesses those entering and leaving, was defective (posul) in some way.

(42) Midrash, p. 61.

(43) Wise's The Essence of Judaism appeared in 1861 and was revised and reissued in 1868.

(44) Eleonore O. Sterling, "Anti-Jewish Riots in Germany in 1819: A Displacement of Social Protest," Historia Judaica, vol. xii, April 1950, Part I. Sterling notes that "Hep" has been variously defined: an acronym for Jerusalem is lost (Hierosolyma est perdita, a Crusader's chant); Franconian goatherds' call to their goats; an abbreviation for "Hebraer", an acronym for Haman, Esau and Pharoah, enemies of the Jews).

(45) "Dismissal in Albany."

(46) The Book of Esther, set during the reign of the Persian King Ahasuerus, tells how the Jewish Queen saves her people from the threat of annihilation by interceding with the King.

(47) Cecil Roth, History of the Jews (New York: Schocken Press, 1973), p. 115

(48) Hyam Maccoby, Revolution in Judaea (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., Inc, 1980), p. 52.

(49) Jacob Weusner, Ancient Israel After Catastrophe (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), p. 15.

(50) Citations from this novel and the next will be from the book versions, identical to those appearing in The Israelite, for the reader's convenience.

(51) Adin Steinsaltz, The Essential Talmud, trans. Chaya Galai, (New York: Bantam Books, 1977), pp. 25-26.

(52) See Moshe Rinott, "Gabriel Riesser, Fighter for Jewish Emancipation," LBIYB, VII, 1962, pp. 11-38.

(53) Robert Glenn Wright, "The Social Christian Novel in the Gilded Age," Diss. George Washington University, 1968.

(54) Philip Roth, Reading Myself and Others (Farrar, Staus and Giroux, 1975), p. 222.

(55) G.R. Thompson, ed. The Gothic Imagination: Essays in Dark Romanticism (Washington State University Press, 1974), p. 7.

(56) Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism (New York: E.P. Dutton & Co, 1923), p. 43.

(57) Richard Chase, The American Novel and Its Tradition (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957), p. 36.

(58) Devendra Varma, The Gothic Flame (New York: Russell & Russell, 1966), p. xiii.

(59) Leslie Fiedler, Love and Death in the American Novel (London: Grenada Publishing, Ltd., 1970), p. 120.

(60) Montague Summers, The Gothic Quest: A History of the Gothic

Novel (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964), p. 129.

(61) Leonard J. Kent and Knight, Elizabeth C., eds. and trans. Tales of E.T.A. Hoffman (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. xv.

(62) D.H. Lawrence, Studies in Classic American Literature (New York: Penguin Books, 1977), p. 14.

(63) John L. Thomas, "Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865," American Quarterly, vol. xvii Winter 1965, no. 4, p. 79.

APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Wise on The Last Struggle of the Nation

The Israelite, August 8, 1856:

> Such will be the title of the next original novel, written for the Israelite, the first chapter of which will appear as soon as the author returns from his journey.
>
> This novel treats on a period of Jewish history: viz, fifty years after the destruction of the second temple, when Hadrian administered the final blow to the political existence of Israel, and is rich not only of the greatest characters and most eminent heroism and acts of unpreceded courage and of bravery, but also of romantic occurrences and high-minded females. This, and the fact of its acting in the Orient, give the author a wide scope, not only to bring all his historical genius and knowledge, but also his phantasy and poetical talents to bear on it.
>
> No period in the history of any nation was more sadly neglected and more unscrupulously misrepresented than the above--Christian historians, partly unacquainted with the original sources and partly misled by religious considerations, failed entirely in reproducing this sad, yet glorious epoch of Jewish history, and the Jewish historians are too pedantic to be original. Who has represented to us in truth the character of a Bar Kochba, Rabbi Akibah, Rabbi Jehoshuah, Ismael ben Nannes, Rabbi Tarphon, Ben Soma, Ben Asai, or even Acher, Turnus Ruphus? None. This piece of work was spared for our novelist, and we have no doubt he will do it justice.
>
> The peculiar romantic of oriental antiquity, the fairy forms of the daughters of Zion, the eminence and intensity of oriental passions, the attractive simplicity of their habits and living, and their capability of self-denial and self-sacrifice are rich materials to surprise, amuse and to instruct the reader. Let, therefore, the ladies prepare for a grand fete, they will be offered a characteristic novel, such as only the Jewish novelist who is a thorough historian, can produce.
>
> We hope to see the author return to this city within the next forthnight, in order to be enabled to please our numerous readers and patrons, meanwhile we must beg them to read the useful articles of the Israelite and postpone their curiosity for two or three weeks.

The Israelite, May 15, 1857:

Volume II. Some Preparatory Remarks.

The first volume of this historical novel having been so kindly received by our readers, both in America and Europe, we begin today to lay the second volume before our kind readers with the hope of giving them that satisfaction which we can afford to give the reader. We also take this opportunity of informing our friends that this novel will be published in book form as soon as practicable; those who wish to subscribe for it will please send us their names.

The Author

The Israelite, November 13, 1857:

'The Last Struggle of the Nation,' the unusually interesting Novel, which is generally found on this page, has been omitted this week, on account of the continued absence of the Editor in the East. It will be resumed on his return--perhaps in the next number. Meanwhile, we introduce, in its stead, the interesting 'Editorial correspondence--No. III,' which we hope will satisfy our numerous readers.

The Israelite, January 28, 1858, the novel's conclusion:

Nothing more remains to be said than to take leave of the readers. I wish I had satisfied them as well I desired to do; but it appears I am not a good hand for romantic composition. my intention was good: To do justice to a period of heroes and martyrs, as history has not a second to show, was my intention; for those men have been abused and misrepresented by almost every historian (especially by Dr. Jost) and theological writer. Would to God my pen was good enough to depict those men in their true greatness, that the shame be expunged, which prejudice, malice or servility has heaped on the tombs of our fathers.

And so I part from the readers, begging them to keep my heroes and heroines is good memory; also while begging their indulgence for my inabilities, requesting them not to forget the author who has done his best to do justice to his offended ancestry.

Issac M. Wise

Reminscences, 1875 (trans. 1901):

I returned to Cincinnati in the middle of August [1856]....I had brought back with me sketches for three novels, which I developed later and published in the Israelite. The first, which began to appear in the issue of August 29th, was entitled, "The Last Struggle of the Nation; or, Rabbi Akiba and His Time." The leading characters were Bar Kokhba and Rabbi Aqiba, and their most prominent contemporaries. I introduced the young Rabbi Meir in the role of the lover: Acher, the traitorous Samaritans, Turnus Rufus, and several other Romans furnished the darker side of the picture. I had to invent the female characters. I have Bar Kokhba a heroic wife, and introduced Beruriah as her foster-daughter. She was, as may be imagined, Meir's beloved. I gave Rabbi Aqiba also a heroic daughter, who spurns the love of Acher, and drives him to despair.

I included within these outlines all the historical events from the beginning of the revolution to the fall of Bethar and the flight of Meir to the East. I put into the mouths of the prominent Tanaim their own words and ideas, as reported in the Talmud and Midrash. I described as faithfully as possible the customs, habits, views, the patriotism, the heroism, the victories and defeats, the joys and sufferings of that period of storm and stress. I had in mind the twofold object of awakening once again Jewish patriotism, and of popularizing an important portion of Jewish literature.

The selection was fortunate, for Rabbi Aqiba, his contemporaries, and his pupils were the most exalted examples of rabbinical wisdom. They were unexcelled in moral depth and spiritual evaluation. An abundance of truths and noble deeds, such as are reported from that time, is well adapted to instil respect and arouse eagerness to know all there is to know of the period. That epoch, so rich in achievements, was well suited to furnish expression to glowing enthusiasm and fiery patriotism. The account of how the Jewish people arose, how it struggled even unto death against all-powerful Rome, how it fought heroically and finally succumbed, must arouse every reader. Whoever has a spark of Jewish feeling must be deeply thrilled by those great deeds. Yes, the selection was fortunate, I mused. I grew enthusiastic, I rejoiced, I wept while writing. Being in the company of those heroes, I often forgot the present. Thousands, as I knew well, read the novel eagerly, and it left a deep impression on thousands. The fact that the classical figures were Jews and not Greeks, or at least Romans, displeased some critics. The anti-Talmudical agitators were chagrined at seeing prominent Talmudists appear in so popular a garb. But the novel was read more widely than anything had ever been read in American Jewish circles.

The other two historical novels were elaborated later. The one was entitled 'The Combat of the People; or Hillel and Herod.' In this novel Hillel, his son Simon, and their rabbinical contemporarires, Herod, his relatives and his couriers appeared as the characters. The other was entitled, "The First of the Maccabees," and treated the period from the arousal of the Jewish people by the Asmonean and his sons to the re-dedication of the temple at Jerusalem. Jose ben Joezer was made one of the principal characters. Both novels were written along similar lines as the first. I am still of the conviction that these novels, and those written later by Nathan Mayer and H. H. Moos, not only established and lent prosperity to the Israelite and the Deborah but that they had a telling influence on thousands of readers in the way of arousing patriotism and a desire for Jewish learning. They thus accomplished their purpose fully, although I never had any ambition to become renowned as a novelist. Thousands of copies of the last-named stories were sold in a second edition.

Appendix B: A Little Bohemian

This novel ran in three parts (some extending over more than one issue) from October 29 through December 3, 1880, and while it is unlike any of Wise's other novels, it bears a strong resemblance to Henry James's "Daisy Miller." That tale appeared in 1878 and was, as is well known, a literary sensation. James' tale was immediately pirated in New York and Boston, selling twenty thousand copies in a few weeks when Harper's published it as a pamphlet (1). Like the James story, A Little Bohemian is about an innocent, fresh girl, English in this case, who eventually dies after social ostracism.

Meeting Daisy Browne at witty, sharp-tongued Lady Belminster's (reminiscent of James's Mrs. Costello), Annesley is of two minds about the girl--is she innocent or not? Her father is a bounder, and she calls herself a Bohemian because they are much travelled and very poor: "we have no country...we are wanderers on the face of the earth." Annesley falls in love and marries her, but all Creamshire society turns "their backs on her" and she is not welcome despite Annesley's attempts to launch her in country society. There is some suspicion about her when a woman claims that she saw a lovely sixteen-year-old newlywed like Daisy five years ago on a Channel crossing.

Annesley's great friend Jack Charteris returns from abroad married and cuts Daisy at a charity bazaar. Daisy is thus forced to reveal to her husband that in France, Charteris's disreputable

brother, the current Lord Hazlewood, fed and sheltered her when her father was broke, and sent her to safety in England. Jack Charteris found Daisy and his brother at dinner and believed they were married--or worse. Hazelwood tells Annesley the same story, but when he overcomes his shame to beg Daisy's forgiveness for doubting her, she has already drowned herself, leaving him and Creamshire society guilty.

The question of innocence as weighed by an observer, and the heroine's first name and common second name are not the only similarities with James' tale. Both girls are described to similar effect (the James quotation is first):

> "...she gradually gave him more of the benefit of her glance; and then he saw that this glance was perfectly direct and unshrinking. It was not, however, what would have been called an immodest glance, for the young girl's eyes were singularly honest and fresh" (2).
>
> "When for the first time she turns her pretty blue eyes and her attention on him, and though there is not a particle of shyness in her manner and bearing, he discovers in a moment that there is not an atom of...under-bred coquetry" (A Little Bohemian, Part I).

Like James's Daisy, the little Bohemian is fresh, pretty, frank, unconventional and in a sense isolated from the parent she seems to care about. Annesley's puzzlement over whether she is as innocent as she seems resolves, however, in his marrying her despite Daisy's hints of some secret in her past that he might disapprove of. When his disapproval does come, it is as complete as Winterbourne's when he decides that Daisy Miller "was a young lady whom a gentleman need no longer be at pains to respect" (p. 190). Pressed to respond to her confession, Annesley sends his wife away: "I do not believe you. I

should be a fool if I did. Go!" Rejected, Daisy drowns herself and her body is discovered by moonlight; Daisy Miller catches her fatal fever in the moonlit Coliseum.

All these similarities--and many others--point to a clear inspiration by James's short story, but the authorship is not so clear. Writing in 1900, Louis Grossman listed six of Wise's novels and mentioned that others appeared in "the early volumes of The Israelite," which would hardly include volume 27. James Heller does attribute the story to Wise, but with no documentation as to his source. After 1856, when Wise subtitled The Last Struggle of the Nation as "By the American Jewish Novelist" and his name appeared at its end, all his subsequent novels bear that designation, or are listed as being by the author of novels that do. A Little Bohemian has no such attribution, nor does it have a scintilla of Jewish content. It is possible that Wise was so impressed by "Daisy Miller" that he sought to emulate its achievement--but why set the story in England, which he did not know, and why pass up the opportunity to make Daisy Browne's secret a Jewish parent, especially when such secrets are a staple of his fiction. Given Wise's themes, this story of English country snobbery seems an unlikely subject for him to choose, especially at a time when he had not written any fiction for sixteen years.

The writing itself is mostly in the present tense which Wise never uses as a dominant mode. Its focus on characters' ostensible wittiness and analysis of their feelings bears no resemblance whatsoever to his other fiction. Consider this passage:

> Her husband, coming in a minute or two later, stands looking critically and admiringly. Eyes and mouth are a great deal graver and more sorrowful than the eyes and mouth of the young girl who had dressed herself in her cheap white gown to go to Lady Belminster's garden-party a year and a half ago. But he does not see that. He has perhaps grown used to the change. He only sees that she is very beautiful, and some of the old pride of possession, the lover-like tenderness of manner, that have been obliterated, or at any rate, thrust into the background by the troubles and annoyances of the past months, stir in him afresh.

The rhythms of the prose and the vocabulary seem quite unlike Wise's, though again it must be admitted that the sixteen years separating this story and The Rabbi of Bacherach might account for the change. Given Wise's ambivalent attitude towards his fiction as expressed in Reminiscences only five years before, anonymous publication, especially of a "non-Jewish" piece, seems a possibility. But given also his emphasis on creating positive Jewish portraits in his fiction A Little Bohemian is not very likely by Wise. There is unfortunately no way of determining what sources Heller had to attribute this story that a writer like Grossman, who knew Wise, did not. Perhaps the title threw Heller off, and he did not actually read the piece. In any event, I am not convinced that A Little Bohemian was written by Wise, but in the absence of definite proof to the contrary, and because Wise's primary biographer does list it as Wise's, I include it here.

(1) Leon Edel, Henry James (Harper and Row, Publishers: New York, 1985), p. 216.

(2) Henry James, Selected Short Stories, ed. Michael Swan (Penguin Books, 1973: Harmondsworth, England), p. 140.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Agus, Jacob B. "The Reform Movement" in Understanding American Judaism: Toward a Description of a Modern Religion. Ed. Jacob Neusner. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1975.

Appel, John J. "The Trefa Banquet." Commentary, February 1965, pp. 75-79.

Baym, Nina. Novels, Readers and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1984.

Blau, Joseph L. Judaism in America From Curiosity to Third Faith. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1976.

----------. "The Spiritual Life of American Jewry, 1654-1954." American Jewish Yearbook vol. 56, 1955, pp. 99-171.

Bode, Carl. ed. Midcentury America: Life in the 1850s. Carbondale: Illinois University Press, 1972.

Chase, Richard. The American Novel and Its Tradition. Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957.

Cohn, Bernhard N. "Early German Preaching in America." Historia Judaica, vol. XV, 1953, part 2, pp. 86-134.

Cohen, Naomi W. "Pioneers of American Jewish Defense." American Jewish Archives, November 1977, pp. 116-150.

----------. Encounter with Emancipation: The German Jews in the United States 1830-1914. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1984.

Cohon, Samuel S. "The History of the Hebrew Union College." Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society, XL, September 1950, no. 1.

Cronbach, Abraham. "The Sprout that Grew." American Jewish Archives, vol. XXVII, no. 1, April 1975, pp. 51-60.

Dawidowicz, Lucy S. "When Reform Was Young." Commentary 42 July 1966, pp. 63-67. Review of James G. Heller's Isaac M. Wise: His Life, Work and Thought. New York: UAHC, 1964.

Eisendrath, Maurice N. "The Union of American Hebrew Congregations: Centennial Reflections." American Jewish Historical Quarterly, LXIII, December 1973, no. 2, pp. 138-159.

Engelman, Uriah Zvi. "Jewish Statistics in the United States Census of Religious Bodies (1850-1936)." Jewish Social Studies, vol. IX, 1947, pp. 127-174.

Feingold, Henry L. Zion in America: The Jewish Experience from Colonial Times to the Present. New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1974.

----------. A Midrash on American Jewish History. Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 1982.

Freehof, Solomon B. Introduction to The Reform Movement in Judaism. David Philipson. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1967.

Fiedler, Leslie, Love and Death in the American Novel. London: Grenada Publishing Ltd., 1970.

Glanz, Rudolf. "Jews in Early German-American Literature." Jewish Social Studies, vol. IV, April 1942, no. 2, pp. 99-120.

----------. "The Immigration of German Jews up to 1880." In Studies

in Judaica Americana. for. Jacob Rader Marcus. New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc., 1970, pp. 85-103.

Glazer, Nathan. "Social Characteristics of American Jews, 1654-1954." American Jewish Yearbook, vol. 56, 1955, pp. 3-43.

----------. American Judaism, 2nd ed., rev. Chicago: The University of Chicago, Press, 1972.

Goulder, Grace. "Isaac M. Wise" in Ohio Scenes and Citizens. Cleveland, Ohio: The World Publishing Company, 1964.

Grollman, Jerome W. "The Emergence of Reform Judaism in the United States." American Jewish Archives, vol. II, no. 2. January, 1950, pp. 3-14.

Gutman, Joseph. "Watchman on an American Rhine: New Light on Isaac M. Wise." American Jewish Archives, October 1958, pp. 135-44.

Handlin, Oscar. The Uprooted. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1951.

---------- and Mary F. "The Acquisition of Political and Social Rights by the Jews in the United States." American Jewish Yearbook, vol. 56, 1955, pp. 43-99.

Hansen, Marcus Lee. The Atlantic Migration 1607-1860. ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940.

Harap, Louis. The Image of the Jew in American Literature. Jewish Publication Society: Philadelphia, 1974.

Harlow, Alvin F. The Serene Cincinnatians. New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, Inc., 1950.

Heller, James G. As Yesterday When it is Past. Isaac M. Wise Temple: Cincinnati, 1942.

Higham, John. "American Anti-Semitism Historically Reconsidered." In Jews in the Mind of America. Ed. Charles Stember et al. New York: Basic Books, pp. 237-258.

Jacob, Walter. "Isaac Mayer Wise's Views on Christianity." Judaism 15 Fall 1966, pp. 437-445.

Jick, Leon A. The Americanization of the Synagogue, 1820-1870. Hanover, New Hampshire: The University Press of New England, 1976.

Jonas, Joseph. "The Jews in Ohio" in A Documentary History of the Jews in the United States 1654-1875. ed. Morris U. Schappes. New York: The Citadel Press, 1950.

Key, Andrew F. "The Theology of Isaac Mayer Wise." The Papers of Isaac Mayer Wise: A Guide to the Microfilm Edition. Intros. Jacob R. Marcus and Abraham F. Peck. Bell & Howell and The n.p.: American Jewish Archives, 1981.

Kisch, Guido. "A History of the Isaac M. Wise Temple of Cincinnati." Review of James G. Heller's As Yesterday When it is Past: A History of K.K. B'nai Yeshurun of Cincinnati. In Commemoration of the Centenary of its Founding 1842-1942. Cincinnati, 1942., Historia Judaica, vol. VII, October 1945, no. 2, pp. 205-207.

----------. "The Revolution of 1848 and the Jewish 'On to America' Movement." Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society, no. 38. March 1949, part 3, pp. 185-235.

Knox, Israel. "Isaac Mayer Wise" Chapter Four in Great Jewish Personalities of Modern Times. Ed. Simon Noveck, Washington, D.C.: B'nai B'rith Department of American Jewish Education,

1960.

----------. Rabbi in America: The Story of Isaac M. Wise. Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1957.

Kober, Adolf. "The French Revolution and the Jews in Germany." Jewish Social Studies, vol. VII, October, 1945, no. 4, pp. 291-322.

----------. "Jewish Communities in Germany from the Age of the Enlightenment to their Destruction by the Nazis." Jewish Social Studies, vol. IX, no. 3, pp. 195-238.

----------. "Jews in the Revolution of 1848 in Germany." Jewish Social Studies, vol. X, April 1948, no. 2, pp. 135-165.

Kohler, Max J. "The Jews and the American Anti-Slavery Movement." Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society no. 5, 1897, pp. 137-155.

----------. "The German Jewish Migration to America." Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society, no. 9, 1901, pp. 87-105.

Korn, Bertram W. "American Jewish Life in 1849" in his Eventful Years and Experiences. Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1954.

----------. "Isaac Mayer Wise on the Civil War." Ibid.

----------. "Jewish 'Forty-Eighters' in America." Ibid.

----------. "The Know-Nothing Movement and the Jews." Ibid.

----------. "Factors Bearing Upon the Survival of Judaism in the Ante-Bellum Period." American Jewish Historical Quarterly, LIII, June 1964, no. 4, pp. 341-351.

Lacour-Gayet, Robert. Everyday Life in the United States before the

Civil War 1830-1860. trans. Mary Ilford. New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1972.

Lawrence, D.H. Studies in Classic American Literature. New York: Penguin Books, 1977.

Liptzin, Sol. The Jew in American Literature. New York: Bloch Publishing Company, 1966.

Maccoby, Hyam. Revolution in Judaea. New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., Inc., 1980.

Marcus, Jacob Rader. "The Americanization of Isaac Mayer Wise." Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1969.

----------. ed. "Isaac Mayer Wise. A Rabbi with a Purpose." In his Memoirs of American Jews, vol. Three. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1956.

----------. "Isaac Mayer Wise and the College He Built." Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1959.

May, Max B. Isaac Mayer Wise: The Founder of American Judaism. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1916.

Mersand, Joseph. Traditions in American Literature: A Study of Jewish Characters and Authors. New York: The Modern Chapbooks, 1939.

Miller, Douglas T. The Birth of Modern America 1820-1850. Indianapolis, Indiana: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., Publisher, 1970.

Mosse, George L. German Jews Beyond Judaism. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1985.

Neusner, Jacob. Ancient Israel after Catastrophe. Charlottesville:

University Press of Virginia, 1983.

Philipson, David. "Reform in the United States" in The Reform Movement in Judaism. rev., with an introduction by Solomon B. Freehof. New York: KTAV Publishing House, Inc, 1967.

---------- and Louis Grossman. "Biography" in Selected Writings of Isaac Mayer Wise. New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969.

Railo, Eino. The Haunted Castle: A Study of the Elements of English Romanticism. New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1927.

Raphael, Marc Lee. Profiles in American Judaism. San Francisco: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1984.

Ratner, Lorman. "Conversion of the Jews and Pre-Civil War Reform." American Quarterly, vol. XII, Spring 1961, no. 1, pp. 43-54.

Reisner, H.G. "The German-American Jews 1800-1850." Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook, vol. X, 1965, pp. 57-114.

Rinott, Moshe. "Gabriel Reisser--Fighter for Jewish Emancipation." Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook, vol. VII, 1962, pp. 11-38.

Rollin, Roger B. "Against Evaluation: The Role of the Critic of Popular Culture." in Theories and Methodologies of Popular Culture. eds. Ray B. Browne, Sam Grogg, Jr., Larry Landrum. n.p., n.d.

Roth, Cecil. A History of the Jews. New York: Schocken Books, 1973

Roth, Philip. Reading Myself and Others. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1975.

Rubinger, Naphtali J. "Dismissal in Albany." American Jewish Archives. November 1972, pp. 160-183.

Rubinstein, Aryeh. "Isaac Mayer Wise: A New Appraisal." Jewish Social Studies. 39, (Winter-Spring 1977), no. 1-2, pp. 53-74.

Ryback, Martin B. "The East-West Conflict in American Reform Judaism." American Jewish Archives, vo. iv, no. 1, January 1952.

Sandmel, Samuel. "Isaac Mayer Wise's 'Jesus Himself.'" in Essays in American Jewish History, ed. Jacob Rader Marcus. Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1958.

Sarna, Jonathan. "The German Period." Commentary, September 1985, pp. 72-76. Review of Naomi W. Cohen's Encounter with Emancipation: the German Jews in the United States 1830-1914. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1984.

Spengemen, William C. and L.R. Lundquist. "Autobiography and the American Myth." American Quarterly, vol. xvii, Fall 1965, no. 3, pp. 501-519.

Steinberg, Abraham. "Jewish Characters in the American Novel to 1900. Diss., The University of Michigan, 1956.

Steinsaltz, Adin. The Essential Talmud. Trans. Chaya Galai. New York: Bantam Books, 1977.

Sterling, Eleonore O. "Anti-Jewish Riots in Germany in 1819: A Displacement of Social Protest." Historia Judaica, vol. XII, April 1950, part 1, pp. 105-142.

Stern-Taeubler, Selma. "The Jew in Transition from Ghetto to Emancipation." Historia Judaica, vol. II, October 1940, no. 2, pp. 102-119.

----------. "The Motivation of the German Jewish Emmigration to America in the Post-Mendelsohnian Era" in Essays in American

Jewish History ed. Jacob Rader Marcus. Cincinnati: The American Jewish Archives, 1956.

----------. "The German Jew in a Changing World." Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook, vol. VII, 1962, pp. 3-10.

Strauss, Raphael. "The Jews in the Economic Evolution of Central Europe." Jewish Social Studies, vol. III, 1945, pp. 15-40.

Stroock, Solomon M. "Switzerland and American Jews." Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society, no. 11, 1903, pp. 7-52.

Summers, Montague. The Gothic Quest: A History of the Gothic Novel. New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964.

Tarshish, Allan. "The Economic Life of the American Jew in the Middle Nineteenth Century." in Essays in American Jewish History ed. Jacob Rader Marcus. Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1958.

Temkin, Sefton. "Isaac Mayer Wise 1819-1875," Diss. Hebrew Union College, 1964.

----------. "Isaac Mayer Wise: A Biographical Sketch." In The Papers of Isaac Mayer Wise: A Guide to the Microfilm Edition. Intros. Jacob R. Marcus, Abraham J. Peck. n.p.: Bell & Howell and The American Jewish Archives, 1981.

----------. "Isaac Mayer Wise and the Civil War." American Jewish Archives, November 1963, pp. 120-142.

Thomas, John L. "Romantic Reform in America, 1815-1865." American Quarterly, vol. xvii, Winter 1965, no. 4, pp. 656-681.

Thompson, G. R. ed. The Gothic Imagination: Essays in Dark Romanticism. Washington State University Press, 1974.

Tucker, Louis Leonard. Cincinnati During the Civil War. Columbus:

Ohio State University Press, 1962.

Varma, Devendra. The Gothic Flame. New York: Russell & Russell, 1966.

Weinman, Melvin. "The Attitude of Isaac Mayer Wise toward Zionism and Palestine." American Jewish Archives III (January 1951), no. 2, pp. 3-23.

Whiteman, Maxwell. "Isaac Leeser and the Jews of Philadelphia." Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society, vol. XLVII, June 1959, no. 4, pp. 207-244.

Wilansky, Dena. Sinai to Cincinnati. New York: Renaissance Book Company, 1937.

Wilhelm, Kurt. "Benjamin Szold and the Rabbinical Post in Stockholm in 1858. With an Unpublished Letter of Isaac M. Wise." Historia Judaica, vol. XV, April 1953, Part I, pp. 49-58.

Wise, Isaac Mayer. The Convert, The Israelite, I (1854), no. 1-no. 5.

----------. The Catastrophe at Eger, A Narrative of the Sixteenth Century, The Israelite, I (1854), no. 12-no. 21.

----------. The Combat of the People; or, Hillel and Herod: A Historical Romance of the Time of Herod I By the American Jewish Novelist. The Israelite (1858-1859), no. 11-no. 42. Cincinnati: Bloch Publishing Co., 1859.

----------. "The End of Popes, Nobles and Kings, or the Progress of Civilization." New York: J. Muhlhaeuser, 1852.

----------. The First of the Maccabees. By the Author of the Last Struggle of the Nation, The Combat of the People, The Shoemaker's Family, etc., etc., etc., The Israelite, VI-VII (1859-1860), no.

19-no. 6. Cincinnati: Bloch Publishing Co., 1860.

----------. The Jewish Heroine, The Israelite, I (1854), no. 6-no. 11.

----------. The Last Struggle of the Nation or Rabbi Akiba and His Time. A Historical Novel from the Second Century, by the American Jewish Novelist, The Israelite (1856-1858), Vol. III, no. 7-Vol. IV, no. 30.

----------. "Paul and the Mystics." (1870) in Selected Writings of Isaac Mayer Wise. Eds. David Philipsobn and Louis Grossman. New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1969.

----------. The Rabbi of Bacherach: An Anti-Romantic Romance By The American Jewish Novelist (1864), The Israelite, Vol. 1 (1864), no. 10-no. 31.

----------. Reminiscences. Trans. and ed. David Philipson. Cincinnati: Leo Wise and Company, 1901. Reprint New York: Arno Press, 1973. edition. Central Synagogue of New York, 1945.

----------. Resignation and Fidelity or Life A Romance, The Israelite, I (1855), no. 39-no. 46.

----------. Romance, Philosophy and Cabalah, or, The Conflagration at Frankfort o.t.M. A Narrative from the Beginning of the last Century., I (1855), no. 26-no. 33.

----------. The Shoemaker's Family, The Israelite, I (1855), no. 26-33.

----------. The Wizard of the Forest: A Tale of the Thirty Years' War By the Author of The Last Struggle of the Nation, The First of the Macabbees, and other novels, The Israelite, VII (1861),

no. 36-51.

----------. "The World of My Books." trans. Albert H. Friedlander. The Papers of Isaac Mayer Wise: A Guide to the Microfilm Edition. Intros. Jacob R. Marcus, Abraham F. Peck. n.p., 1981, Bell & Howell and The American Jewish Archives.

---------- and Max B. May. "The History of the K.K. Bene Yeshurun." Cincinnati: Bloch Publishing Co., 1892.

Wright, Robert Glenn. "The Social Christian Novel in the Gilded Age, 1865-1900." Diss. George Washington University, 1968.