

# CANADIAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

971.004924  
C35  
v.43  
1990

FOUNDED BY SAUL HAYES, O.C., Q.C., LL.D., F.R.S.A.  
FIRST EDITOR LOUIS ROSENBERG, F.R. Econ.S., F.S.S.

Nous nous souvenons

NEW SERIES 43

Forgetfulness leads to Holocaust;  
Remembering is the root of redemption.  
(*Baal Shem Tov*)

## BERCOVICI OF THE ADLER

Compiled by  
DAVID ROME

NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

MONTREAL, CANADA

1990

ISBN 0-921895-55-0

ISSN 0576-5528

NATIONAL ARCHIVES of the CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS  
PUBLICATIONS by DAVID ROME

CANADIAN JEWISH ARCHIVES, New Series:

<u>Number</u>	<u>Title</u>
1	Early Documents on the Canadian Jewish Congress, 1914-1921, 69 p. (1974)
2	Inventory of Documents on the Jewish School Question 1903-1921, 118 p. (1975)
3	On the Jewish School Question in Montreal, 1903-1931, 136 p. (1975)
4	Canadian Jews - Early in This Century (by B.G. Sack) 95 p. (1975)
5	Our Archival Record of 1933, Hitler's Year, 112 p. (1976)
6	The Congress Archival Record of 1934, 131 p. (1976)
7	Jewish Archival Record of 1935, 119 p. (1976)
8	The Jewish Congress Archival Record of 1936, 148 p. (1978)
9	On our Forerunners - At Work, 94 p. (1978)
10	On our Forerunners - At Work - Epilogue, 98 p. (1978)
11	On Jules Helbronner, 98 p. (1979)
12	On Mackenzie King and Jewish Sweating Labor, part 1, 91 p. (1979)
13	On Mackenzie King and Jewish Sweating Labor, part 2, 77 p. (1979)
14	On Sunday Observance, 1906, 126 p. (1979)
15	On the Early Harts, part 1, 105 p. (1980)
16	On the Early Harts, part 2, 118 p. (1980)
17	On the Early Harts, part 3, 100 p. (1980)
18	On the Early Harts, part 4, 99 p. (1980)
19	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part 1, 110 p. (1981)
20	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part 2, 152 p. (1981)
21	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part 3, 132 p. (1981)
22	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part 4, 124 p. (1981)
23	On the Early Harts, Their Contemporaries, part 5, 136 p. (1982)
24	Benjamin Hart and 1829, 120 p. (1982)
25	Samuel Becancour Hart and 1832, 165 p. (1982)
26	Anti-Semitism I - The Plamondon Case and S.W. Jacobs, part 1, 104 p. (1982)
27	Anti-Semitism II - The Plamondon Case and S.W. Jacobs, part 2, 121 p. (1982)
28	On the Jews of Lower Canada and 1837-38, part 1, 98 p. (1983)
29	On the Jews of Lower Canada and 1837-38, part 2, 100 p. (1983)
30	On the Jews of Lower Canada and 1837-38, part 3, 108 p. (1983)
31	Anti-Semitism III - Early Anti-Semitism: Threats to Equality, part 1, 111 p. (1983)
32	Anti-Semitism IV - Early Anti-Semitism: Across the Dominion, part 2, 112 p. (1983)
33	Anti-Semitism V - Early Anti-Semitism: The Voice of the Media, part 1, 121 p. (1984)
34	Anti-Semitism VI - Early Anti-Semitism: The Holy Land; Tardivel, 151 p. (1985)
35	Anti-Semitism VII - Early Anti-Semitism: The Imprint of Drumont, 124 p. (1985)
36	The Immigration Story I - The <u>Jewish Times</u> , etc., 114 p. (1986)
37	The Immigration Story II - Jacobs' Opponents, 134 p. (1987)
38	The Immigration Story III - The Yiddish Theatre; the <u>Adler</u> , 108 p. (1987)
39	The Jewish Biography of Henri Bourassa, part 1, 112 p. (1988)
40	The Jewish Biography of Henri Bourassa, part 2, 108 p. (1988)
41	The First Jewish Literary School, 144 p. (1988)
42	Men of the Yiddish Press, 140 p. (1989)

CLOUDS IN THE THIRTIES, ON ANTI-SEMITISM IN CANADA 1929-1939, 13 Sections

For further information: National Archives  
Canadian Jewish Congress  
1590 Ave. Dr. Penfield  
Montréal, Qué. H3G 1C5

# CANADIAN JEWISH ARCHIVES

FOUNDED BY SAUL HAYES, O.C., Q.C., LL.D., F.R.S.A.  
FIRST EDITOR LOUIS ROSENBERG, F.R. Econ.S., F.S.S.

Nous nous souvenons

NEW SERIES 43

Forgetfulness leads to Holocaust;  
Remembering is the root of redemption.  
(*Baal Shem Tov*)

## BERCOVICI OF THE ADLER

Compiled by  
**DAVID ROME**

NATIONAL ARCHIVES  
CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

MONTREAL, CANADA

1990

**D9001954**

ISBN 0-921895-55-0

ISSN 0576-5528

CANADIAN JEWISH ARCHIVES - Serial Publication

Founded by Saul Hayes, O.C., Q.C., LL.D., F.R.S.A. (1904-1980)

Original series, edited by Louis Rosenberg, F.R. Econ. S., F.S.S.,  
numbers 1-6, 1955-1962

New Series, edited by David Rome, M.A., Ordre nationale de  
Québec, numbers 1- , 1974-

CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS (Founded 1919)  
1590 Avenue Docteur Penfield  
Montreal, Quebec  
H3G 1C5 (514-931-7531)

National President  
National Executive Director  
Executive Vice-President  
National Archives Chairman  
Quebec Region Archives Chairman  
Director National Archives  
Historian  
Editorial Assistant  
Distribution

Les Scheininger  
Jack Silverstone  
Alan Rose, C.M.  
Professor Irving Abella  
Professor Mervin Butovsky  
Janice Rosen  
David Rome  
Lily Kaplin  
Phyllis Kimia



Bibliothèque Nationale du Québec

FC  
106  
J8C35  
v. 43  
1990

## CONTENTS

	Page I
Introduction: Men of the Age	1
Konrad Bercovici	4
Art and the Artist	6
The Poor	7
Editorial Office	9
Welcoming the Guests	10
Sheltering Home	12
At the Orphanage	13
Providing for the Naked	15
Fearful Jews	16
Combat	17
Montreal Types	22
Mediocre Man	24
Brethren	25
In the Darkness	26
The Surface	28
The Fine Horse	29
King Steel	31
Murder and Advertising	32
The Artist in Patria	34
Greeks	35
Without Ground	37
Lust for Battle	39
Romeo	41
Deserted Wife	43
The Favoured Child	45
International Affairs	46
Napoleon	47
Jingo	49
Execution	50
"Magic Bell"	52
Mr. Katakura	54
Literary Cafe	59
Need	61
Good and Wise	63
Jewish Music	65
Jewish Street Songs of America	67
The Orchestra	70
Literature	71
Burdens	72
Shylock	74
The Kiss of Salvation	75
Lights	76
Lamps	77
Christmas	77

The City	79
Parc Lafontaine	81
Mount Royal	83
Main Street	85
A Cafe Without an Owner	87
Card Players	89
Pranks	91
Before Dawn	93
Dawn	94
Thinking	96
Courage	98
Five in the Morning	99
Moods	100
Death	102
Winter Impressions	104
Flowers	105
In the Basement	106
Charity Observed	109
Contempt of Clients	110
In Dialect	113
Index	115

## MEN OF THE AGE

Before the First War the annals of Canadian Jewry were marked by a series of distinctive personalities of very great value nearly all of whom performed their social roles in the midst of a new immigrant community which grew from tiny cells from 1880 into the thousands, into several tens of thousands.

The Montreal heritage did offer a remarkable foundation in the personages of the de Sola family - the father, Rev. Abraham de Sola preaching for forty years and the son, Clarence I. de Sola leading the community and the Zionism he founded for another forty - and the sons of the Lithuanian immigrants, Cohens, Vinebergs and Jacobs (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 36), towering over the threshold between old establishment and the creative Yiddish newcomers.

This history also records the Aschers and the Mosses, the Schwobs, the Scheuers and the Pierces, as well as the first Lithuanians, citizens of a quality not likely to be met up with at random in groups as small as the Canadian Jewish society of the early period.

It is easier to understand that those who arrived in the new century - with their distinct heritage of a thousand years of Ashkenazi Judaism, with their turbulent history which cast them on Canadian soil, with the emotional and intellectual ferment that was so creative in world Judaism, as in all humanity during this period - added an impressive gallery of personalities to the group biography of the community.

The area of their function being largely in ideas, it is not surprising that the cultural treasury of this community retains the fruit of the creative work, largely in literary and journalistic form and in the organizational structure of the community, rather than in political or economic fields. Nor were art, law, architecture, the military their fields of interest.

The rabbinic sphere was also not the centre of community concern, though we find that the several outstanding personalities of talent in this sphere - Rabbis M.A. Ashinsky (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 41) Drucker,

Simon Glazer (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 37) and Judah Rosenberg - were virtually lost in internecine conflict and irrelevance. Even Rabbi Hirsch Cohen, with the same talent and dedication, survived only with the advantage of his family's direct and indirect support, and his longevity, to enable his work to prevail.

Yet a dozen or more devoted leaders of the secular world made their mark in Canada during the first two decades of the century.

Active as they were in several scenes, they were all reflected and recorded on the pages of the Jewish Times and more especially of the Canader Adler.

The Adler, which H. Wolofsky established in 1907, was rich in literary and communal personality from its first week to its last edition.

They were excellent and meticulous journalists, aware of their professional responsibilities. But no less were they conscious of participating in creating a new lasting and better world outside Europe, a new world in which Jewish emigrants could legitimately play a large part. They knew that they were also shaping a new Canadian society within the dominion's boundaries; that they were delineating a Jewish community within Canada which could influence the new Judaism of their nineteenth century and the twentieth, and they knew that they had particular responsibility for each of the sectors of the vast cultural and social immigrant element in Canadian Jewry then being born.

This complex historic role was so deliberate that it is possible to examine it line by line and issue by issue of the Adler and, indeed, of the other serious early Canadian Jewish publications such as the Jewish Times, Der Veg, and Die Volkszeitung.

Not surprisingly, H. Wolofsky (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 38), the founder of the Adler, and A.B. Bennett, one of the editors who shaped the Jewish Times, emerge as leaders of Canadian Jewry for decades, as did L. Chazanovitch (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 42), the creator of the short-lived Folkszeitung who left a profound impression on the community.

The school of articulate and active men of the pen about Wolofsky, led by A.A. Roback (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 41), B.G. Sack (Canadian Jewish Archives, no. 42) have left their mark in Canadian Jewish journalism and thought. Several of them were men of style whose contribution to Canadian literature are quite unknown; among them S. Schneour, Konrad Bercovici, Isaac Yampolsky, J.L. Malamuth.

The two greatest Canadian names who have written their names in golden letters on Hebraic world literature are, of course, Reuben Brainin and Yehudah Kaufmann. For a stormy, war-torn half a decade, which was central in their own biographies, they were active on the Canadian scene and left a permanent mark on its further development. Sadly, their leaving Canada in 1916, followed "one of the most sordid episodes in the history of the community," to cite the judicious testimony of the distinguished Bennett.

A year later, the greatest Canadian literary figure, J.I. Segal, began to publish his immortal poetry, in 1917, in the pages of the Adler, encouraged by Canada's first storyteller, M. Shmuelson.

Bennett and his associate Michael Garber followed the intellectual, Zionist and political tradition of Brainin-Kaufmann for many years even while, on the prairies, young Louis Rosenberg was initiating his career in farm leadership, education and scientific research of Canadian Judaism. They all inspired the uniquely revolutionary program of the Canadian Jewish Congress after their deposition of de Sola and the installation in Canadian leadership of Archibald J. Freiman and that heiress of the Sarah Bat Tovim tradition, Lillian Freiman.

This cultural and communal tradition was followed faithfully in vigour and in ethical tone by such men as Leib Zuker who placed his stamp on the Jewish Library, the I.L. Peretz School and on the early Jewish trade unions; H.M. Caiserman, who fought Canadian anti-Semitism almost single-handedly and shaped the Canadian Jewish Congress permanently in his own historic pattern, even as he nursed Yiddish literature in this country; Simon Belkin, whose initiative extended from collecting clothing for the survivors of World War massacres to

organizing the first Save Soviet Jewry emigration project; and Shloimeh Wiseman of the Jewish People's School whose Hebraist cultural leadership stamped Canadian Jewry - indeed, the broader Jewish scene - with a paedagogue's mark all his own.

This social conscience marked the age, particularly the migratory element, and explains in part the fact that every ideological movement of the period - Jewish or more general in origin - was reflected within the palette of Jewish public and cultural activity. The Adler was open to this breadth not only because of Wolofsky but because his team made this universalism inevitable.

But these common qualities did not make for homogeneity. Indeed, they were no college of cosmopolitans, and the nearest to an agreement among them all was in resistance to the pressure cooker of assimilation; they were all Jewish nationalists, Zionists, dedicated to the survival of all distinctive Jewish values.

This responsibility was also clearly apparent in each line of writing of nearly every contributor to the Adler: C. Schneour, B.J. Goldstein, M. Shmuelson, M.L. Benjamin, J. Goodman, S. Belkin and H.M. Caiserman.

Different as the members of the Adler team were, they were all individualist in moods, style, concerns, often in biographies, in culture and in fate.

In this perspective it was almost inevitable that their cultural progeny and successors in the Canadian Yiddish press should have the breath of A.M. Klein, David Lewis, Leonard Cohen, Mordecai Richler, Miriam Waddington, Irving Layton and Ghitta Caiserman.

It is a Jewish stellar chart deserving of the appreciation of Canadian citizenry; not least the person of the distinctive gypsy-oriented Konrad Bercovici, one of the literary figures of variegated talent and intense, far-ranging personal and social interests.

### KONRAD BERCOVICI

When editor Reuben Brainin assumed the direction of the Adler in March, 1912, he searched out original talent in the Montreal community. Among these he discovered Isaac Yampolsky and J.L. Malamuth. Their fresh essays with their profound thoughtfulness, new form and rhythmic language quickly drew the attention of literary critics.

These writers displayed profound talent and marked the Adler as a serious literary medium as distinctly as did the editor himself. It is remarkable that their talents - as much as that of M. Shmuelson - found a home in the pages of the Adler, and nowhere else after they left Montreal.

The very day he departed from New York to assume his position in Montreal he began to implement his intention to bring valuable talent to the columns of the Adler.

He narrates a remarkable incident that occurred that evening at a gathering of Yiddish authors and journalists in an eastside hall where he met Konrad Bercovici (1882-1960) who was to become one of Brainin's important contributors to the Adler.

A native of Roumania, Bercovici, a musician by profession, had studied literature and music at the Sorbonne and came to Montreal in 1912.

Like so much of Brainin's recollections, those on Konrad Bercovici are to be found - if at all - in various assemblages of his diary notes of varying tonality and in varying degrees of objectivity. They reside on different levels of credibility or at least of consistency. The diary experienced editing by the author, or possibly suppression.

His diary notes on Bercovici were summarily broken up when they appeared in print.

The Bercovici entry in the diary of January 15, 1924 appeared in the "Book of Memories," in the third volume of his Complete Works (N.Y. 1940) It cuts off abruptly with a reference to "other places in my diary."

"I knew everybody in the room but for one quite unfamiliar stranger, with a rather wild face. His overgrown hair was black as grease, and his face that of a gypsy. I was told his name was Konrad Bercovici. He writes much but the editors have not published a line of his.

"Suddenly someone announced that Bercovici 'would read a sketch which he had brought with him.' He barely restrained his laughter as he called on Bercovici.

"The young man had been waiting in his corner for this all evening. Now he began searching in his pocket for scraps of paper and notes which fell on the floor as he rose. The audience laughed at his attempt to collect and arrange them. When he began to read them in a strange voice no one in the audience was listening in the confusion.

"But I listened very carefully and when he concluded I went to him, shook his hand and told him that his sketch was very fine. I explained in a few words why I liked it so much.

"'But what am I to do when the bastard editors will not publish my work?' His face expressed his deep tragedy as he asked his questions. When I told him not to despair, the poor man proposed to visit me at my home to read me more of his work. I was leaving for Montreal, but I was ready to take the sketch that he had read to deaf ears. I would publish it.

"He was elated at my promise. 'You will be my saviour.'

"On my trip to Montreal next morning I read Bercovici's notes. I liked the contents and the external technique even more than when I had first heard the sketch last night. The paper showed his weakness in the orthography of Yiddish nor did he have the fullest command of the language, but the manner of his expression and his grasp of his issues and his vision of life were new, those of an experienced writer. Every line showed the assured hand of a true artist. I published the sketch and arranged for his fee to be sent to him in New York. Within a few days I received several packages of his manuscripts, portrayals of gypsy life and essays on current affairs with a letter of his endless joy at seeing his work in print.

"During the following weeks not a day passed without a letter, usually inquiring what was happening to his stories. On my inquiry he sent what passed for his life story which was full of exaggerations and outright lies beyond the imagination of Baron Munchausen. He told of being born in a Roumanian village where gypsies formed the majority.

"I had gone to Ste. Agathe des Monts for a rest on Shabuoth when my wife called me on the telephone that Bercovici had arrived from New York and had gone straight from the station to my home. He looked like a refugee from a revolution or an escaped prisoner. My wife Edith did not know what to do with him. I suggested that he remain in our house for several days until I return."

Bercovici described his arrival in beautiful Montreal in the midst of a strike. (Canadian Jewish Archives, new series no. 42, pp. 102-107)

Bercovici was one of the founders of the Mile End school which was the predecessor to the Jewish National Radical School.

After leaving Montreal in 1925 he moved to the United States and became a well-known English-language author, particularly on the gypsies.

An article by Bercovici appeared in Melech Grafstein's Sholom Aleichem Panorama. (London, Ont., 1948)

He died in New Jersey in 1960.

## ART AND THE ARTIST

Brainin began to publish Bercovici contributions in the summer of 1912 with an article on the objectives of 'Art and Artists.'" (July 13, 1912)

"What is the artist searching to attain by applying his entire intellectual power?

"His eyes constantly seeking to see what other mortals do not see, of what other mortals would never think.

"The artist is composed of a yearning eye and hungry heart. He stands before his picture which everyone praises as perfect and shakes his head, 'It could be better; it should be better.' He will always remember that it should be more powerful, the paysage more truthful; the melody does not sound as he had intended it, or as he had it within himself. He continues in search of what he had not found or what he may never find. Nevertheless, it is his mission to invent it. He was born for it.

"All who do not feel his pain should be on bended knees before this greatest sufferer, who by nature was endowed with the mission of pains of childbirth, whose child may never be born.

"A melody wanted to be sung, to incorporate in its joy the pain of scores of generations. Subconsciously every note, every rhythmic turn and swing is conveyed from mother to child until one morning it will be sung out by a God-punished man.

"It happens at times that life may embitter the life of the singer even as he is fated to sing the song of happiness. Thus did Schubert suffer hunger and illness even as he composed his happy songs, and another in happy life will need to express the sorrow of his ancestors: Felix Mendelssohn.

"It required millions of years for free wandering unregulated cells, combined, to form a complete living machine, and more millions of years for the crustacea by evolution to become a creature that thinks and searches and dares ask questions about how and why and what for about existence. It requires millions of years for an individual to express the meaning of past generations or to signal the eternal future of generations, for life eternal, with no dated beginning or end.

"In a sense wandering is a circle. Where and who jumps from the turning wheel. There is no real beginning, for each one is cast down; it is really no end.

"One jumps out; one is cast in. The wheel turns. But the creator leaves a mark on the wheel.

"Like the millions of cells melding to create one living being, so millions of beings meld to create a higher being in himself, the artist. It is the justification of all these beings.

"The artist does not fulfill his civic duties, and he does not care how his clothing hangs on him. He wanders from place to place, and sees what no one else sees, feels what no one else feels. His eyes are a thousand years old and his wisdom is limitless, with generations behind him. He is superman." (July 14, 1912)

## THE POOR

Bercovici discussed "Who is Rich?" on November 29, 1912.

"It is said, 'Not he who has piles of millions is a millionaire,' and not all who barely have enough to eat are poor. Some of the poor are wealthier than those who accumulate piles of silver; because they do not live in fear of poverty if they donate what they have. They feel a greater richness within themselves than do the believers in Mammon. They do not feel isolated and alone when they come to the wildest wasteland. There is breadth in the heart of the generous man.

"During a recent campaign for the stricken in Saloniki a wealthy man was asked for a contribution.

"'Where is Saloniki?'

"'Four thousand miles away.'

"'They are thousands of miles away, and you ask me to help them? It is too far for me.'

"I looked at him with pity. He was poorer than the poor of Saloniki. His gold and dress render him more pathetic. He could not reach four thousand miles, could not cover the holes in his garments, could not cover his nakedness, the lumpy miles, the poverty of his eyes.

"I was sorry for him as for all the poor, as for all the dying.

"The truly rich, who give all they have, continue to hear the call of the constantly poor, and to feel.

"We should pray for the wealthy who do not feel, for the poverty of their hearts, the poorest of all, those beyond help or hope; who die poor in the heaps of their poor piles of gold."

EDITORIAL OFFICE

Bercovici notes in the office of the Adler that other people write their histories in ink, but our people write it in blood. "Every blood bath awakens us from our routine, makes us forget the way of the world. We think, instead, of the surviving children and of women hungry and without a roof. The unexpected report on the pogroms in Saloniki came like thunder out of a blue sky.

"Brainin decided this is no time for weeping. Writing will not alter the conditions of our kin. We must raise relief and send it to the unfortunate. Within a few minutes we raised \$80 in the office of the Adler, from lower and the several middle class people. When Brainin was about to thank one of the contributors, the man responded, 'Thank you for the opportunity to do my duty.'

"The Baron de Hirsch Institute was conducting their annual elections when Brainin was asked to speak. He urged immediate aid for the victims. As I listened I was certain that the thousand dollars would be raised there and then. All the wealthy citizens of the community were there. But the sum total was \$180, and this largely because of the energy of the former president Lyon Cohen.

"From there we went to the Young Men's Zionist Literary Society where Brainin was to deliver a scholarly address. Instead he made his appeal. Within a few minutes they collected \$30.

We left for the Russian-Polish Sick Benefit Society. H. Wolofsky understood the situation. Brainin's address resounded like the funeral march of Chopin on the heartstring of a nation, a march which would revive and teach the arts of the arms when necessary. Those present immediately contributed \$50.

"We arrived at the Hebrew Sick Benefit Society after their meeting, but their officers had done our work for us. They pledged \$50 and Brainin had but to thank them.

"We stopped in at the King George Society. Brainin sounded as an echo of the martyrs, and those who had remained to hear him raised over \$20 within minutes. In the meantime the society delivered another \$25 to the Adler for the cause.

"We arrived at the Montreal Hebrew Association after their meeting; only four members had remained, but the chairman took it upon himself to pledge \$10 in the meantime. We came too late, also, to the assembly of the Shoemakers Protective Society. When the last three members at the door had emptied their pockets, the contribution was \$2.25.

"We went home after midnight tired and broken. In the morning we received an envelope with \$9. The pulse was beating hard.

"I was tempted to pace the streets and announce to all, 'I am a Jew.'" ("With Herr Brainin in the Societies," Nov. 25, 1912)

### WELCOMING THE GUESTS

Bercovici, like his readers, never ceased from the problems of the poor. On November 13, 1912 he reported, "Everyone in the house was ill - father, mother, children. They had too often been hungry - the children, their parents, and the parents of their parents. Each new generation was weaker than the previous one. They worked long and were long sick. The present generation is the weakest. The children are sixty years old when they are born. They cannot smile nor laugh. Bread is their only joy.

"Their neighbours come in and see their misery. They could not help them for their own poverty, so they ran to the rich.

"The rich came and saw the cold rooms and the desiccated faces and were sorry for the poor, and wept for pity. They sought out doctors to heal them, fed them a nutritious diet and restored them. The entire family was grateful and blessed the charitable women and prayed for their welfare.

"Father became well enough to go to work and soon the older children could work as well. They were employed by the husbands of the charitable women, and everyone in gratitude prayed for the happiness of these families.

"But when father went to buy bread it was more expensive than before he had fallen ill, as were coal and water and clothing. As they were not earning enough to buy bread, they became ill again.

"The wealthy wives of the sellers of bread and water and clothing and beautiful things came again and pitied the poor who were ill.

"And the more charity they dispensed the more expensive the bread, the weaker the generations, the richer the dispensers of charity, the poorer those accepting it."

## SHELTERING HOME

The established community speaks.

The Jewish Times of January 26, 1907 years earlier had welcomed "the project of establishing a Jewish Sheltering Home that has been taken in hand by a leading society of ladies. Experience has proved that whatever the ladies of this community undertake to carry out is always successful, and we have no doubt the same result will follow in this case. Montreal, as the metropolitan city of the Dominion and the chief port of landing for immigrants, has a heavy duty imposed upon its people.

"While our community here is chiefly composed of those who have but recently arrived in the country, there is a considerable number who can do more than they have done to aid in the work of caring for the poor cast upon our shores.

"Cases frequently occur which require religious and moral, as well as material, treatment. There must be provided some systematic way of dealing with juvenile waifs, and the suggestion of establishing an Orphan Asylum is one which should be acted upon without delay. The Jewish population of Montreal is now estimated at about thirty thousand.

"We cannot too strongly appeal to all who can assist in however small or large extent to send in their contributions without delay. The present severe winter has increased the demands for assistance and everyone should feel that it is incumbent on him to help in the good work. The spring is coming when the opening of St. Lawrence River navigation may be surely expected to bring many thousands of immigrants who must be cared for, distributed and provided with employment.

"But money is needed in order to take the best advantage of opportunities. We sincerely hope this appeal will have the desired effect, and that all will hasten to assist to the extent of their means. The Sheltering Home and Orphan Asylum are urgent necessities and should be within the competence of this community, and the ladies who are moving for the establishment thereof should be given all the encouragement and assistance possible."

XXXXXX

Bercovici recorded a visit to one of the early institutions of the immigrant community whose sign proclaimed "Hachnossath Orchim. (Welcoming the Guests) Home for the Aged, Orphanage," founded by Rabbi Glazer (Canadian Jewish Archives, new series, no. 37, pp. 77-78).

"The first regrettable aspect of the house is that the three institutions are together. Young children are constantly surrounded by passing wanderers arriving on every ship, by the aged and the poor. These children live in the midst of loneliness; they will be robbed of the sense of independence; they are in the midst of the machinery of charity.

"Experience in Europe as well as in America has shown that the best way of caring for children is to place them in normal homes as foster children; it is less expensive and the children are not pauperized.

"The committee is planning to receive 32 children. Beds for them have been purchased, but there is no space for more than 12. The rooms are poorly lit, there is no fresh air; no bathroom, wash stands, furniture, lavabos or washing facilities. Where will you put them, gentlemen of the board of administration?

"Nor is there an isolation room for children who might be ill. There is a fire escape from the upper floor, but it is made of wood, which burns first. How can you have been so negligent?

"Kitchen arrangements are dark, unsanitary.

"I know you mean no harm; it is only ignorance on your part. But if the children will grow up with weak lungs - or will not grow up at all - your explanations will not serve. Orphans require greater care than do children with parents. For the very fact that the parents died young indicates that the children are suspect.

"In the home for the aged an old man was reading a newspaper; a second happened to be at prayer, a third was stretched out on his bed, so distraught that he did not notice us coming in. After a while, he raised his head towards us and sank back in his reflections.

"Three women sat out of doors peeling potatoes. One of them, five years in Montreal, told me that they had been wealthy. Another one came from Germany three years ago.

"As I was leaving I looked at the sign again - Orphans - Wanderers - Aged. Do they necessarily follow?" (Sept. 20, 1912)

## AT THE ORPHANAGE

Bercovici spent "An Evening at the Montreal Orphanage" (Nov. 13, 1912).

He had been invited by the superintendent without an explanation of the nature of the program.

"I was there Sunday before the set hour. From the outside I heard the clatter of cutlery and the moving of benches and the chatter of children and of the violinist rehearsing in the basement. Inside many shining eyes looked at me, cheeks were flushed, teeth shining. The hall was lit up, paper decorations on the walls, candies on the table - an excess of youthful, naive energy and laughter. You lose years of your age in the presence of these young ones, and you forget you are in an orphanage.

"I was called into the office where the serious men were discussing elections, tickets, ballot cards, dues, house and bylaws, president and opposition - the full political bazaar which drags after every institution, poisons the lives of staff and of officers and robs all lives.

"I am bored and cannot understand how they can discuss such dry matters when upstairs there is so much cheer.

"There is a movement down below as several gentlemen come in. The superintendent displays the new stove to them, with the compartments for meat foods and for dairy. The ladies also come in with their daughters; they try hard to be serious, as befits an orphanage. When I laughed a young lady chided me, 'How can you laugh in an orphanage?'

"The ladies passed through the hall with the youngsters - like a frost. The laughing ceased, their cheeks chilled, their eyes froze. The freezing visitors left the room. The silence remained for a few minutes, but it warmed up again. The Yiddish eyes lit up again; red and white blooms appeared in their hair. The fiddler in the basement struck up again. The evening began. A young people's group had organized it to cheer the orphans up. It was a noble thought, the finest I had met up with, the finest gift they could have brought and the finest they could give to themselves.

"I left because I had to leave, to part with the rosy cheeks and shining eyes, the sincere laughter and the naive violin and the paper decorations."

### PROVIDING FOR THE NAKED

Bercovici devoted a column to the Malbish Aroomim Society, whose name derives from one of the qualities of the Lord, "He who provides the naked with clothing." (Nov. 23, 1912)

An editorial in the Adler awakened the group to action, and within a fortnight some 90 poor children were provided with garments. The activists were not men of high standing but ordinary citizens, Baalai Batim who remembered the feel of the cold and of hunger and of torn clothing.

"I froze when I entered the Baron de Hirsch Institute to witness the distribution of the clothing that Sunday, when I saw all the small, poorly dressed boys. Some mothers were waiting outside. I could see the toes of one of the women through her torn shoes. Another woman was leaning on the wall, her face was grey, stony.

"'In fact, these children are doing us a favour, for they provide us an opportunity to perform a good deed,' Mr. Brainin was speaking. 'it is but sad that this activity does not reach the parents. But the children were naked and you dressed them, even if some coats were too small and others too large. It was sad to see all coats of one cut, and the children were thus stamped with poverty. But at twenty or thirty below zero they will be warm and will not think of the style.'

"Before dispersing there was to be a parade of the children, but Brainin protested and the children went off without having to appear as in a menagerie.

"As we were leaving the Institute I saw the mother who was leaning on the wall. Her ashen face was alive. She saw her child dressed warmly."

xxxxxxx

In "His Beloved" Bercovici portrays the unhappy mother of a poet who sees her brilliant son, bedraggled and poor, while less worthy sons of other mothers are wealthy and happy. The son asks her advice: he can marry the older daughter of a rich man whom he does not love, or a poor, beautiful girl whom he loves. The mother suggests that he follow his emotions. He thanks her by dedicating his next poem to her.

xxxxxxx

Bercovici's short sketch of a family tragedy "Between Two Fires" appeared on July 19, 1912.

XXXXXXX

His "Bloodthirsty" tells the story of a lion in a Paris circus gone mad, biting the keeper's hand. (Aug. 14, 1912)

XXXXXX

### FEARFUL JEWS

"You know the fable of the tree which was weeping when the lumberman began to chop at it with his axe.

"The next tree asked why the bitter plaint. 'Why cry? You know full well that such is the end of all our brethren, the coming of the woodsman with his axe.'

"I am not crying because of the man. I cry because the handle of his axe is made from one of my branches. He is killing me with wood from my own branch; it is my own blood that is the cause of my death.'

"So it is in life, in our own exilic condition, with a sort of impulse to destroy our people and not even to wait for the woodsman to raise his axe; they beg him to hurry to his work.

"Some anticipate by making axes and at a signal they rush to offer their services.

"Take the case of the Rosenthal murder. The press did report that the victim and some of the criminals were Jewish. But the Jewish public seized upon the case and made a big issue of it. They are now convening a public meeting in New York's Cooper Union which will be addressed by Jacob Schiff himself. What animates them?

"No anti-Semitic paper would be low enough to exploit the Jewish origin of Rosenthal and the gang. The world understands that crime, joy and tragedy are international. A murderer is neither Jewish nor Christian, a follower of no religion or nation. He is a murderer. Who would accuse the entire American people for having wicked people among them, or the Italians, or the Germans? Did any of these peoples apologize for their criminals, or did anyone ask them to do so?

"But our newspapers have spread the Rosenthal case over dozens of newspapers as if the entire Jewish people had been accused."  
(Aug. 8, 1912)

## COMBAT

Bercovici had been longing for combativeness for some time.

"Much had been somnolent within me as my spirit had rotted, my fantasy dozed and I see the world as it is, the grey wooden truth, people as they are and not as we would see them.

"Can you give me anything that is other than it is? That is what I seek. I have become accustomed to see the world as spectators see it, at a distance, through fiery eyes, with red lips and satin cheeks. Suddenly someone calls, 'Fire!'

"I run upon the stage to save the actress, so beautiful. What I see is an old woman, her colour smeared, instead of a smile she grimaces at me, her cheeks fallen in, pale, the wig at the side, the enchanting eyes cold and fatigued.

"The fire had been extinguished together with the flames in my heart. I can no longer go to the theatre. I know the face of the beautiful actress. I had been too close. Can anyone show anything different than it is, a cheery, beautiful lie, a bright colour, a sharp sword? I can see through everything, and no one will contest my perception. 'Let it be as you say,' my friends agree.

"But I was born to conflict. I have fought my battle to become myself. I have killed the moral to which I was born and created another moral for myself; I have fought my own moral and have won to create new habits. In turn I conquered some of these. Others have conquered me. I have fought my loves and fought my hatreds.

"I want to wage war today, to draw my sword from its scabard, dull as it is; my breast is open to anyone, to hundreds, to the world.

"To the unsmiling world, to a world prepared to surrender, their beloved, their faith -- all but their sack of gold." (Dec. 5, 1912)

### MONTREAL TYPES

Bercovici introduced "Montreal Types" from the editorial rooms to his readers on September 24, 1912.

"So that is you?"

"I thought you would be a bearded Jew, considering your writings; Heaven knows who. In reality - a man, and a young man at that; as they say.

"A Jew naturally asks: 'Here I am old and gray and am devoted to nothing like in the years of young manhood.'

"But that is not what is on my mind. I want to ask you something: as they say, 'Ask and you shall be answered; seek and you shall find.'

"Yes, as I was about to ask.

"Winter is approaching, and I am a big reader. I have read all the Yiddish writers, but I like to have the book at my side as I read, not wait until someone will bring me a sheet. It isn't enough - a page; a spit, and throw it out.

"I want you to lend me, or at least give me the name of the book from which you copy your scribbling. I want to read it at once, and that is all. After all we are in America.

"You are trying to convince me that you think up all these things? Come on! Do you think I am a greenhorn?"

"I have been thirty years in Montreal. Long enough to know something.

"Why all this pretence? Just say simply that you don't want. But I would spend a dollar for such a book. Just don't bluff.

"Am I a greenhorn, as they say? I have been thirty years here in Montreal!"

Type II

Characteristic of the strong social theme of the earliest Yiddish literature in America is Bercovici's monologue, "I Am a Thief." (Oct. 17, 1912)

"You sought me and you despise me. You will turn me over to your people and they will punish me. You will be the hero, for you caught a thief.

"Do it quickly, for I despise talking to decent people. I will feel better among my people in jail.

"I am young and strong. Why did I not go to work? You see, I am not a thief because I need to steal, but because I want to steal; and what I cannot steal I destroy, I burn; yes, I burn. I do this because I hate your decency.

"All this because I come across as a simple young boy, a stranger. I looked for work and could not find any; I was hungry and freezing. I was pushed away from everything. The smell of meat and bread followed and persecuted me as I smelled smoke from the chimneys. I begged for bread in vain; for a warmer place near an oven, but my frozen limbs were rejected. I did not go to the charity places, for there is humiliation there.

"I was fatigued and broken, lying in the snow, waiting for death to relieve me, cursing my life and all those who spat at my outstretched hand.

"Suddenly somebody put out a helping hand. It warmed and relieved me. All this without asking me who or whence I was. When I was better, I asked him who he was. 'I am a thief,' he told me. I understood that I belonged to them, my brothers.

"For a moment I thought of the rabbis, the citizens, the distributors of charity - which of them is the good man? I then stretched out my hand to him who saved me. 'We are brothers,' I told him. I am a thief; better than a stinking corpse, than a rabbi, a citizen. I need no charity; I answer no questions; when I have bread I share it with my brothers, I destroy it; I throw it into the waters. Hurry, because I must join my brothers, the thieves."

### Type III

In another sketch of an anonymous acquaintance Bercovici wrote that "he had met him in Paris. He had come from Ekaterinoslav where he had become involved in the revolutionary movement. The police had learned of this and he chose Paris instead of Siberia.

"He was studying philosophy. Grossman, a friend of mine, invited me to his home where I would meet Elman, newly arrived from Russia, a brilliant conversationalist, an orator and in idealist. Elman was a giant of a man, overgrown with blond hair, deep childish blue eyes under thick brows. He had the voice of restrained thunder.

"Manya, who had been in love with Grossman, could not take her eyes off Elman. Masha the Bomb, as we called her, looked contemptuously at us, as if to say, 'There is a man.' Goldie, who was engaged to Herman the Musician, was embarrassed with the man of her destiny.

"Elman kept on speaking, I understood little of his vocabulary in Russian; on revolution, revolvers, republic, socialism. Grossman was an orthodox Marxist, while Elman was a follower of Bernstein. We went walking late at night in the Luxemburg gardens. His face shone with inner enthusiasm as he explained 'the isolation of the Russian peasants and workers under the lash of ignorance and tyranny, disease and starvation. The entire world is suffering under the yoke of capitalism. None of us is permitted to think of his own fate or fortune while millions perish. Can you not hear the cries of their woe? Are you deaf? I shall not rest as long as I live.'

"I drew his attention to the sun rising behind the trees, the firmament coming ablaze. He measured me as he looked at me. 'You are not one of us; you are from the other side of the barricades.'

"He shamed me. After we separated I could scarcely liberate myself from his mighty figure. 'This is a man,' I told myself, 'an idealist.'

"By the time I met him again a few months later he had learned to speak French well. His entire body breathed revolution as he addressed labour activists who virtually deified him.

"Six years later, walking on a street in Montreal I heard my name being called. It was Elman, an unrecognizable Elman. He pressed my hand as he asked me in Yiddish, 'How is it coming?' His long hair had been cut, his moustache shaven, his new suit well pressed.

"He made me come with him to a storefront office, 'Elman Real Estate.'

"'Elman Real Estate? Is that you?'

"'Don't you understand? It is in the air.'

"A customer entered. I heard my old friend in Elman's voice as the two spoke. Elman's eyes shone again in enthusiasm as he spoke with old conviction, 'You will soon be rich. We can become millionaires. You see these lots? They will be worth ten times as much within ten years.' And he did convince him.

"'Elman, is that you speaking like this? Where is your idealism?'

"'Did you say three thousand? Are you crazy?... Money is a delicate matter... You have to be careful nowadays... Where are these flats exactly... I will be there in half an hour... All right, in half an hour. Good-bye.'

"He changes caps quickly.

"'You will excuse me. Business is business and you can't make a living out of philosophy. Come in tomorrow and I will show you like twice one is two that our entire life makes no sense.'

"'You understand, my friend. It is in the air. It is infectious, like measles.' But he looked down at the floor. 'I am still an idealist. But it is in the air. No one can help it.' ("It is in the Air," in Adler, Oct. 8, 1912)

Type IV

"The philosopher is a merchant, a bit of a real estate man, and still a person.

"He likes to digest a good lunch with some philosophy, to think about the coming of Messiah, as to when he will come. Will it affect the price of real estate, and what other changes will develop?

"But deep in his heart he needs something greater than money, and when he finds an opportunity to discuss higher values he seizes it with pleasure. In the midst of such a discussion of the why and how of life, he dons a pessimistic, Hamlet-like mien, lifts his eyes and lowers his head quite pessimistically. Yes, that meaning of all life? This chase for something else does not give us a tenth of the expected pleasure in a hopeless life with no sense, no purpose. But the telephone rings and he answers at the first bell."

### MEDIOCRE MAN

The mediocre man, another type, sits on the throne in "The Kingdom of Mediocrity," our university. (Nov. 24, 1912)

"He is not very good nor very bad; not very clever, the mediocre. About him are many who stand lower, and others who stand taller.

"They are not his slaves. The power of the kingdom of mediocrity consists in the truth that anyone can become a king, and that everyone thinks he can be king. 'Look at our king. He is no finer, no wiser, no better than I, yet he is king. My turn will come.'

"No, there are no more slaves stamped with their shame. It is too dangerous, for slaves sometimes break their chains. The mediocre have studied their history and they know the history of their experience. Their principle is to give everyone his turn to become a king, but not to rule.

"Mediocrity is the new government; not very good, but not very bad. See them love everything in their class; similar homes; they honour and love their equals who assist them to the throne; their names are similar; they are similar, of like stature, like faces; same hair and beards; same garments - grey, blue and black. If you have seen one of them, you have seen a thousand, a million, and the king is the perfect norm of mediocrity, plus the will to admit that he is perfectly mediocre.

"They trained the trees to be equally high; they tore out the flowers from the fields and planted rye and barley and wheat; but few geniuses, yet many talents.

"They fear the geniuses who do not surrender. He laughs at them, sets a bad example. They raise their pupils to the high level of the average. Their average has robbed them of great knowledge.

"Is it by chance that the kingdom of the average arrived with steam and with factories, with literacy and compulsory education? All write and all have the same thought; no great thought; we all paint, but no da Vinci, no Raphael, no Rembrandt; pianos in every home without Beethoven.

"The king has said, we do not need them. They constitute useless labour. We need machines and mediocre men. Creation is work, gold is honour. The mediocre man wants to live forever, never to die, because he has never lived, never created; they never possessed

anything immortal, nothing will remain of them. They fear lightning and prefer a slow candle; servants instead of courtesans.

"Their god is not omnipotent. His power is average, not eternal, infinite, the force of steam and smoke."

BRETHREN

"The golden wheat was rocking under the silver sky and the fiery sun greeted the murmuring bluish stream. The low trees sang their morning songs and the branches touched and caressed in the breeze.

"Two swallows, red-headed, played and raced and danced between the branches, brothers of one mother and of one father. Behind them a black, murderous robber bird was eyeing them, hungry but fearful of being attacked by the two birds at once, children of one set of parents, for he is cowardly.

"Suddenly, one swallow noticed a worm below. It left its brother to swoop down to eat it. But its mate also saw the worm, and the two faced each other over the worm in enmity.

"'It is mine. I saw it first.'

"'I am hungry.'

"Putting aside their common nest, their common mother and father, they attacked each other. Feathers flew and blood dripped from the two little bodies.

"Because of a worm they forgot they were brothers.

"As the wind shook the stalks, golden grain fell on the ground for many other swallows. Yet the two fought while the worm crept away. From his perch above the black bird was happy in his anticipation. His time was coming soon.

"When the bloodied swallows had weakened the black carnivore swallowed them both.

"The golden wheat waved and bent before the fiery sun. The black bird was no longer hungry. (Aug. 13, 1912)

IN THE DARKNESS

In the darkness of the night Bercovici found his understanding somewhat enlightened. (Sept. 30, 1912)

"I peered into that darkness and I am unsure whether it abated somewhat or whether my eyes are more accustomed to it. But I will say to my brethren what I saw and understood.

"Man developed from a simple cell to the crustacea and thence to the beginning of reason and to the meaning of the why and how of life.

"The concept of God reached him in its primitive form of fear - fear of all that he did not understand. He developed further, and though his feet were nailed to earth, his head was rising to the heavens. His concepts became more defined, from fear to complex love.

"The earth too, developed - the sun and sea, flowers and beasts and man, and from simple God to a higher notion of the entire universe. The concept of God paralleled the development of his own creation; like flower blossoms the earth grew from a single cell, and human understanding developed to his most complex machine, as the understanding of man matures from infancy to adulthood. Men become wiser with each generation; is God at the same level for millions of years? Today God is the god of modern man.

"It is dark, but in the darkness my reason is more enlightened, but only for a moment."

XXXXXX

On September 29 he wrote "Two Sinners."

## THE SURFACE

Bercovici's essay "Polishers of Shoes" appeared in the Adler of November 16, 1912, before advertising reached its heights.

"There is a spirit of the shoe polishers as there are spirits of beggars and of storekeepers. A shoe polisher cannot make shoes, but when these have been made and are put on feet, he comes with his polish and makes them shine. He is responsible for the high shine of all things in our world.

"He evoked a new need; all must shine in our world. Boots may be tattered, patched, they let water in and let mud leak out, but they must shine. Shoes may be of the best leather, but no one will touch them unless they shine.

"We can scarcely tell who has feet, because under the legless man shoes have been stuffed with rags and polished to an unheard of shine.

"Nor does this apply only to shoes. Worthless goods are packaged in silk paper. Plain brass is polished until it shines finer than gold. False diamonds shine more brightly; not to speak of false teeth. His spirit has entered industry, politics, literature, art and philosophy; it has been elevated to an art.

"Stores exhibit all their merchandise in their window displays. I have suffered in a restaurant where sixty plates offered scarcely any food, but the cutlery shone.

"There are shoe polishers in literature who have never had a thought, but they add a lustre to what they borrow. When they address someone they do not look him in the eye, but see only whether their interlocutor wears a cylinder hat, lacquered shoes, frock coat; not what is under his high hat, whether he has a heart. He must shine.

"Our century is not of electricity but of advertising, of polish, of the polisher's brush. Shoes are purchased once a year, but are polished every day, and the more polishing, the thinner the leather; and we dare you not to polish, a shirt is now cheaper than a necktie.

"There are men of value who will not shine their shoes. So devoted patriots follow them, brush in hand, even if they annoy their great man and bring contempt upon him. Shoemakers make poor shoe polishers; the latter assure the world that, but for him, the world would disintegrate. America consumes more shoe polish than leather, more varnish than lumber, more fine paper than meat.

"A young lad (an author) confided loudly to me that he does not care any more for the sun and the moon because they are not news, they do not shine enough. Electricity is more exciting; a globe sheds more light than the moon; jewels shine finer than stars. I looked at him and saw my enemy. He will polish shoes."

### THE FINE HORSE

"A farmer had two young horses. He loved one of them more deeply, washed him and polished and brushed him until he shone like silk. It responded by its beauty and its wisdom.

"When the work season came about he put out the other horse from the stable, harnessed it to the plough and for other useful work. The finer horse remained in the stable as too fine and clever for rough work.

"Years passed. The work horse became stronger and wiser, but the fine horse shrank, lost the polish of his skin; his feet coarsened and his eyes no longer lit up. The farmer neglected him. The horse lost his cleverness, became angry, bit his rope, broke his jaws and escaped. His eyes did not see so subtly; as one too fine to work, he fell into a deep mudhole.

"But the horse without a shining skin lived happily with the farmer who had not loved him, who now cursed the other and let him starve in pain in the damp, deep mudhole. (Aug. 18, 1912)

### KING STEEL

The arrival of King Steel (Oct. 10, 1912) and his industrial slaves "has injected the lords of the spirit in the new era with a new relationship between the classes and the meaning of time in society.

"Men are the slaves of their products in today's kingdom of iron, steel and electricity.

"These machines are built to ease the labour of man, but the result is contrary to this intent. So many new needs are created that men need to work harder than ever, creating machines, digging coal to move the machines. It requires more labour in iron mines to make the tools than is saved in production.

"Before King Steel became its God mankind produced many higher spirits. Developing the spirit calls for physical repose. Spiritual effort demands all the energy that man possesses; when the body is exhausted man cannot create.

"But King Steel will not hear of this. He requires slaves, and the men of the spirit are kings. Machine labour requires a special type of man, a machine part. Whoever touches a machine becomes a part. Everything is mechanically arranged, mechanically understood.

"A handful have not surrendered to King Steel and are at war with him. By their spirit of prophecy they know that their victory is near, when each of them will be the spokesman as they enslave King Steel. They are the survivors of today's slaves of the machine. They inject these slaves with their product of their poems, song, thought, painting and sculpting.

"But the slaves of today consider the king of their future as their slave. The needs of the spiritual man are extraordinary because he is royal. He cannot combat the machine parts, because he cannot command the hammer, nor command force as they do; they tread on him.

"The loss is that of the machine man, temporarily defeated. The beaten intellectual, emaciated of spirit, desiccated by the endless chores which should not engage the creative man who cannot create the finest and the best.

"Men rush. Even in the garden, at the sight of a rose they would press out its perfume, without waiting for the bee to give its honey. They press the bee for its honey. But the slaves of iron and of steel cannot or will not understand this. They have developed a theology that the spiritual is produced as is the physical. They put man-king on a par with God-King. They scorn the need for fine music, flowers and paintings and thought.

"In this hegemony the artist belongs to the past, before labour-saving machines came and left no time for thought on life, for children to learn the names of flowers. In that past a new thought was worth more than silver, woman was a sanctity and not merely a weaker slave.

"If God would descend now King Steel would harness Him to a labour-saving machine that prolongs life. Recently someone asked me, 'God, what is His work?'"

## MURDER AND ADVERTISING

"Under present conditions advertising has grown into an art, a science unto itself, so that businessmen and artists who do not follow its dictates must disappear and leave space for the less worthy who follow the dictates of the time.

"Years ago Mr. Barnum announced that if he had \$100,000 to invest in business, he would spend \$90,000 of it in advertising and \$10,000 on merchandise. By this method he earned countless millions.

"It is being applied by all who depend upon the public. Many are the actresses who owe their fame to the genius of their press agents who make certain that the artist's name appears constantly in the press, if only because of imagined thefts of her jewelry, or the kidnapping of her children, or her invention of artificial gold, or her saving an old person from death by accident, or her lover's suicide.

"These flights of the imagination having become hackneyed, the men of the skill were forced to resort to the exploitation of murder. No sooner was an innocent victim assassinated in a café then the site is beleaguered by strangers who are photographed in situ, at the same table, drinking from the glass which had been in the hand of the murderer or of his victim.

"The staging is followed with greater interest than a rare discovery or a natural phenomenon. The world has become a theatre, a show with new effects exciting the nerves. It is no longer news for a murderess to receive hundreds of letters from men ready to marry her. Vaudeville managers offer her the stage for her appearance.

"This advertising is entering literature. The banning of a book ensures sales and intense reading - a phenomenon dating from Adam and Eve.

"Even though banning of books has become more frequent, when a story appears about someone committing suicide after reading it, or when someone attacks the author, the notoriety of such tomes increases sales immensely.

"A French novelist, Mme. Bloch, shot an American, Miss Ridgeman, for having stolen her husband. Now her books, of which no one had heard before, are sought out and translated. Public morbidity evoked interest in why she committed the crime, and her children's stories will be examined for traces of her deeds, as well as evidence of her talent, genius or temperament. When she emerges from prison she will be awaited by journalists, impressarios and publishers."  
(Aug. 6, 1912)

### THE ARTIST IN PATRIA

Bercovici's "Among Greeks" is the tale of an artist now in Paris, Antwerp, at sea. (Oct. 18, 1912)

"Rosen left his capricious Clementine, packed some of his things and left for Antwerp with the money he received from his father, the Russian businessman. He expected the contrast between Paris and Antwerp would awaken a longing for work.

"But when he went down to the waterfront, set up his easel near his box, fixed the canvas and began with his colours, the veil again covered his eyes. His head sank and he could not see the slow flow of the canal. The bright colour of the windmill did not excite him, nor the boats. A thousand lesser images followed each other before his inner eye as he felt in a rapid train which was racing against his life - his parents, his sister, friends, the rivulet where he swam near the houses of his shtetl.

"On his way home he stopped in three saloons for wine.

"Rosen has now been in Antwerp for two weeks, away from Paris. He had not been able to tolerate Paris any longer; he could not work. A longing for something old would not let him rest. The colours blended on his palette, his hand became uncertain, the brush lost its character. It was late summer, and he sought to take himself in hand. He took short trips around Paris, but brought nothing back with him - some leaden rivers and cotton skies. He tried wine; it was worse. He was with friends.

"But no sooner did he touch the brush than his thoughts fled from the canvas. Far away.

"For two weeks he paced Antwerp with a youthful passion, desirous of further travel. Where? It was all the same: Paris again, London, Berlin, Brussels. None of these were preferable.

"One morning he descended to the port without his box, where ships of all nations lay together; some unloading, others loading. He stopped at one flying the Greek flag, preparing to depart; the sailors rushing from one side to the other, sails stretched out, steam escaping from all sides. The orders which he heard were enticing; if only one of them were directed at him! The sailors charmed him with their directness.

"Beyond self control he went onboard the freighter. The captain did not want any passengers. But the young painter insisted and the captain accepted him as a sailor. He rushed away for his box. An hour later they were in motion.

"He was turned over to an old sailor for instruction.

"He worked all day, tirelessly, but happy for he had no time to suffer the uncertain invisible image-pains and absence of purpose. At night, when the sailors gathered at the bow and sang, his loneliness returned again. Again he saw his life gallop by. Where he was yesterday is already a thousand miles away, an ancient past.

"The ship slid on the fat waves. Dolphins raced ahead and the skies reflected the silver lights. From time to time a wave struck on the ship's side, broke and sprinkled with a resounding laughter. From ahead the song of the sailors.

"Rosen leaned on the railing gazing into the waters, where all was so purposeful: the men, the fish, the sea, the ship, the sky, the stars. Everything except himself. His tears enriched the Mediterranean.

"The old Greek noticed his unhappiness. Someone slapped his back. It was the old Greek. In a mixture of all languages he asked the younger man the reason for his sadness. Rosen could not answer. He only said, 'Thanks, father.'

"The old man never left him alone. After work he would seek him out and would bring him among the men where he had to hum with the choir and dance in the circle. Each sought to teach him Greek. Late at night they all met on deck and sang with great spirit till dawn, the melodies more beautiful than the previous night. Their voices rose and surpassed the winds, the fluttering of the winds and the breaking of the waves.

"That evening Rosen learned a new word, 'Patria.' When he stretched out on his bed that night the word would not disappear from his awareness - and he understood the purpose of his wanderings out of Paris and Antwerp, the floating images, the cause of the leaden rivers and woollen skies, his lust for wandering, his sadness.

"The next day, in Greek waters, the flags fluttered in the winds, the sailors sang. They wanted him to sing with them, they wanted to force him to sing with them.

"But the old man came up and led him away; he spoke to them. Rosen heard one word in the comments, 'Patria.'"

## GREEKS

Some 200 Montreal Greeks responded to the call of their government to join the forces in the conflict with Turkey. The men are reservists in the Greek army.

An additional 300 Greeks in the city also volunteered, but they had never served and have no military experience, it is unlikely that they will be called for army service, but they may be utilized for police duty since many gendarmes have been mobilized for the army, the Adler reported on Oct. 6, 1912.

"I enter and sit at a table, but no one serves me. The owner and the waiters pay no attention to me; they are with the group. Someone stands on a chair and delivers a lengthy speech. They are Greek and they talk about the war with Turkey. Many of them are going back to defend their country. They are leaving their businesses and friends to face death.

"I think of our Jews. How many heroic Jews do we have among our young people, but there is no homeland to defend. Our Garibaldis and Jeanne d'Arcs are useless.

"The speaker ends and passes his hat around on behalf of those who do not have fare and for the national cause. Enthusiastically they all contribute; the waiters empty their pockets. The owner runs to the cash box and contributes its entire contents.

"They think of me. They bring me coffee; they drink wine and sing battle songs and tragic melodies. Their eyes shine, their teeth are clenched. Suddenly they begin to dance and cry out 'Long Live War.'

"The restaurant quiets. Only the owner and the waiters remain. A moment ago there had been no class interests. But now the waiters do not attend to the several fresh customers. The owner calls out. 'There is no more war. Hurry up,' cursing them. Half an hour later there is no memory left of the enthusiasm. He stands coolly and attentively at the cash register, and when the earlier group returns he meets them at the door and tells them to keep on going.

"He returns to the empty cash box, shivering, cursing battles and the fatherland and the Turks and the Bulgars and the orator.

"The customers disperse. The waiters sit down; some fall asleep. The owner sits at the open register with paper and pencil and calculates, and curses.

"It's raining endlessly."

### WITHOUT GROUND

On October 28, 1912 Bercovici chose to speak of "Men Without Ground." "A friend told me that I am one of them. They are born to parents from whose environment they have been torn and they associate with others whose life thread they cannot follow; torn from one circle and unattached to another.

"There is probably a ground to both circles, but two halves of the finest picture do not constitute an entire beauty. Often we long for an entirety that is minor but is whole. But where can I find an entirety when I am surrounded by people who are without ground, by people each of whose halves have no touch with their prior or later halves of living and effecting?

"I speak of halves, but that is at best. With most it is but a line. Their lives are scattered lines. I see it; I feel it. Our exile's life is the swamp. Death and disappearance await us.

"My friend, I am without ground. My entire life has no foundation as the lives of so many others, perhaps of all others have. But some walk the narrow line between shore and sea, dictated by care; they walk on sure ground, but they have no ground.

"May I say to you, my friends? When we have no ground we must learn to fly, develop wings to the high skies. And when we look down from above it is hard to identify an individual man. When we hear their loud laughter we do not ask their nation. When we hear their cries we do not ask whether we are brothers. 'Joy unites, pain unites, love unites, hate unites; the struggle, hunger and death unite.'

"Absence of ground? We are distinct only because we cannot live together. But if we could? That is the absence of ground.

"But for those who will not sink, or do not run to sink as they would save another - they must fly, or should they throw themselves into the sea and disappear and become one with rock and wave?

"I was born in the sea. The water cast me out because I could not become one with the waves. I lay on the sand, saved from one death for another.

"But there may be another sense to the fish evolving into birds.

"As the ground sinks under us we will have to fly like songbirds and like carnivorous birds. We shall become two bands, the singers and the robbers; the robbers will feed the singers.

"But I have no ground. I am solitary, as the weeping men who have no ground and search for it, would save one another, afraid of sinking even when they are on the firmest ground. So they weep and cry alarm and run and lose the firm ground, missing the earth; from dumbness to song, missing speech. From swimming to flying.

"We shall sing Holy Writ.

"We have lost our certainty.

"We have lost our language.

"Our lungs are unaccustomed to air.

"We jump from fish to sky.

"Have you ever stood at the edge of the Atlantic or the Adriatic, on a swamp? From the distance, to the sea, the white sand lies calm and shining. The inhabitants know treachery; when they go swimming they search out the rocky paths.

"Two wanderers pass by, tired; their feet burn. The water pleads its invitation. One suggests, 'Come, let us cross through the sand and refresh our feet.' He is more courageous and is already running on the sand. The sand sinks under his feet, but he runs faster. The sea is calling. His feet sink in the soft sand. He would return, but he cannot, and the ocean is near.

"His friend sees his need, risks his own safety and runs to save him. He is near him. He grasps his hand, but the sand gives way to him. Each seeks to save the other, but both sink. Their last hope is that the ocean open its mouth and swallow them."

LUST FOR BATTLE

"I have been quiet too long. Too much in me has fallen asleep. My spirit has become lazy; my fantasy is dozing and I see the world as it is.

"The grey wooden truth, the cold grey reality; men as they are and not as we would wish them to be.

"Can you give something other than it is? That is what I long for.

"I had been accustomed to see the world as audiences see an actress, from the distance, her fiery eyes, red lips, rosy satin cheeks.

"Suddenly, someone cried out, 'Fire.'

"I leaped on the stage to save the beautiful woman. But what did I see?

"An old woman, lipstick streaked, grimacing instead of smiling, pale sunken cheeks, wig askew, the beautiful eyes that had enchanted me now cold and silent.

"The fire was put out, together with the flame in my heart.

"I can no longer go to the theatre. I know the face of the beautiful actress. I can imagine no longer.

"I had been too close for anyone to show me anything that looks other: a happy, cheerful lie, a bright colour, a sharp sword.

"Everyone is clear and cold and quiet. I see through them all. I cannot warm at any hearth. No one will fight me.

"'Let it be as you say,' my friend responds.

"Yet I was born to battle. I had fought with myself to the end. I killed my inborn morality and created my own new morality. I quarrelled with it and won. I fought my old ways. Some I conquered, others were stronger than me.

"I fought my loves, my hatreds. I readied with them, I am ready for war. I took out my sword from its scabard, dulled. I sharpened it and now I am ready, my breast bare, my brass helmet off, without armour I stand sword in hand, awaiting someone; ten of them, a hundred, the whole world.

"But no one comes. They are prepared to lose all: their conscience, their faith, their beloved. Take them all, they will not resist until their moneybags are touched. But this I do not seek.

"Today my old lust for war came. I hate the peaceful flow of my life. Ready to fight the windmills, anyone, only to strain all my nerves, my muscles in activity, when my entire being and understanding are called on, for the decisive moment between life and death.

"This one moment is worth more than the peaceful, continuous, colourless existence.

"But no one wants battle; they are all too rich, coarse and fat, my friends and my enemies.

"As for me, my life is superfluous because I cannot live the true moment.

"Men no longer wish to fight. Only animals are that fortunate.

"I have been quiet too long. My lust for battle has awakened me. I shall have to force someone to wage war on me.

"I want to feel life." (Dec. 8, 1912)

## ROMEO

Bercovici wrote a sketch on the Romeo and Juliet theme, "From Hate to Love" (Oct. 31, 1912) which one dares to compare in its story form with the Shakespeare tragedy.

It is set in the Yagriz-Georges-Roumania desert where generations ago the two warring gypsy tribesmen engaged in ancestral vendetta whose origins were lost in the fogs of centuries. The earnings of their economies had been expended on conflict, on legal and social efforts and on false witnessing, on stealing of cattle and horses, on destroying of oxen and dwellings and on murders.

"When a tribe succeeded in jailing an opponent it declared a feast with music, while the others wailed and mulled over further retribution and the exiling of the other chief. On both sides, among women as among men, the knife was the great peacemaker. When the children were but two years old they had already been taught to hate the people of the other band. The gendarmes had twice separated the tribal nations, moving one to Jassi, the other to Braila. But only hours later each had found their beloved enemies, set up their tents and were again at war - the women, the children and their goats. The police came and arrested half of each group.

"One day Yagris, the great man of his tribe, was arrested. His band wailed and wept, but in the tents of Georges there was dance, song and mime. Niza, the son of Yagris, a strong young gypsy, emerged from his tent and called all to battle, with appeals and curses. In response he heard only loud laughter.

"The entire day he wandered in confusion; in anger he bit his flesh, wept, screamed and pondered full revenge for father, for tribe. During the blue-white summer night of midseason the sound of river and forest was confused with tents of merriment and song and with tents of frustration.

"Not content with either he entered the further forest and spread over a fallen tree.

"Some minutes later he heard a rustle. It is Lialka, the youngest daughter of Georges, come to repeat her beloved song in the forest quiet. Instantly he sprang upon her, and hand on her mouth, threw her violently down as she struggled. In his powerful arms he could barely sense that she made any effort even against a leaf against her face.

"Slowly Niza pulled his proud knife. It touched her neck. He laughed loudly as he cut her long braids and disappeared.

"She lay long. Her tribe went in search of her and were planning to attack the Yagriz tents even before they found the stunned girl.

"Niza ran into his tent - fatigued, not tired but in search of rest from excitement. He repeatedly took out the black braids from his pocket, looked at them, but no longer with vengeance requited; his hatred had passed; her trembling body had conquered him. Out of her hair grew her face, her head, her body, smiling. He was being drawn into the forest.

"He heard the cries of her tribe. They had found her. He waited for them, knife in hand - all night. She knew who had cut her hair. But no one came.

"The following day he was confused, but not with thoughts of vengeance. Endlessly he pulled the hair from his pocket to kiss it. He felt that she was looking for him.

"At night he returned to the forest, to the same spot where, but hours ago, he was raging for revenge. Now what had replaced it?

"Suddenly he felt a movement behind the leaves. He hid behind the tree trunk. Lialka appeared, seeking him. He moved towards her, facing her. The moon shone upon the lovers in arms."

### DESERTED WIFE

Bercovici's "Recollections of a Deserted Wife" is a simpler tale of a heartbroken woman who does not understand why she has become estranged from her husband. (Oct. 30, 1912)

"Was I unfair to him? There has to be a reason for a man to leave a wife after ten years. It has been two months since he left me the short note, 'I do not love you any longer.'

"Besides, even if it is true, I still love him, and there has to be a reason. I always felt that I knew him so well, and now that he has left me I feel that I never knew him.

"I have been seeking so to understand the unspoken thoughts, that I failed to hear the spoken words.

"He had said on our wedding night, 'We will leave our birthplace soon. I am tired of being a teacher, to teach Chaim the blacksmith's son to pray, to prepare for his Bar Mitzvah.' and we left Podolsk.

"My mother warned me at the station, 'Watch him, he flies in the skies!' and he told me that father had told him the same thing, to watch over me, I am an orphan, in our form of speech.

"I was so lonely during the trip. He was deep in his thoughts. The further we travelled the further I became from Peretz; a night in Lodz, the frontier, two nights in Vienna, Paris, New York.

"He went to work in a factory in New York, then he opened a factory of his own. We worked hard, the two of us. We fought for our factory, suffered, became wealthy.

"He never wrote home. That evening of our first quarrel; he did not want to go to the theatre; he may have been right.

"He never liked silence. Why did the child die? If he had lived we would have shared troubles. 'Is he better? What do you think? Go, lie down, you are tired.' 'No, you lie down.' So we stay up together. The child begins to walk; he stumbles, speaks, 'Papa.'

"The child died. I did not want another. Did I leave him alone too much? But we were so busy, committees, charity. Why did he stop coming home early? Why did we never quarrel?

"Now I remain the poorest of women. Mr. Peretz Goldberg of New York has left me. My Peretz remains in my small shtetl.

"Come Peretz, let us return home, we will have children there; leave it all here. The furniture here is so heavy, alien."

"I do not love you any longer."

XXXXXX

Bercovici composed a longer sketch, "Jealousy" concerning a broken love affair between a pair of factory workers (July, 1912).

XXXXXX

He wrote a sketch of a starving couple whose wife, with their small children was being evicted into the snow by a cruel "philanthropist." She committed suicide by drowning. (Adler, July 9, 1912)

### THE FAVOURED CHILD

His immigrant family, "Parents and Children," of November 17, 1912, is set in New York.

"They had come to America from Russia where he had been a smith. They had two sons; a daughter was born to them in New York. He earned well. Mother wanted her older son to become a doctor. The younger was sent to work, and so they worked hard

"The parents did not permit themselves anything; they spared on food and clothing so that elder son, of whom they were proud beyond end, could study. When mother was alone she made a thousand plans for the day he would become a doctor. (He was already not called Moishe). She already acquired a shiny brass plate with his name in black letters.

"The other children received less attention; their clothing was neglected and they were deprived of needs, because the doctor required so much.

"So many years passed and each day was etched on the faces of the parents, their backs bent the more in hardship. But they were happy they would have a son a doctor.

"'You know, Chaim, when it will all end, when he will graduate... When our Maurice will finish...' and the younger son was silenced, 'Do not make so much noise. The doctor is here.'

"The daughter was challenged, 'Whom are you going around with? Shame on you. A brother a doctor, and you are going around with I don't know whom.'

"When the son needed a book, the father always bought it for him and brought it home proudly.

"All conversations at home began with, 'When he will graduate...our Maurice...my doctor.'

"The doctor was one of those lesser worthies who could easily learn all that he needed to exploit others and who believed that everything was coming to him. He looked down upon his brother and his father because he had a finer frock coat, and he paid no attention at all to his sister or his mother. They only lived to serve him. The house had him as the central point, the doctor, and only one hope, the day he will graduate.

"The time came and mother had lived to the day she would see the brass plate with its black letters on her son's door.

"Naturally he did well after his first day, he married well, so that he was ashamed of his mother and father; his brother and sister were alien to him. At his wedding they all sat in a corner.

"His mother's eyes lost their hopeful shine and the doctor title lost its charm for them. When she saw brass plates on the street she remained cold.

"But her other children, now adult, were happy. Their parents developed a new warmth when the name of the doctor faded from conversation, and the date of graduation was no longer in their future expectation, even though the old couple gazed at each other silently as they remembered their lost years, the senseless planning. The name of Maurice faded from conversation.

"Soon a new hope entered their life, when she will marry. And it was with a working man, and the younger son also married. When each of the elders went out, they would say, 'I am going to my daughter.' or 'I am going to my son.' The doctor no longer counted in the family.

"By the time the daughter bore a child, the doctor had had two. But at the birth of the daughter's child, the grandparents danced and sang, 'Today I am a grandfather,' 'Today I am a grandmother,' as they looked at each other.

"'Yes, this is our first grandchild,' she said and he responded, 'Yes, our first grandchild,' as large tears fell from his old eyes."  
(Nov. 17, 1912)

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

When "The Christian Nations" (Nov. 11, 1912) protested "against Turkish barbarians on the war front, whose fleeing soldiers killed children, women and old civilian men - there is no talk of killing men in uniform, although they, too, did not go to battle voluntarily. Bercovici protested in turn, "Christian nations!"

"That Russia should protest as a Christian nation, in the name of civilization, barbaric as it is, even while ten prisoners committed suicide, unable to bear the continuous torture!

"Has Spain forgotten the bloody days of 1910 in Barcelona, in Catalonia - and Cuba?

"Has Congo been forgotten where 10,000 hands were cut off for failure to deliver the quotas of rubber, and tongues and ears were chopped off?

"Has Austria dismissed its barbarisms in Herzegovina?

"Does Germany remember its incitement in Africa and the blood its victorious soldiers shed in French cities, and in Algiers and Morocco and on Devil's Island; and the Italian troops in Arabia?

"And what Christian soldiers in Bulgaria and Greece did to the Macedonians, Albanians, in Sophia?

"Are these the last words of modern Christian civilization?"

## NAPOLEON

Bercovici wrote on Napoleon, "the great man of a century ago for whom a statue was being erected on the Borodino in Russia in memory of 'The Dead of the Great army, September 12, 1812.' One hundred thousand men fell on one day.

"The great man returned to France without his 600,000 soldiers; proudly he told the men of his nation that he was in good health, stronger than ever.

"'You cannot make omelettes without eggs,' he said. Now the French and the Russians are allies, the best of friends, the men who had never met and had not done each other harm were killing each other at the bidding of power-hungry robbers and an idiotic czar. Will they never learn?"

XXXXXX

Bercovici poured out a lyric essay, "My Sad Hour" in which the soul rebels against the inevitable destruction of each mortal being. (Sept. 8, 1912)

## JINGO

"Jingoists" (Dec. 13, 1912) is a rare Bercovici essay on Canadian politics.

"Premier Borden's Navy Bill, in which he calls upon Canada to make a gift of three warships to Great Britain at a cost of \$35,000,000 is a product of the jingoism that is sweeping all countries during the past decade.

"Since Czar Nicholas put forward his proposal, and the Hague tribunal was set up, the powers have spent more on weapons and warships than ever before.

"But today we need new methods to force the people to spend more in the hysterical demand for more weapons.

"The press speaks more of war, and the English are informed that the Kaiser is alleged to have said that... and the Chancellor has interpreted it to mean... and the conversation is of war with Germany.

"And, speaking of war, they count the German battleships and it appears that they will soon outman the British navy by one vessel, and the army, too, will soon be greater. The only way to maintain the peace is for Britain to build more ships.

"But Germany will fear that Britain will become too strong and will wink to its navy during a political confrontation, as if to say 'Respect, please.' So Germany is constructing more, larger war vessels, forcing the German people to put forth more money, as Britain does.

"This method, now universal, is known as jingoism. The United States fears Japan, Russia fears Austria, Germany is afraid of Britain, and France fears Germany, and everywhere the poor are forced to give money for weapons to murder them eventually.

"Now this is applied in Canada to press money from the country which is only now beginning to develop, a country which has no proper roads, no canals for its river system, nor bridges, a land which depends on foreign capital for its industry. A country still in its cradle is asked to strain itself unduly to act as a child. It needs stronger muscles lest they become atrophied.

"But the Conservative Party knows how to sound the alarm of arms and to multiply jingoist speech, and the visions of German ships and soldiery to drive the Canadian populous mad for war. They could see Germans flooding Canada, with the Berlin throne in Ottawa. The

British jingoist press showed Englishmen trembling in fear, and begging for Canadian help. Can Canada fail?

"Mr. Borden's speech is a masterpiece of jingoism. Confidentially he states that he had information which he could not reveal why Canada must come to the help of the motherland and supply three warships. In confidence, in secret, no one must know except the entire world and Germany, and Germany, and again Germany.

"In such a condition, the Liberals had to remain silent. They will propose an amendment which will not be accepted, but will not fight for it, because the mood of the nation is such that a word of any sort is a confession of treason to a nation in danger. Those who exaggerate see the German flag on the St. Lawrence.

"When the Krupp corporation runs out of contracts for cannon there is anxiety in Germany. The press begins to write of the French or the British menace until Krupp receives the order.

"When it is silent in France, and the tailors and necktie manufacturers have little work, the press sees German ghosts, and the parliament votes several million francs for a new tailoring invention. In Austria it is the Howitzers, and in other lands the sailing vessels call upon military threats in the world, using resounding phrases such as 'The Armed Peace,' 'Peace through Steel,' and 'the discovery of a dangerous weapon which will bring an end to war.'

"Tens of thousands are killed daily in every modern war. (Strange the sound of modern in the context of murder.) Ships sink with their crews. Cities burn. Bombs are launched from planes. New cannon can shoot ten shells a minute, each capable of killing a thousand people.

"But the wars are brought by the arms companies, for it is their only area of consumption, the only support for the jingoistic spirit. In the present Balkan war the French press boasts that the Balkans are winning because they have French weapons while the Turks employ German officers.

"But who cares? As long as a people does not care to look at truth in the eye, why not contribute \$35,000,000 for the battleships?

"What we need is excitement. Whiskey has lost its power, is no longer fashionable. The cavalier life is dead. Moving pictures have lost their attraction. They are no longer new.

"So, war is the only thing. Why not? It only costs \$35,000,000."

## EXECUTION

The Adler reported that Sheriff Lemieux need not worry; any number have volunteered to assist in the hanging of the Italian Farduti who had been sentenced to death for murder. ("A Life for a Life")

On December 12, 1912, Bercovici visualized the removal of the condemned man from his cell:

"The executioner will erect the gallows, test the ropes for strength. The judicial sentence will be read again, the priest in clerical uniform will pray to God as he will surrender the living body to the executioner, dressed in a frock coat and a cylinder hat - formal as at a wedding. Within seconds, the mouth of the man will already be twisted, eyes with a fatal shine, heart has ceased to beat. Doctors with stethoscopes will attest to the death of the victim.

"A man has died, officially in the name of the law, in a Christian land, in the twentieth century, when electricity is in use, when science searches for the secret of life, where the dictum of a pale Jew is taught, 'when you are stuck on your right side, offer him the left; when your cloak is stolen, offer him another garment.'

"Friday before dawn a man will die in our city. They are permitted to kill before full sunrise - they are ashamed of the light; they will kill in the dark, in the night of the Middle Ages. Their civilization has only reached warm homes during winters and cool homes during summer, while their spirits have remained in the darkness of the twentieth century; their understanding is of the stone age.

"They murder because they have not yet heard that most crimes are due to circumstances and heredity; they punish a dumb man for being unable to speak, a blind man for not seeing. They take measures to ensure against murder, but such measures!

"In the twentieth century murder is permitted only on the battlefield, as much as the soldier wishes, as much as he can. Science has invented small bullets, far-reaching shells, bombs from airplanes; science was invented so that radium will kill armies in a minute. For the victim numbers do not matter.

"In Africa, on the Hashi-Hashi festival which marked the day when God gave mankind back the sun, twenty young children were sacrificed and the naked king wearing a cylinder hat and a necktie drank their warm blood. The French guillotine was close in miles and years.

"On Friday morning, in this twentieth century, the invited men in cylinders and neckties in Montreal will leap back into the Middle Ages."

"MAGIC BELL"

"A silver bell in the city rang on its own free will, rang joyful greetings when a child was born, joined enthusiastically when lovers embraced; it chanted its welcome to the first bloom; every height of joy set its tongue in motion and every mourning touched it deeply, more coarsely, slowly, sadly to set the city ashiver.

"It set the tone for the city when it announced its joy song, it filled hearts; the girls dressed colourfully, flowers in their hair, called the young men to dance; the fiddlers came around to play, as all were forced to sing after them.

"Even the old became young for joy, and worked better later. The lips were wet from kissing; blood ran faster and the songs sang themselves.

"Mother Earth was good to them, good with its fruit and bread. The surrounding mountains grew grapes for the best wine to be pressed. All were happy for such a bell.

"But if an injustice was committed the good silver bell became enraged. He told the inhabitants of injustice. When he would not be heard he pealed faster and louder. If the sun set before the injustice was set right it rang and squeaked the entire night. Lovers feared to kiss; girls feared to dance. The old grew white, the strings on the fiddles became silent; the moon hid, and the leaves and blossoms saddened.

"It gave no rest day or night. Angry and bitter, the fine silver sound alarmed and thundered. 'Injustice' it pealed, and the echo answered, 'Injustice' across vale and forests and the earth shook. Many small symbolic bells rang with the magic clock, until the injustice was set right.

"Then all were happy. The sun shone. The girls danced, the young kissed, wine was sweet again, the fiddlers played, the river and the blossoms participated in all joy, and the silver bell resounded the happier.

"The rich man in the city planned evil against an orphan. In the past he had done many wrongs, and the magic bell was set in motion, and the entire city ran, driven by the endless strains of anger in its thundering voice.

"So the man split the wall of the clock.

"When he committed his act of injustice its tongue was set in motion. But its wall was wounded and would not resound. The tongue struck to no avail. No one heard, and the evil man did his deed and the city slept.

"They still sleep, but the girls do not dance, the grapes dry out, the old do not become young and the young age soon, the moon is tired, the leaves fade on the fields and the fiddlers sleep.

"The nights are still. The days are sad; and the tongue of the bell chatters and becomes angrier at each injustice.

"All is dumb and sad and deaf." (Nov. 21, 1912)

MR. KATAKURA

Bercovici's "Pleased to Meet You" (Nov. 22, 1912) was told to the Yiddish writer by American Jack London in a New York café, where the discussion turned on the secret of Japan's success. The American writer told them a true story,

"Three years ago we advertised for a Japanese servant because my wife believed that they are quiet, patient, courteous. Our man had a long name, so we called him Jim.

"We were very happy with him during the two years he served us silently, intelligently, neatly; he learned English very rapidly.

"One day he came to me and asked me to settle our accounts because he was leaving. Did he want a raise? 'Are you not satisfied with us?'

"'No, I was very happy with you. But now I want to study in the university. I want to study political economy. I can become a minister within two years.'

"In brief, I settled with him. 'I wish you well, Jim.'

"He rose quickly and said sharply, 'My name is not Jim. It is Amahaya Katakura,' and he added very ceremoniously, 'I will send for my bags tomorrow.'

"In my conversation I learned that he had studied in Tokyo, and had no means of continuing his studies there. He came here to work, had saved all his earnings and learned English; he knew our literature amazingly well, and had read all there is in English on political economy.

"'When did you study all this, Jim?' I asked.

"'My name is Katakura. I studied nights.'

"My wife entered the room and saw us chatting at the table.

"'Jim, we need to pack up for tomorrow,' she reminded him. But he did not move, standing, facing her boldly as if he did not hear a word she said.

"I understood the situation. Turning to her I said, 'I want to introduce you to Mr. Amayaha Katakura.'

"He bowed as if he was seeing her for the first time and said, 'Pleased to meet you.'

"I then understood their force. They can adapt instantly to altered circumstances." Jack London summarized.

## LITERARY CAFE

Bercovici discussed the sad state of Yiddish literature in the United States compared with the European scene. The writers who immigrated found the market limited to the Yiddish press which was engaged in spirited competition for circulation, with standards low, very much as on the Yiddish stage. The editors dictated the nature of the writers' production to suit the taste of the non-literary readers, cynically described as "Moishe," which term was also applied to the vulgar spectators of the lesser theatre. ("Yiddish Literature in the United States" Nov. 14, 1912)

Reuben Brainin, Bercovici's Montreal patron, spent several days in the famed New York literary cafe, Shulem's Kibetzarnia, the site of the "Kibetzing" by the famous Jewish writers and their hangers-on; a parallel to Berlin's Monopol. These American and visiting celebrities spent their days and nights arguing, sniping, complaining, glorifying themselves, negotiating, seeing and being seen, as they climbed their ladders or as they slipped rungs.

As Brainin entered, without much anticipation, the writers at their tables invited him to join their circles; among them Dr. Shmaryahu Levine, Sholem Asch, Abraham Reisen, Dr. M. Ginsburg and A. Lubarsky, the latter not an author but a broker and the consultant of a noted philanthropist.

"Sholem Asch maintained his posture as the hero who descended to the beggars from on high.

"The principal guest in this writers' centre was Levine who loved the sound of his speech and scattered his innovations, anecdotes, subtle phrases and episodes (much of it repetitions of what I had heard from him many times, some of them fresh) generously jumping from idea to idea; some sharp and biting. But he seldom invited anyone to interrupt his flow. On this occasion he was sulphurous on American Jewry and its leadership.

"Levine paused for a moment to explain that whatever had been created in recent times in American Jewry had arisen from him and from his thinking; yet he has not been adequately appreciated. Indeed there are impertinent people who would depreciate him; their selfishness and their natural vanity stand in his way. All this while restlessly moving from table to table, anxious to cover the full audience of the Kibetzarnia. His mood changes through the minutes, fearful that he has not made his point to all.

"I had not seen him for twenty-eight months, since we met in Berlin, on my way back from the Zionist Congress in Vienna. As we were

then walking on the promenade and in the zoo, he appeared a little depressed. He was dreaming great visions about Jewish New York. Now he was revealing his bitterness, and was awaiting his return to Europe, for only in Russia did he see a future for Jewish literature and culture. But he admitted the reality of American life, the breadth of life as lived by Jews, practically and usefully.

"Asch had gained weight and his motions are slowed, his face has altered and he looks the practical man, a businessman, like an insurance salesman.

"Abraham Reisen has become even easier to respect and appreciate as a man of purer soul and honest heart, void of pride.

"Towards the back of the room sat the younger writers, the modernists. They were discussing their concerns quietly. At times some of them raised their voices to the celebrities, at times with a mild but bitter irony on their lips. I have known some of these younger men from my days in New York, but others are new faces. They are all planting the seed of our future literature and culture, setting up frontiers that we do not know yet. They asked me to sit with them.

"At my table was Asch, next to Konrad Bercovici. He told us imaginary tales, on his triumphs in music, about his friendship with anarchist Peter Kropotkin and with Jack London and authors and publishers in Germany, France and England. He also talked about gypsies and about a love affair with a gypsy girl which ended in a conflict with the chief of her tribe. He showed Mrs. Asch the scar he was still bearing since that battle. I was listening intently to Bercovici as I felt I had reason to doubt some of what I heard, and I wondered whether Mrs. Asch was quite gullible."

xxxxxxx

Bercovici wrote "Pictures of New York East Side Life" in English for The Canadian Jewish Times of August 9, 1912,

"In the heart of the Jewish Ghetto, there is a cafe where all that the East Side possesses of intelligence, art and gossip meet.

"At Shulem's cafe one elbows every celebrity from the renowned philosopher Zhitlowsky to the 'three lines a penny' poet and humorist, Joseph Blank. Shulem's is the brains and the heart of the Ghetto. There you hear all the news, and especially that concerning the Jews; and everything is dissected to the bone, every word, every move is criticized in the true fashion of the Talmudist.

"Almost every Jew who has attained anything is or has been a Talmudist. And though most of them do not care about it any longer, still, when a discussion is started some Talmudic question

mixes in, and in a few moments the real topic is forgotten and the Talmud is on the rack.

"A man who does not know the Talmud is not well considered at Shulem's. An 'am horez,' an ignoramus - is the verdict, and all your Latin, or Greek, or French, or whatever degree or title you may possess, is passed over as worthless. 'A Jew that does not know the Talmud is the son of an ignoramus (am horez) and ignorance is hereditary to the second generation,' is Dr. Ginsburg's verdict. And to Dr. Ginsburg's verdict everybody yields.

"Not that they respect him (though he is a profound Talmudist, having written a treatise of the Talmudic scholastic), but they fear his tongue, he being the 'Kibetser shel pe,' the bad tongue of the Ghetto. His witticisms are repeated in the two Yiddish humorous weeklies. His tongue is as sharp as a keen-edged razor, and he does not hesitate to use his 'Kibetz' on anybody.

"Shulem himself, the proprietor of the place, walks around his domain and sees that his patrons are well served. Never is a patron urged to order anything. Anyone who wants a dish has to call the waiter, who comes at the second or third call.

"Sometimes Shulem sits at table with his patrons and takes part in the discussion when the subject is 'Theater' or the deceased Yiddish dramatist, Jacob Gordin. Shulem is a great admirer of Gordin's works, was a personal friend of his, knows most of the monologues by heart, and does not permit anyone to criticise the master.

"At Shulem's most of the Yiddish newspapers now in existence have been planned and founded. Here, plays are bought, manuscripts submitted to the editors (who often read them while eating), actors are engaged, theaters are bought and sold, clubs formed - in short, everything of any importance to the Jews in America is done there. Shulem's is the brains and heart of the American Jews, and I cannot conceive a greater misfortune to the Jews than that Shulem's should disappear. Ten minutes in the cafe would convince anyone of the importance of this place.

"At a table in the furthest corner sits D. Pinsky, the celebrated Yiddish and German dramatist. Near him A. Reisin, the great Yiddish poet. And on the other side Peretz Hirschbein, the Yiddish Maeterlink, talks with Mrs. Sedatzky, the Yiddish George Sand.

"At another table Dr. Syrkin, the founder of the Nationalistic socialists, argues with Janovsky, the editor of an anarchist weekly. Though their political views are at extreme opposites, they are nevertheless the best of friends and the eyes of the Mephisto-faced editor light up every time he sees his dear friend, Dr. Syrkin.

"And there, in another corner sits Grandpa Winchewsky. Winchewsky is legendary. In his youth he wrote so many revolutionary poems that he forgot to keep track of them, and every once in a while he is reminded of another one that is sung in some factory. Now he is busy writing treatises on the Talmud and love poems. So great is his fame that he is a mythical person and no one believes that he is still alive. He began to write and speak at thirteen and is now sixty."

xxxxxxx

Bercovici recorded the sights and sounds of Shulem's literary café in New York in the Adler,

"Shulem is irritated. The café is full of all sorts of customers - authors and actors, artists and more ordinary people. Mauritz rushes from table to table, his whiskers curled, his haircut trimmed, smiling all the time; that is why he is the Great Mauritz.

"There are discussions at all tables. Kobrin is screaming, lighting one cigarette after the other. Abraham Reisin is quarrelling with Adolf the angry waiter, because the meat on his plate had too many bones; this is the second plate he is returning; the first had been better. Homberg was running from table to table. He had just bought a new suit and wants everyone to see it. Marinoff is everywhere, looking out for new jokes.

"Libin is coming in and Kobrin is upset, taking more loudly, puffing more rapidly. Libin sits near him, smiling, puts out his hand to Kobrin. Libin is also always smiling, but only with his lips. His eyes are always damp and veiled.

"Dr. A. Ginsburg is laughing at Yanofsky, but the editor of the Freie Arbeiter Shtimme laughs in his face. Someone asks Shulem, 'What is it, Big Shulem?' 'Playrights,' he points to Kobrin and Libin contemptuously. 'Jacob Michaelovitch Gordin is no more, and there are the big wheels. Did you see the two new plays? Playrights!'

"Minikes comes in, passes from table to table, nods a good morning to one, shakes hands with another, takes a manuscript from Prof. Zelikowitz, gives Katz a check and escapes.

"The noise suddenly rises as if everybody was competing in volume. Friedman comes in with a friend. He pushes his cap higher on his head, casts a friendly word to Zelicovitch, curses an acquaintance, calls another a scoundrel, orders a glass of tea from the waiter, yelling and screaming at everybody and laughs with his iron voice. Suddenly he sees Dr. Ginsburg. He orders his medicine, always that medicine.

"A young lady comes in to use the telephone. Reisen raises his eyes. The café becomes silent; everybody listens to her and when she leaves twenty pairs of eyes follow her.

"Morris Winchewsky comes in. Everybody greets him courteously except for Yanofsky who pretends not to see him. The grandfather stops in the centre of the café; someone had occupied his corner, the third table by the wall. Blinkin was sitting there. He rises and the old man bows to him. They discuss the Forward, the mailbag, the Tzukunft. Winchewsky is angry and tells an episode where the word 'I' occurs three times in every sentence.

"Blinkin escapes to Shulem's table. He would convince his host that his newest story is especially good, but Shulem is not convinced. Blinkin persists. Shulem succumbs.

"'Golubchik' a voice from the outside was calling. It was Zametkin asking Golubchik to make a seat for him at the grandfathers' table, pushing away the Liliput. 'Dearest Winchewsky, how do you spell Witch?' The old man, smiling, was about to answer, but suddenly Zametkin saw Hermalin. Spell Witch, Socialist, Liliput, Slonim, Warheit. Spell Wisdom.

"The noise is shapeless as they discuss and curse. Reisen whistles that it is expensive. Hermalin talks about shooting hares. The waiters run about. All are smoking and the air is thick. I must run away."

NEED

Bercovici told "Two Winter Tales" on October 5, 1912,

"Can you hear? Grandfather is coming home, bundled up in snow.

"You did not know grandfather, tall and strong, with a long white beard, deep brows hanging over his eyes. I shook the snow off him, took off his thick fur coat. He sat at the fire, warmed his hands and the house even became hot. I put up the samovar, gave him some food and sat next to him.

"Is it very cold outside?"

"Yes, daughter, it is cold, very cold," he responded as he put more wood on the fire. I looked out. The snow was dancing in all directions, like now, beating on the windows as if it wanted to come in, to warm up. From time to time someone ran past. I could hear the squeaking of the snow under their feet.

"Grandfather drank his tea. The samovar sang, the sparks sprang from the fire. Grandfather told stories. Soon your father entered. You did not know your father, son. Also tall, with a short black beard and happy eyes.

"Look! Father is here, Father." He also took his tea, near grandfather, and ate and drank. The wind blew outside and from the forest we could hear the howling of wolves and the waving and cracking of the branches, Oi, Oi, and father was witty and grandfather was laughing, and the house was warm. Are you sleeping, son?"

"No, mother, but I am so cold mother. Grandfather has burned out all the logs. Mother, why is there no fire? I am so cold!"

.....

"Do you hear, my child?" It is so cold outside, and not a scrap of wood, nor a scrap of bread; the children are in their beds, covered with all their clothing of the house. She went from window to window looking for the father who would bring bread and wood. The children are crying for bread. Outside it was so cold, and now darker and the wind danced in through the chimney.

"The door opened and the children were happy. 'Father is here.' He came in, dark, silent, covered with snow.

"'Did you bring bread?' one little boy asked. There was no answer as he sat down and wept; the wind blew the door in and the snow entered from all sides. The children cried less, occasionally muttering to no listeners, 'bread.'

"In the morning a passing neighbour found them all dead."

### GOOD AND WISE

Bercovici's symbolic tale "Good and Wise" (Oct. 27, 1912) is of "a good man who had never injured another. His life had flowed as smoothly as the rivulet in the valley, and in its peace he contemplated it all. He rejoiced every morning with its dawn and every evening with its setting.

"He played with little children and found joy in the loud laughter of their games.

"But the adults did not understand him or his goodness, called him crazy and forbade their children to play with him. So he remained alone and sadder and therefore he saw less; not the falling of the leaves or the greening of the fields. His sky became constantly cloudy.

"He remarked that others had other pleasures. Each had a cane, and the heavier the cane the more fear he aroused, he noticed. All men carried canes: thin, thick, metal, wooden, golden. And when he was hungry and asked for bread, he felt the canes. It was a world of canes.

"So he tore the goodness from within himself. He became blind to all that is beautiful. No longer the joy of the sun, the song of the birds, climbing of the hills or gazing at the sky. He chopped a strong, thick stick, with a hard head, his stony heart; thus he walked among his fellow men.

"Many of those who had called him crazy, saluted and bent before him, called him a good man when he did not strike them, a wise man when he hit them. Even those who fell under his stick did not curse him; they cursed the stick and with their last efforts seek to grasp it from his hand.

"But late in the restful night he feels his loneliness. He wishes only to see, to feel with his heart of stone, but he cannot feel the motherliness of the children, for his hand is hardened by the head of his thick stick. And he is never hungry, for they fear him and call him wise and good."

XXXXXX

"At times I float as an eagle in the sky. From the slopes of Pegasus I look down at the petty earthly world, the work of dwarfs, crippled of soul and of body, leading distorted lives. My own body feels the healthier as I reach the clouds of oblivion above me.

"I no longer see the tiny men, and I respect them more now, noble, powerful. Soft arms reach out to me; fresh lips draw me back to my valley.

"I feel I am a motherless child, alone, deserted in a forest, fearful of the howling wolves, hungry carnivorous birds above me, dogs waiting for me to fall asleep, deep in the black night; the howling winds in the forest. Where is mother? My eyes accustom to the darkness of the swamp, filth all about me.

"In the distance roses on silver branches near golden fields. The roses fade and the fields dry out. I sadden under the clouds, in the marsh, amid the thorns, and I am but flesh and blood, and my spirit suffers even more. I am afraid. God, give me strength for my body and my spirit to remain content together.

"Or, rather, let one of them win; my spirit or my body. No peace between the two is possible, and the struggle between them must cease.

"Soft arms reach me and a living song...

"The world is beautiful." (Aug. 2, 1912)

### JEWISH MUSIC

Both Brainin and Bercovici were passionate students of the Yiddish folk song and wrote series of studies on this aspect of Jewish culture.

Bercovici spoke on "Music and Character" and played his own compositions at a public meeting in November 1912.

xxxxxxx

"Jewish Music," what an ocean of associations these two words awaken in Bercovici! (Sept. 25, 1912)

"Some are reminded of the songs with which mother rocked the cradle, another of the melodies with which father prayed; a third of the love songs, the workers' songs, the melodies of sadness in the factory, in the theatre, at home on the street.

"Yet all this is not yet Jewish music, for Jewish songs are sung with all sorts of melodies: German, Italian, French, etc. In each case the melody is somewhat altered, softened, more feminine. But this does not give it a Jewish character. All this only creates a falsification of Jewishness.

"The history of Jewish music points to the causes of this condition.

"The Jews are one of the most musical of nations, the first to establish a notation system, to apply music to religious ceremonial; from whose bosom sprang great musicians. Now they depend on alien melodies for their songs.

"The Jews had special melodies for the harvesting festival (Judges, 23:19, 27), for their victorious armies (34:10). Their singers were more respected than those of other peoples, stood as the peers of the Levites. King David was regarded more as singer and poet than as king. Two thousand and five hundred years ago they had a musical culture with traditions all its own. But suddenly all this was destroyed, and the site of the floral garden became a wasteland.

"We search the beginning of this desolation in their dispersal over the globe, in the spiritual unity of the nation. Like stalk of the root of a flower covered with rock, the Jewish people lived deep in the earth; the underground roots spread far in search of a spot to sprout; but because of the ubiquity of the rocks it rarely succeeded, and when this happened the plants grew so far from each other; the plants grew quite differently in spite of the common root. The dispersion had destroyed the commonalty of original unity, the single aspiration that was called for in artistic development.

"The Jews of Spain had no common interest, for example, with the Jews of Germany. The influence of climate and conditions created differing perceptions. Their art could not be characteristically Jewish. The traditional songs they had brought disappeared and were not replaced by their own. By the third generation after the expulsion from Eretz Israel they had forgotten their own language. The variations in language from exile land to land was the greatest barrier to the development of Jewish music. With the fading of Hebrew as the common language Jewish music had virtually come to an end. The "Lcha Dodi" which is the delight of Russian and Roumanian Jewry is a sixteenth century Polish melody. "Hamelech" is a crippled transmission of an aria from "Travatore." The Kol Nidre is sung to different tunes in six countries. "Hatikvah," the hymn that is awakening the unity of the Jewish spirit, is the melody of a Roumanian anti-Semitic song. Back in 1581 a scholar in Ghaza compiled 650 Hebrew compositions sung to Arabic, Turkish, Greek, Spanish and Italian melodies.

"New traditions were created with the development of Yiddish, with few connections to ancient Hebrew, with new roots, new blossoms, new flowers, new seed. A great Jewish musicologist wrote, 'As I pass a Jewish house of worship I cannot tell whether it is a student fraternity or a bad Italian opera house;' until Levandowsky introduced a new spirit to Jewish music and saw the development of Yiddish as a common language and the branches weave into a laurel. A rich unity is pervading the Jewish people, creating phases of Jewish art in literature, painting, sculpture, the state and music.

"A heartbreaking sadness, mixed with cries of hope is clearly Jewish in music. Zolotarof's Symphonia Hebraica led the critics to recognize 'the long travail of constant wandering and the hope that it may come to an end.' Now the people have come to realize that the world-ocean does not desire to swallow them; they must remain Jewish. The Menorahs that weave in the ex libris drawings of Lillien, in the poems of our singers in the music of our composers will carry the beacons of the new Jewish expression."

xxxxxxx

Bercovici chose to emphasize the unique themes of our folk music. Unlike the themes of war and riches, triumph in marble halls and golden locks, Jewish song elevates the citizen's hope to Torah learning, piety and national loyalty. Messianism takes the form of Zionism, yearning for Israel, Elijah, the world to come, the beauty of the family, group solidarity, prayer, festival observance and even the melodies of Talmud studies. (Oct. 13, 1912)

xxxxxxx

Brainin wrote a series of articles on "Jewish Folk Songs," particularly on love songs in the European Shtetlach, in July, 1912.

## JEWISH STREET SONGS OF AMERICA

"The temperament, taste and traditions of a nation are reflected in its art, particularly in its folk music. Folk songs differ from country to country. Hearing the songs of a nation once teaches us much about all its music. Nor can it be transplanted from people to people. Its underground network of roots reach out far for nourishment, to strengthen its branches, for its fruit which bear seeds for other trees to deepen and to perpetuate the trees. They feed on all the sentiments of a people, on its conflicts, heroes and loyalties. In its shady shelters, its sorrows are shared, its traditions continued. The songs bind their arms to assure them that they are the sons of their parents, fed from their breasts. They train the men who grow into a unity - this hereditary treasure gift of the nation.

"The soft cosiness of the German song cannot be exchanged for the witty friendship of the French; the pessimism of the Russians, for the theatre of the Italians.

"Street songs are the product of capitalism as people of various lands meet in great industrial cities. These songs do not have the qualities that characterize a people but rather the filth of the lowest strata of all nations.

"Street song has no character; it is sung by people who live on the streets where they seek distraction because they have no homes, families, or the looser bonds of villages. This music is born on the garbage heaps of capitalist society and is disseminated by rootless parasites where there is dirt, in any climate.

"Street song has no sanctity, for it seizes love, marriage, friendship with his dirty paws.

"The very diversity of origins of the men in the factories confuses even men of higher morality. What was hateful at home is attractive here; what was just there is unjust here. Spiritual values are overthrown. When we consider the transition of the first years of migration, so absorptive of energy for normal family life and of old friendships, it is easy to understand how the songs of the street captured the new arrival in the net of filth.

"A friend once suggested that there are no street songs; there is only one, a chain of depravity which binds all the factory cities of the entire world.

"But the Jews' song of the street is exceptional in its stupidity. The newcomer is despised until he has learned a dozen versions. There are salesmen of these songs, often in their early teens singing about 'The Boarder and the Missus' or 'My Wife is no Fool.' The passersby

purchase the texts and bring them home as presents for family, for brides and grooms.

"I heard a song on Rivington St., on the American theme of 'Bill of Fare,'

"Last week I was married  
To a woman ugly as the night,  
For she had much money  
And I did not think long.  
I invested the dowry  
And she had to begin anew.

"Look what I ordered for my wife:  
I ordered a plumber to fix her foot,  
I ordered a butcher to fix her teeth,  
I bought her crutches so she could walk,  
I ordered a glazier to put in an eye,  
I fixed her muscles, I fixed her hands  
And nothing remained of the dowry.

"What respect can a child have for mother or father or sisters after hearing such music?

"The pest attacks the weakest who is confused in the new place where the winds of our society have cast him. When he should be welcomed by the most inspiring and by the best, like a fine plant in its transplantation, at the most critical moment his spirit is plagued by the street songs.

"Are there no instruments to battle this epidemic?" (Aug. 1, 1912)

## THE ORCHESTRA

A series of his sketches were devoted to the instruments of the symphony,

"The violin raises a trembling voice to the heavens and sings praise to spring, a song to the light green and yellow blossoms and the greening leaves. You want to dance, to take her in your arms, to jump the dance of spring with her and the bird's song. The fiddle responds, 'Come and let the rays of the young sun crown us with the young leaves. All is young, fresh, awake; let us jump over fields and kiss the blossoms, the smallest of which makes us joyful. The first to be seen surprises like the first word of the first child.'

"A trembling silver voice rises from the fiddle. It rouses the light passions of spring of love. It is spring.

"The violoncello is a serious voice that passes like golden satin. It reaches the innermost, the most fertile in us, the voice of the finest teacher, the most earnest friend who will not swear a light oath of fidelity, who has seen too much and suffered much, who has survived spring; the voice of the blood red rose, of the forest, of fertilities; of life, not of dance and kiss.

"See, you begin to age; do not forget your young playing. There is much that you know not yet. Look within yourself and ask what you truly are.

"You may want to go to a lonesome place, to a cliff on a roaring sea to find the friend for earnest, deep converse. An earnest voice on golden themes, like the spirit of higher man. Sometimes it awakens responsibility for ourselves." (Nov. 3, 1912)

xxxxxxx

Bercovici addressed his piano (Oct. 3, 1912)

"You are the silent witness of my sentiments, I have entrusted you my secrets, my deepest feelings. I revealed to you thoughts which I feared, which I could not explain, would not explain to anyone, the thoughts that swept over me for which I had no words. These I expressed through you on your ivory lips. You accepted them and answered in your resonance when I permitted your strings to play. I know your cries when you respond to my sentiments.

"I evoked spirits of angels from your higher tones, and they danced to the silver rhythm of the moon and my sentiments.

"When I was sickened by the gross tones of my life, the thick red and the dense green, you gave me ivory dancers clad in rubies and sapphires, dressed in light golden rays and silver veils; they danced from you, caressed me and kissed me. How often have I bent to your breast to confess my loves to your middle lips, I wept my misfortune to you. You were always true to me.

"You rested me to sleep. How many times have I kissed your lips when my beloved was far away?

"Humiliated in my sensibilities, I tore out from your breast my innermost tones. In my despair I wanted to hear your woes of the world; I wanted to drown my pains in yours. How many times did I come to you broken, wounded, and I have risen whole, cured, strengthened?

"In my battles with fellow men you were always my help, my sword, my salve. In their victories I fled to you. From your thick strings powerful, great figures came forth, called by their commands. As long as I shall trust you I shall continue the battle.

"If old desires have dissipated into dreams when they were hardened by the stiffened finger of daily life, you have poured new ones into my life; you, the treasury of my dreams. You receive all from me, you give me all - my piano, my friend, witness of my love, of my hate, my hopes, my struggles, my defeats."

XXXXXX

Bercovici's essay on the orchestra, in his series on music, begins with:

"The artist's choice of a favoured star from all the luminaries that cover the night sky: the dawning star, the early evening star, Jupiter, Hyperion, Venus, Orion. Each of them is favoured by some sensitive devotee. But the astronaut loves them all equally, for he knows that each star is dependent on all of them and the balance of all of them depends on each of them, even on the least of them.

"That is the orchestra; the violin, the bass and the flute, the clarinet and the violoncello, the sounds of diapason. All are needed and play similar roles. There is no orchestra composed only of violins, only of flutes, only of cellos.

"We love beautiful hair, fine hands, but can you imagine a being that is beautiful only in its hands, or in its hair, a mass of golden hair, or thousands of the loveliest hands without the warmth that flows from the entire body without the glance that flows from the eyes, without the long neck from which they are pendant, without their ivory crown? When the lover kisses the eyes under the forehead or the hand, he is but kissing the part of the whole. The orchestra, the sky with all its stars, its planets, the moon and the sun, the

forest and all its trees, all the birds that sing the golden morning and the frogs in the dark night - all together, all perfect, complete with light and shadow, with green and red and shades of silver white the deepest black; the garden with its leaves, the thorny roses, mild violets, innocent lilies, purest narcisses, pale lips and murderous perfume - the orchestra, with the composer as god. He created it all, from nothing; not from bone or flesh or earth, from his essential being, as the first flower and the first man were formed.

"The conductor, like the painter, sees a garden with his abstract eye; each instrument is its own colour. He paints the divine work with his thin cane, the canvas which God had seen, with the end of his accompanist.

"In the audience a spectator enthuses, 'I love the silver.' But no painting is done in silver alone, and no one loves the soil on which roses are planted; and roses cannot bloom without earth.

"A body consisting only of fingers, a sky of only one type of star, a choir of only one voice, an orchestra consisting of only violins, a world of persons all identical - all of the same features, the same eyes, a world that ceases to live, a dead universe.

"The orchestra is the world, the composer is the god, its choirmaster is the painter." (Dec. 16, 1912)

LITERATURE

Bercovici composed a sad sketch "The Literary Illness" (Sept. 17, 1912)

"Enough, Maurice, you are really mad. Look at you, pale, skinny.'

"Leave me. I have an important theme for a sketch. That will be some sketch. Yiddish literature in the same situation as Greek was.'

"I heard this before. Leave this nonsense and get to something important,' she sighed.

"Schopenhauer was right who spoke of woman. Here I am looking to solve the problem of Yiddish literature, to enrich it with the fruit of my talent.'

"Maurice, what do you want from my young life?' She began to cry as she sat down beside the cold stove. The small apartment, poorly lit but well kept, with several chairs and pictures on the wall. Every evening the same scene with him writing and her weeping. The baskets of all editors' offices were suffering from his efforts, his daily efforts. Some inspired days three editors' baskets had the same fate.

"They had met in the shop where he was a presser and she a finisher. She was impressed with his education, and she sought to equal him. She asked him to lend her a book. Only after they married did he discover that she was not the mate of his soul.

"For a time she hoped that the world would recognize him, print his work; that his portrait would hang everywhere, and that she would be the proud wife of the famous man. But years passed. She began to hate books as he explained the situation with Schopenhauer's language on synthetic, a priori dialectic.

"The day did come. The editor was on vacation. The copy he left was nowhere to be found; the typesetters were hungry for copy...

"When the mailman came and brought the journal, there was 'The Moment,' the sketch by Maurice Stark..."

BURDENS

"Today" Bercovici told his readers on December 16, 1912, "we shall speak of bearers of burdens."

"We all carry heavy burdens, like horses and mules, whether lumber or sugar, steel or honey the burdens are heavy; whether with great weight of gold or the lighter weight of stones, weights measured by quantity rather than by quality. Why then do the recipients of gold rejoice more than do those who carry it?"

"But heavier than the burden carried in gold or stone is the burden of those who bring the past of the gold and the stone to the future, for each drop of the past of gold becomes even heavier, and each inch of steel rail; and the bearers of this conscience are never liberated from this weight, and their future is never lightened."

"Mirror-like the fata morgana shining in the future, an oasis, a well, a resting place in the mirage, vanishing at approach in the more intense heat. Only the burden is real, the donkeys and the mules, certainly real, if only morally; isolated a lifetime, not daring to ask, 'Do they toil to save their society, their freedom, their thinking, their heritage for their heirs - or is it for their own lifetime? Or are they destined to carry it for life?'

"Toward the end, as he lies crushed, you speak to him to urge him to discard the unneeded burden. He cannot. He had been born with it, unborn into them. You do not understand why he does not receive your simple words, because you do not understand that weight of a thought is greater than of a ton of gold. For one in a thousand who liberates himself a thousand others replace him. Not others but himself, as when a worm is cut into a thousand pieces so the others - his brethren, his other selves - replace him for the further carrying of the burden."

"Such is the burden of those who carry the burden from here to the future."

## SHYLOCK

Bercovici's "The Shylocks" analyzed Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice in the Adler of September 22, 1912, after he saw Robert Montel's performance in the Princess Theatre in Montreal.

"The various interpretations of Shylock provided actors a means of expressing their own tendencies. The anti-Semitic image of the Jewish moneylender reflected the anti-Semitic nature of the actor. The opposite image derived from another outlook by the actor.

"There are two possible conceptions of Shylock: the Jewish and the Gentile.

"The Jewish Shylock seizes the occasion to avenge the humiliations to which his people are subject. In every Christian he sees a man who has bathed in Jewish blood. His demand for the pound of flesh is symbolic rather than real.

"The Gentile Shylock represents a savage animal who would drink Christian blood, who would avenge the humiliations he has himself suffered, his humiliations at the hands of the Christians who had robbed him of Jesus.

"Shakespeare's own Shylock is not human at all. He is not consistent, for he has heaped upon the Jew all possible contrasts to impress his audience.

"It was the first Jew to appear in Shakespeare. Himself an actor, the playwright portrayed the entire scale of human sentiments of blood lust and love of children, greed, nationalist sacrifice, meanness. He is a mannequin wearing all clothing intended for others. He is not human, not Jewish; he is an actor. His inconsistency permits the widest range of presentations; the threads are free and can be woven at will. The little logic that binds the scenes and acts reflects the morals of the time.

"All the other characters are a band of swindlers from the Venetian aristocracy who have no respect for Jewish money or for Jews, who would marry a Jew's daughter and would evade their obligations to pay their debts. Portia demonstrates that Venetian greed is greater than Shylock's.

"The play should rather be called 'The Badly Written Contract.' When a Jew like Rudolph Schildkraut plays the part he creates a new character and reveals the pathos of the swindled Jew who personifies all Jewish fathers whose young daughters have been stolen by Christians; it is the revenge lust of a tortured people. He's not

Shakespeare's Shylock, the mannequin, the actor. He is the man of flesh and blood, the Jew who utilizes a part of the text of the Merchant to portray the feelings of the wounded Jewish father.

"Montel played Shylock as a Gentile, as it is performed on the vaudeville stage - bloodthirsty, greedy, vulgar and comical - tenth grade melodrama.

"Schildkraut once said, 'There had never been a Shylock.' I would add, 'There once was an actor who looked for effects. He heaped them on a type whom he called Shylock and stamped him as a Jew.'"

### THE KISS OF SALVATION

"Every morning my mother kissed my forehead; with that kiss her silvery voice trembled like a violin string, as she caressed last night's flower like a fresh rose. My mother.

"So when I went out on the street the women who smile when they wish to bite, who speak of love when they hate, laughed with me when they desired to pierce. I thought of mother when I waltzed to the fiddles and the trumpets, music that draws to the skies, that refreshes the blood and speeds the breathing.

"I bent this way and that as I danced with my beloved, as she nestled in my arms, her burning hands on my body, lips longing for a kiss, different from my mother's.

"The animal that is me, the one my mother's sacred kiss sent back to its rest, now was reawakened, and now I have forgotten all, forgotten the fresh flower of my chalice. No longer am I disgusted with the eyes that laugh when they really want to pierce, and that smile for a slice of bread.

"I fled from my lover's gate; I fled the thirst of a kiss; I fled to quiet my love in a glass of the dirty wine of false love.

"God must have wanted me not to sink. I came home late, thirsty; I had waltzed and I bit my skin to the blood. I tortured myself and wept and promised myself to quench my thirst on the morrow. I forgot about my mother.

"No sooner did the sun's rays enter my room than my mother came in, 'Good morning, son. May I kiss your forehead?'

"The pure, sacred kiss restrained the beast and stilled my blood.

"She cleared out the faded flower from its pot, and woke me up every morning with her kiss." (Sept. 3, 1912)

## LIGHTS

Bercovici dealt with the puzzle of "Lights" on December 22, 1912.

"A wealthy man decided to arrange a great festivity. He invited many guests to his table that Friday, spread with breads, fine meats and liquors.

"His wife blessed the candles, all shining equally. At moments one candle flamed more brightly; a breeze blew another; at other minutes candles faded somewhat, for the threads were not uniform. But all burned equally and all extinguished at the same time.

"So one of the guests asked, 'Why are all candles the same thickness and the same size? This is not truthful; the world is not uniform.'

"A second guest looked at the lights going out and commented, 'It is becoming dark. One candle should be burning longer.'

"A third called out loudly, 'It was not a very strong candle in the first place.'

"Because he was quite wealthy, the host was affected by these comments and, when his guests departed, he gave much thought to the better display of his riches.

"On another occasion he invited his friends to the Sabbath meal at which he displayed his heavy silver candelabra with its thick candles.

"The guests marvelled, 'It is more light than before, but still not enough,' and no one looked at the candelabra itself, which made the host quite unhappy as he wondered, 'Is it not splendid enough?'

"On the third festive evening he lit still more candles and, to make the masterpiece more prominent, he put it in the centre, with scores of smaller candles all about it. The assembly marvelled at the multitude of lights, but did not notice the central candelabra, since the menorah candles burned out before the many lights about it.

"The heat of all the smaller lights had melted the lights at the centre and the newly rich man asked, 'Why did no one notice my beautiful gold candlestick so decorative in its workmanship? Why did its heavy candles extinguish so quickly, and remain on the bookcase as a thing of beauty for the week, even as a hundred small candles are lit on Friday evening, while the candelabra remains as decor on weekdays, on days neither festive nor Sabbath?'"

LAMPS

Bercovici's recollections on "Lamps" (Oct. 22, 1912) evokes impressions remaining in the mind of an old actor: "His eye contact with his audiences across the footlights and, at other times, the 'cold public,' when the words intended for them froze on his lips and each of his gestures appeared ludicrous even to himself.

"But there had also been times when his words flew warmly, tremblingly, floated over the theatre touching the strings of their hearts, their applause was his reward, his life.

"The stage was his love, the scene where he brought laughter in all its forms: healthy laughter, lively, cheerful, comic, wise, dead laughter, ailing. All these were not alien to him. He feared the white forms of laughter even more than the black.

"The stage remained his love, his eternal love even as he aged, a love that does not cherish roses; it often replaces a foolish fresh flower with a faded bloom.

"Women are usually the majority of the theatre public, seeking trembling tears, still bearers of pearls of dew.

"Now the audience has deserted him. He comes every evening to the theatre when the lamps are lit and burn into his heart; his eyes are damp and his lips hang in powerless anger. When the new star appears he senses a wild jealousy; he would jump upon his usurper who had raped and murdered his true love.

"The stage itself has become a veiled person carrying a wreath, yet hidden behind a thick curtain, shedding a flower to the audience when it applauds, a kiss for every appreciative laugh. The stage becomes cold when it is silent. Each such instant the time-knife cuts a scar; tempus fugit.

"He presses the hand of his usurper as he calls 'à demain.'

"His anger cools when the public leaves. But he comes to the theatre each evening; his eyes become damp, his hands tremble. His beloved calls to him and laughs at him."

## CHRISTMAS

As early as 1912 Bercovici reported a surprising degree of cultural integration in two reports, "Before Christmas" and "Jews and Christians." (Dec. 19 and 25, 1912).

"Jews also observe Christmas each year, on December 25, just as Christians do. And why not? Are they not as fully entitled to do so?"

"Christmas is a merry season, and Jews have a right to rejoice. They buy toys for the children, and Christmas presents; they get new dresses. Xmas is a great Jewish holiday."

"Last year I was walking along one of the great streets of New York. In front of a store stood Christmas trees with all their decorations that are also found in Christian homes. Toys, red lights, bells. I was watching the customers select the richer, larger trees with more lights and the smaller trees with fewer lights."

"Suddenly I saw a Jew with a long beard before the store. He was waiting his turn and soon appeared dragging a Xmas tree and carrying a package of lights. I wondered what I was looking at. Is he a Christian? But his long beard, his nose, eyes?"

"'Uncle,' I asked him, 'What do you need a Xmas tree for?'"

"'It's an American holiday. We are Jews and we earn our living here; so we must learn how to behave. Do you understand?'"

"'But what sort of holiday is this?'"

"'I don't know - Washington or Lincoln. Some American holiday, and I am a citizen.' and he walked away happy that he had enlightened some greenhorn."

"Christmas is a great festival for the Jewish people for Christ was born, and Jews rejoice. Yet Prof. Gombart claims that Jews do not assimilate; Santa Claus with beard and earlocks. One Jew calls 'Merry Xmas' to Mr. Goldberg, who responds, 'Happy New Year.'"

"Elsewhere Jews participate not because Christmas is essentially a religious festival, observed in the churches. But in the United States, as in Canada it has lost its religious nature, a month of fair and exposition in which everything is on sale."

"The rich want to make sure that the poor eat that day. The head of the Salvation Army in an American city asked the Hebrew charities

there for a list of the Jewish poor. 'We want to make sure that no one goes hungry on that day of superfluity.' So they provided them with their list.

"So this is America; and we do not want our children to be jealous of the Christian children.

"Watch the Salvation Army beggar, bell in hand, Santa Claus garb, collecting for the poor for Christmas; watch the Jewish pennies and dimes slip into his box. For Christmas is a great holiday for Jews; Washington and Lincoln were born that day.

"He, Christ, came modestly into the world, in a barn, from very poor parents who were often uncertain of their next meal. Now his birthday is feted with rich meals."

## THE CITY

Bercovici mused on "A Small Village City" on November 19, 1912.

"There are cities of 50,000 population which have a sense of a large city, and cities of a million with the spirit of a town.

"The first mark of a town is its dependence upon another city. What it possesses is not beautiful, what it creates is not good, it must originate in the large city, in another city; the people have no confidence in themselves. You cannot convince them that most scholars and artists were born and brought up in small centres.

"America is worst, for all tends to one city, but New York does not consider itself independent. Its streets are full of peddlers who offer European matches, German papers, French newspapers, Parisian styles (sewn on Hester St.).

"But in smaller cities, the teacher must come from New York, and the lecturer, the tailor, the actor, the shoemaker, the wife. If possible they would import its air and water."

xxxxxxx

The city centering on Common Street is the scene of Bercovici's "Montreal at Night." (Nov. 8, 1912)

"A cold wind is a reminder that General Winter, with his army of frost and snow is not far away.

"Suddenly the street becomes cheerful, the hour of the closing of the theatres. Men and women walk together and it is easy to tell what each group brings from the temple of art.

"A young girl clings to her man; on the stage she had seen a man deceive his wife, and now she fears for her lover. As she walks with him she thinks of the possibility of his infidelity. She senses the drama.

"Another group are repeating loudly the line of the comedian in the play. That is how it is; the happy ones make what is cheerful; each according to his requirement.

"I was drawn to the water. Recollections of my youth. As I neared the harbour I smelled the dry fish, the ropes, the rubber boats and sweat. The lights of the ships sprinkle the St. Lawrence with gold, and the moon is reflected in the river, still and mysterious. I would jump on board and remain there, the wanderer. I think contemptuously of my present life, about my house and my bed; my memories

return to the carefree days and nights under the blue Adriatic skies, when responsibility was not mine but the ship captain's.

"Two men approach me; one for a match, the other for a few cents. Both smelled of alcohol. On Common St. a gang of cheerful sailors, recognizable by their broad gait. They laugh and sing as sailors do, and disappear into an open saloon. I have to leave the harbour; I am pulled too strongly.

"I enter the Windsor Station waiting room. A group of "green" arrivals. A Galician girl with a dress of the country and a French hat. A young Russian looks at her. I asked him where he is travelling. Instead of answering me, he calls out to his travelling companion.

"'Moishe, do you hear? It is a Jew.'"

"They surround me and ask a hundred questions, but no one answers me. I ask again and a bearded old man pulls out a card, "Is it far?" One is bound for Winnipeg, another for St. Paul, a third for Vancouver. No one knows their destination.

"I approach the girl with the French hat and ask her. Without a thought she tells, 'To my bethrothed' she shows me his photograph, with a cylinder hat in his hands. She is the only one who knows her destination, her man. She had dressed for the occasion, intentionally. Her gloves are from Germany, her shoes from Austria, her hat from Paris, her shawl from England.

"They are calling out the names of the trains and cities. The immigrants forget me and rush to their bundles. A railway official comes to them; they show him their cards. He tells some of them to follow him, bundles in hand, cards between their teeth.

"But the old man remains seated. His train is not leaving yet. He sighs deeply, puts on his glasses, and takes out a book which had been wrapped in a large kerchief, the Psalms. He bends forward and straightens out as he reads from it, looking at no one, but at the slightest commotion he rises and shows his card.

"Soon his turn comes; he wraps his book up again and puts his glasses aside carefully. The official screams at him impatiently, but he must protect his book carefully.

"I understood what is most important to him. The ships' horns sound far away, calling me. I remember my own books far away, in my own home. I flee the sirens that would tear me away. I jump on the first car away from the sea, from the call of the heart, from the captain, the dry fish. But even at night, while asleep, I still smell the harbour and the broad wings of the sails dancing before my eyes, calling me."

### PARC LAFONTAINE

Bercovici spent one early winter "Montreal at Night" at Parc Lafontaine, a saddened garden, the bare trees reach out like the bare hands of young children seeking sympathy. The benches are covered with snow; occasionally a man runs past, his hands in his pockets.

"A couple in love pass by in serious conversation. Occasionally they stop. He is involved in his words; she is silent and keeps her eyes on him as he clears half of a bench for them to sit down in the midst of the blowing wind whistling amid the twisting branches. The lovers kiss as the snow dances.

"A man of about forty wrapped in a torn coat, fatigued and bent, approaches me for five cents for a cup of coffee. After he gets it, he runs. I feel like his saviour; I still his hunger for a moment. But he stops at the lovers' bench; he approaches them and stares at them long as they continue their embrace. The cold was attacking him; he stomped his feet, blew on his fingers. He then walked away slowly, looking back. The cup of coffee lost its attraction as he disappeared in a corner lane.

"Yes, a slice of bread can stifle the hunger of our stomach, but how many hungers does our entire body suffer? The entire spirit? A greater hunger destroys a smaller hunger; a great joy erases a lesser pain. Hunger of love can make the poor man forget the hunger for bread. Who knows whether his coffee will smell well for him.

"The snow covered both lovers completely as they kiss in the shine of the moon. The tramp returns. He coughs. The two awake fearfully, look about, see him, rise, and walk away. I wonder if he will approach them. He follows them and turns away.

"I, too, continue my walk. Behind me the wind seems to bring me the melody of a French love song, one does not beg for love with a bowed head.

"Craig Street is dead. The stores are shut. Some street women are walking about. A policeman is eating in a café. They greet him, 'Bon appétit. How is business?' Several drunkards pass by, singing as they drink. One hands the bottle to the policeman who takes a long gulp. The women approach; they give them the bottle. Within a few minutes it had been kissed by all.

"They had come together well; street women, drunkards, policemen, whiskey had united them all.

"Things are happy in Chinatown on Lagauchetierre St. on the second storeys of the unstable homes with gargling sounds which the Chinese

call song; a half silenced drum and a broken bell. I wonder what all this means in their language.

"I walk down Lagauchetierre to Bleury. A Chinese walking towards me asks me for a match. As he lights his cigarette he surprises me by asking if I am Jewish. 'So go to hell,' he suddenly said in Yiddish, proudly. How does he know these Yiddish words?

"At the corner two women jump out from a car. Two Chinese approach the women. They call to each other in Yiddish, 'Don't be long' and the other also replies in Yiddish, 'You too.' I no longer wonder that the first Chinese had spoken those Yiddish words to me.

"Yes, it is the only place for them. The street is uncomfortable. A policeman passes. The lamps are dimmed. It is quiet as in a tomb."  
(Nov. 25, 1912)

## MOUNT ROYAL

Bercovici's series of "Montreal at Night" (Nov. 15, 1912) included a night on Mount Royal. "Yearning drove me from home. To silence my heart I sought solitude.

"The few lights were being extinguished below. To the right the St. Lawrence River; the leaves were yellow under the silver moon; the trees were towering silently. The city only permitted a ship's whistle or an automobile horn.

"The yearning persists. The arms would stretch out for someone, hear a beloved voice, feel the restful glance. I fell asleep to waving dream of spirits and fairies dancing in satin greengold of silver veils, yellow flowers, blond hair and ivory.

"A cutting sound awakened me. Two harsh voices; a thick voice of a man and a thin pleading voice of a woman. Soon it became clear. She was pleading with him not to leave her. But why here on the mountain peak? They noticed me and disappeared, and I, too, dozed off, but not to Pan but to quarrelling wild people, until the first rays of the sun.

"I climb down towards Duluth St. A man behind me overtook me as he saw a young woman approach him. A French voice, familiar, rough like those in my last dreams...

"I did not notice that the loving couple were also on the streetcar until they both jumped off and went their way happily.

"As I saw them descend, I become sad for no reason. I sensed wild men dancing and Pan played a barbaric tune. Factories were whistling, cars racing, chimneys spewing out dark smoke, wild and senseless.

"At midnight a group of men are assembled in a St. Catherine St. café and discuss loudly.

"At the corner of Main and Dorchester Street, in a heavy rain, a small crowd stands around a preacher under a big umbrella. The crowd also have umbrellas, sometimes sharing this flimsy shelter. The preacher confesses that he had sinned, but Christ had forgiven him as He will forgive all believers in Him before His second coming. A poorly dressed Jew punctuates the speaker with the loudest Amens, his eyes devoutly shut.

"The rain became heavier, the crowd disperses; the Jew remains close to the missionary, helps with the pamphlets. Before the last one

leaves, the Jew approaches him and whispers to him. He shakes his head, but gives the Jew something. I follow them with my eyes, various thoughts come to my mind. The Jew was near me; he glances about like a frightened thief and darts into a saloon.

"I understand his loud Amens." (Oct. 29, 1912)

## MAIN STREET

"Montreal at Night." "Main Street is covered in blue. Horses pulling carts from Main St. are tired as they come up the street painfully. The driver interrupts his melody, beating the horse with his whip. A few stars wink from behind the clouds. There is laughter in some homes, and song, some in a foreign language; a woman sings a vulgar song in English; the sound of bottles and glasses.

"People are running, their collars up, hands in pockets, rain whipping their faces. I stop for a warm drink in a saloon near St. Catherine St. Two French Canadians, half drunk, are nodding over their half-filled beer glasses, look at each other, utter some unintelligible words, shut their eyes. The bartender leans on a mirror, a bottle in one hand, a cigar in the other, sleepy. I am awaiting my punch which he had forgotten. 'Punch,' I called out again. He excused himself with a smile.

"The two drunks open their eyes, glance at each other, glance at me contemptuously, sip their beer, draw on their cigars, shut their eyes and nod. There is nothing human about them, or anything belonging to any group; I recall that they belong to no nation.

"As I pass the side room I hear snoring while the bartender is asleep and the two are asleep.

"In that room a woman is leaning, head on the table, hands hanging down, a small whiskey glass beside her; her snoring even louder. Suddenly she begins to cry. Her wet clothing is steaming as she talks to someone in her sleep. She becomes silent, then snores more loudly, then wails again.

"The door opens and a street cleaner enters, soaked with the rain. He orders brandy; the drunken men finish their beer, order more, and the three begin to discuss the warm weather. They complain at the endless rain.

"The bartender washes his face in cold water and drinks from a bottle. The wailing begins in the other room. The bartender is irritated and goes to the woman. She awakens but does not understand him, puts her head on the table and goes back to her snoring. He orders her out. She looks at him wildly. What does he mean, get out? She wants to sleep. He takes her by the arm and makes her get up. Her tangled hair over her face, a small black cap at the side of her head, over one ear, her face unclean, with foam at the side of her mouth. She looks at him, unsteadily, seeking her glass. It is empty. She asks for another, but he asks for money. She looks in her pockets; they are empty. He takes her by the arm and pulls her. She grabs at the chairs, at the tables, doors. She

would bite him, but he withdraws his hands with disgust, hits back at her and throws her out.

"The night workers awaken. He washes his hands. The street cleaner pulls out a sandwich from its wrappers and eats it with a fresh beer while his friends talk of fallen women, and condemn those who drink.

"Some minutes later she returns, and the bartender would move to keep her out. But she is not alone. A half intoxicated fifty-year-old man follows. She smooths her hair, walks to the bar, speaks to her man gently, and orders two brandies.

"The bartender wipes his lips servilely, wipes the table with an end of a towel. As he is paid, he thanks the man graciously. He no longer washes his hands.

"There is singing in the side room. She calls in the other men. They sit about the table, touch glasses, joke, laugh. The bartender is laughing. He acknowledges each payment as she looks at him with contempt. Now she is the stronger of the two." (Oct. 14, 1912)

I - A CAFE WITHOUT AN OWNER

J.L. Malamuth, colleague of Bercovici, sketched with a pencil pictures and types in the Northeastern Café on the corner of St. Catherine St. and Clark, "Heroes of the Night," in their common genre. (March 2,3 and 4, 1913)

"Grey wooden chairs about the walls, with flattened arms that serve as tables. In the centre, a marble table with a large sugar bowl. On its left, broken and overturned plates that are like signatures of the night habitués of the place. Aside from sugar the table also holds spices, mustard, pepper, salt, toothpicks, paper napkins, cutlery, etc.

"On a flat marble there are pastries, tin cups for steaming coffee and tea exuding flavour over the entire restaurant and are imbedded in the walls.

"A waiter stands at the food counter, hands deep in his pockets.

"'Coffee and toast,' a guest orders. The waiter repeats the order. Another waiter behind the counter also repeats, and the guest receives what he desires.

"No one serves him. He finds the teaspoon, picks the sugar from the bowl with his fingers and carries it to his chair. The one civilized article in the restaurant is the cash register. A sign on the wall instructs, 'No Smoking.'

"The young guest, his eyes fearfully stark and overflowing, clearly drunk, short of sleep, is at home here. He stretches his feet halfway across the floor and lights a pipe. The waiter behind the counter smiles at him. 'No smoking, can't you see?'

"'That's why I am smoking' he replied as he emits a fresh wave of smoke as from a chimney.

"'Don't worry,' the waiter slaps his back, and you forget that the waiter is the nighttime owner who rings up the income of the place.

"Before long a second customer comes in, clearly unshaven for several days, his cap askew, limping, bringing with him the smell of cheap beer. But he is happy as he recognizes the earlier comer.

"'Hi, old pal, what brings you here like a dog in the middle of the night?'

"'You are insulting him,' the waiter defends his customer.

"'No matter,' the first comer says.

"'If he said it to me, I would black his eyes, and you fool, are quiet,' and the waiter pulled his sleeve in encouragement.

"'Get away. Give me a bed, or I'll tell the boss in the morning that you are provoking your customers to fight.'

"'The hell with the boss. There is no boss.' and he danced, 'I am here because I am here, because I am here.'

"'So you can sing Jewish?'

"'I gather that they are both Jewish. There are cheerful noises from outside as several enter at once. They come not for food, but because it is a café without an owner.'"

## II - CARD PLAYERS

Malamuth continues,

"One of them is flushed, eyes gluing; the second is depressed, his cap over his face; the third an aristocrat, gloves and cane.

"'Jack, you pay now,' the aristocrat decided, and ordered two soft boiled eggs, buttered toast and coffee.

"'You son of a bitch!' the depressed man pulled his cap further down. 'You won every game and you have the nerve to joke.' He raised his fist to the other's eyes.

"The third encouraged him. 'Hit him with the cholent board.' I find myself among my brethren in Israel.

"The waiter explained, 'These are speculators; the plague of cards had hit them; our best young people.'

"The aristocrat had cleaned them all out.

"The man continued his threats, his pockets were inside out; not a penny in them.

"The two losers suddenly twisted the arms of the aristocrat behind his back and went for his pockets. As they pulled two five dollar bills, one of them shouted, 'That is my ten,' the other claimed the ten dollars.

"'I will give you all you want,' the aristocrat surrendered. 'Leave my pockets alone. On my honour.'

"They trust him and let him alone. 'How much do I give?'

"'As much as you wish. No one is telling you what to give. Business is business, winners keepers.'

"The waiter proposes ten percent.

"The aristocrat says, 'Agreed.'

"They sit at a table, order steaks, apple pie, coffee, enjoy true friendship.

"'Tomorrow?'

"'We'll play poker.'

"'And sleep.'

"'You sleep during the day, or did you earn enough tonight?'

"'You should eat what I earned with Ex-Lax,' the aristocrat told them. They left cheerful; no longer sleepy."

III - PRANKS

"A fresh group, red-faced, fur gloves under their elbows, clearly automobilists, long in the fresh air.

"My boss is dead drunk. I am free till late tomorrow. He will wait till I am ready for him.'

"Mine told me he is coming soon. But I know him. He will see a skirt and will forget wife and children, his life and health.'

"So what are we drinking?' the third asked, beating his feet to the melody of a cheap American tune.

"His friend laughed, 'Champagne.'

"So, order.'

"One proceeds to the order counter, while another goes to the central table. While the first brings the coffee, the second pours the mustard and olive oil into one of the coffees. A third watches quietly as he adds pepper to the coffee concoction. The first returns in all innocence, stirs it well and drinks deeply.

"What filthy coffee, fit for tramps.' he drinks again and spits it all out.

"The waiter had seen it all. 'You will have to pay for all of this. Mustard and pepper cost money.'

"The victim of the prank laughs at the trick. 'You bastards,' smiling and enjoying it all.

"Quiet in the house, a lady is present.'

"He assumed a solemn posture when he saw a heavy lady, just past forty, grey, her hat far behind her face, painted a reddish tint, clearly Irish. Her unclean dress and manner rather evoke regret.

"As she entered and looked about her she broke out into

'Mary had a little lamb  
And it liked a glass of beer  
So did Mary  
When Mary went to the saloon  
So did the lamb.'

"Her audience applauded. She addressed no one when she ordered a dark beer at the counter. After looking about she chose a sober seventeen-year-old boy as her companion.

"'May I?' she asked.

"'Certainly,' he answered, looking at the floor in a long silence.

"She missed his words. 'What did you say?' but he had not uttered a word, and did not answer. She moved a little closer and was about to put her hand on him.

"'Shame,' he muttered.

"'Look at the baby,' she joked as he lowered his eyes, and she repeated her Mary limerick. 'Don't be shy.'

"He suddenly rose to leave. She rose just as rapidly, and as he passed through the door, she followed him, 'Don't be shy.'

"No sooner did they leave than the conversation in the restaurant began.

"'I would not have let the old witch in the place. It's time they were put in a corner in a nunnery, and she is still attempting to seduce young people.'

"'Look who is talking. You would think he is fasting.'

"'Shut your mouth or I will knock your eyes out.' When the door opened two well-dressed girls in short dresses come in, with feathery hats and much impertinence on their puckered lips.

"They listened for a few minutes. 'Some language.' Her esthetic sense was injured. They measured the small crowd. They soon walked out with the two men who had used the most abusive language."

IV - BEFORE DAWN

"The dark windows were becoming blue when the cashier took up a mop to clean the floor become a gutter during the night from the trodden ashes and butts and cigar ends and spittle. He pushes at some customers who had shut their eyes, awaking them to go to work; but none moved; some pretend to snore. At the marble in the centre he replaces some sugar and places the plates in order. He knocks down a chair with a sleeping man. The man yawns and leaves with a curse.

"New customers arrive; they have their breakfast without appetite and rush off to work. One dark, thin, tall man stands out in a black shirt, face coal-smearred, fatigued, hands unwashed, rushing to work. Clearly he worked late, rushed home for supper, lay down to sleep in the same clothing, uncleaned, grabs his breakfast here and rushes off to work, so the entire week.

"A whistle. The shift changes. The waiters change.

"New customers, polished. They greet each other, politely, civilized. They take their time in the restaurant. Different people.

"The Heroes of the Night have disappeared."

DAWN

Konrad Bercovici's "Montreal at Night" continues in Malamuth's vein on October 20, 1912, as he began his "Dawn" instant by instant.

"The milk wagons, the bread wagons, the heavy fruit wagons bringing food to the markets; the newspapers appeared in turn one after the other. One by one men appeared on their way to work. Clearly they are still half asleep, hands in pockets, collars raised, heads bowed, none walking straight.

"One was coming out of Sherbrooke St., silently, carrying his shoes in his hands, doubtless a thief, or a murderer? Who knows what he had done? In my fantasy I could see killing, infanticide, theft. An upper window opens slowly, a lady's head emerges, fingers at her mouth. She sends him a farewell kiss. He responds. The window closes. A few steps later he puts on his shoes. I soon hear him sing Toreador, moving victoriously. His head is stretched out. He comes from Carmen. He is a thief; he stole some happiness from life.

"The air becomes blue, the stars go out one by one, but the moon will not surrender its scepter to the sun. The queen remains the last on the battlefield between night and day.

"Ontario Street is already alive. The small candy stores open. They put out the newspaper tables. A barefoot woman opens the grocery door. She is so far asleep that she can barely find the keyhole, and when she does, she snatches a moment of dozing as she stands. A barefoot girl with a can awakens the lady who pours the milk for her. A few steps further the little girl sips a little of the milk and goes further. A few steps later she looks into the can. Will mother notice?

"On St. Catherine Street I stop at a French restaurant and ask for a drink; I am the only customer. The lonely waitress brings me a hot cup of coffee. 'Are you a stranger here?' she asks me. I am at my third cup. She is from Paris. 'Yes. I am only a few days here. But you are a stranger here too, a Parisian.'

She is glad I recognized her; she is proud of her city and sighs every time she mentions Paris, a Parisian sigh with a smile. She brings herself a cup of coffee and we talk of the beloved city. We compare the streets where we had lived, where we walked. She had come here with her husband, but he died; she wants to return, but has no money. She asks me about my work. 'I write.' 'In a French paper?' 'No, in a Jewish paper.'

"'Jewish?'" She jumps away, takes her cup with her. Puts the check on the table and becomes busy with the cakes, bread, wipes dishes. I no longer exist.

"The sun is up. But it is so dark."

## THINKING

Bercovici decided to address himself to his readers on the noble, fine, lost art of thinking, on September 10, 1912.

"Once, in the past, there was respect for the thinker and there were those who sought to follow in his footsteps to 'See, here was the stone on which he sat,' and his thoughts flew over the past and into the future, and all wondered.

"The race of thinkers is no more, and thought - how this art suffers! It has fallen into untender hands, coarse hands. Once thoughts were treated like the beloved, polished and ornate. Today thinking is considered a labour, and thoughts are slaves. We expect production from them.

"How thinking blossomed when it was impossible to write nonsense, when writing was slow, when it was chiselling on stone, after slow reflection of text, selection of the newest, most beautiful, most noble thoughts. Thousands of thoughts floated in the air. The poets felt and saw them - yes, true thoughts are seen - but only the finest were retained as worthy gifts for mankind.

"Yes, slave dealers also had thoughts, gifts which are still alive, among your stores and books and your pride and nobility. They, too, were painfully chipped out of rock.

"Then came vulgar printing. Its crude hand that knew not the beauty of thinking was cast in type, and it sickened and aged. The romantic spirit disappeared with the appearance of print.

"Did you expect that noble thoughts would be disseminated and refined? But what has happened? Who possesses Virgil, Socrates and Plato among his books?

"People wanted to be tickled, titilated and the rough hands have conquered. The chisellers upon stone have died and they were replaced by men who treated all women equally indifferently.

"Is there love today? Is there thought?

"The even road is favoured, mountains are levelled. In the desert a thinker is a mountain. Thinking is applied to the exploitation of other people's thoughts. Our ages are parasitical; they live off the old thoughts of the past. They do want thoughts, but not to be pregnant with them, to suffer the pangs of childbirth; they want gardens of artificial flowers...

"We see our trains, planes, steamers, but the perspective is false.

"A fly sits on a mountain and comments on an elephant in the valley below. God have mercy on foolishness, you wise people, you are standing on the experience of thousands of centuries. You did not create the mountain or raise it by an inch.

"It was necessary to give you a God; you did not find another, and you deny Him because you do not understand Him, you wise people.

"Regard your own smooth, dry faces; no wrinkles. Your thoughtless foreheads. Only children have thoughtful eyes, and an old man recently asked me, 'How does one think?'

"I told him what I say to you now. 'Stop knowing and be alone, sit at a still river. You will rejoice with your first thought, will become divine.'

"The best of us ought to go out into the wilderness, far from people and their knowledge, and have children there raised far from the world of today, make their own bed and find their own god, who will raise the mountain higher.

"Their beloved ought to save part of the world, save the ancient beautiful art of thinking from perdition."

xxxxxxx

Bercovici addressed his readers fraternally, musingly, "On the Education of Their Thoughts."

"Every living being, from microbe to vast organisms, has a certain beginning even if only arbitrary; for in reality we cannot conceive of the first without predecessors, and certainly not without prior development.

"This is as true for the abstract form and idea.

"A thought is born. The past and the present embrace; or the present and the future embrace and thus the thought is born.

"Yes, my brother, each new thought has a father and a mother; its beauty depends on the love of its parents and so does its health.

"But so, also, must it be brought up. It must be strengthened, cleansed, protected from bad company, loved and educated. Your duty to it is just beginning, for no child is born independent or autonomous at first, even though it carries the seed of independence, even as it carries the seed of future seed." (Oct. 23, 1912)

## COURAGE

Bercovici's "Courage" (Nov. 7, 1912) is the tale of one of those men who earn their bread by the sweat of their understanding.

"The waves of life cast him in a land of alien tongue, where they would not use his understanding, where they required only brawn. When hungry he appeared in the market with bowed head. He of sound body too stretched out his arms. Many passed him by, felt his muscle - firm enough - but in his eyes they sensed strong spiritual life, and passed further. They chose men of fatigued eyes, men who were dull and without speech.

"Behold, a cripple, a crooked hunchback, stopped at the bowed head, felt the strength of the muscles and said, 'I see you are a stranger and have never done hard labour. I will give you bread and water and straw to sleep on, and you will work from dawn to sunset.' He accepted the offer because he was hungry. As the days wore on the cripple watched the sweat pour out, and the light slowly die out from his eyes, and the labour grow heavier, and the bread loaf smaller and the straw less, and the cripple's insults more daring and open.

"Until, one day, the insult became more injurious and the worker raised his hand. But he looked down and he saw a crippled hunchback. He had not the courage to strike him. He lowered his gaze and cried bitterly, for he understood that it requires greater courage to strike a cripple than to fight ten giants.

"And the cripple understood that the other was a coward and continued to insult him.

"But a time will come when they will both be cripples. And then..."

### FIVE IN THE MORNING

One of Bercovici's lightest sketches dealt with a man who had risen early all his life. "By five in the morning he has always risen, dressed and was outside walking. Winter he was reading or writing; he earned his living by his pen during the last twenty years.

"God helped him and he was offered a position that required him to be at work by five every morning. No one in the editorial office wanted that position. Writers are usually late risers, and everyone was happy when Chaim's name came up.

"'With the greatest of pleasure' he accepted. But all that day he went about a disturbed man. He must awaken early. He went to bed earlier than usual, prepared his clothing for the morning, set his alarm clock just on time. He could not sleep all night lest he awake too late. He kept striking matches all night, watching the clock; after nodding off for a few minutes he awoke fearfully, struck another match, but it was damp and would not light; he found another match, but dropped it. In despair he put on the light. Only a few moments had passed since he had lain down. But he doubted his clock. He looked for another clock. It was ticking properly. Tired and with no confidence in matches and clocks, he lay down again - and rose two hours later than usual. He had not heard the alarm.

"In disgust he threw away his alarm clock and bought another. But that evening he was again restless. What if this one will not ring again? So he bought another clock, wound both clocks and set them to ring at the same time. Midnight he rose to check his purchases. Happily he shut his eyes. After a long time the ringing dutifully woke him up. One clock showed him five o'clock, the other said three. With faith in the second, he turned over in his bed and slept till eight.

"He quarrelled with his watchmaker, and worked, sleepily, all day on his feet. That evening he went to sleep early, with a battery of clocks all about his bed. He could not help it. He could not sleep.

"The next day he resigned. He threw out all his timepieces and went to sleep.

"Ever since he slept peacefully and arose at five." (Oct. 24, 1912)



MOODS

"How I wish for something to draw me out of my apathy - some great joy or some deep sorrow; some strong experience with great laughter or intense weeping, a force to strain my nerves and make my blood boil, an inner revolution which will age me by twenty years within the hour.

"As it is the grey days follow each other, slowly, identical; a little more disgust, some quieter, the same faces, same voices, same words, same concerns.

"The two frozen trees opposite my window, the silent curtains next door, and a bird buried in itself on a branch of a tree, rocking in the wind, too cold to fly away on the falling snow.

"I once brought such a bird into my home, warmed it, fed it from my hand. It played with the children, but it did not sing all winter. But at the greening of the first branch it flew away.

"I had forgotten myself, and spoke badly of it, for it never even returned to the window sill.

"The children skate on the ice, the hats green and black and blue. as they laugh and fall and rise. Are thy learning to rise or to fall? They will need it in their lives, to rise, to sink lower; the higher we rise, the lower we fall.

"How I would like to be among them, skating on the ice. I will find no great joy among them, but possibly God will grant me a profound sorrow.

"I do not fear death. I only regret that I will not be able to mourn myself. That is all that death will rob me of. It would be a great experience, to witness my own death, to take the great step from here to there, to jump the great boundary.

"How many people cling to life because they do not know death.

"All we do in life - love, work, laugh and impose torture - is only pastime, to avoid thinking of death. Those who are not afraid of death do not work, do not laugh, do not cry; but they regret that they cannot live with that experience behind them. Man truly lives for one second, the second before death.

"My strange feeling, that spring will never come; will the bare dry branches green again, share their odour? Will grass and flowers grow where the children skate? Will the sky be blue and the snow on the roofs melt? Will I see all this happen?

"I wait for the extraordinary to happen. But nothing happens. One hour after the other, one hour like the other hour, a long round loneliness.

"I know them all, the hours with the pale face, the sleepy, tired, sickly hours, face that had lived their time, like prisoners marching in chains, next to each other, like each other. After the hour passes, it shakes its head and continues. A tired world." (Jan. 9, 1913)

## DEATH

Bercovici's "Death" (Jan. 2, 1913)

"At first motionless. Life is day between two long motionless nights; life is hanging on a pillar between death and death; before you, after you, above you, ice, cold heaven.

"The being springs out from the dark night to greet and to be greeted, like the face of a cuckoo clock, and back into the box, to jump out at the hour. As much as the Dutch bird teaches us, that much we learn each hour: we come in; after the hour, its day, its time, its boundary come its divine eternity, its eternal divinity. That is, we respect the dead, their wishes, their memory. We appear, we greet, are greeted or punished.

"You can change life, weaken it, even cease it, but you cannot alter the dead; it is not relative, not more or less dead. It is not measurable in days or hours to come; we meet, we are welcomed or are tortured and eternally death is eternal. The bird knows better, and it knows that life is only a joke; it draws the net tighter at will, and they come again.

"But I tell you that life exists only so that we know that death exists, as an antithesis where all returns; death is positive; life is negative.

"You have seen the windmill which the wind turns; there is no turning without the wheel. That wheel is death, wiser than life.

"Death is glad of life, happy to see the child at play or weeping, or serious at play. Then it becomes cold, icy, fades, ceases. Only in death is all eternalized. Life has a predetermined time, a boundary. But death is divine, eternal. Which is why we fear it and respect its will; its justice, its ability to destroy life, to alter it, to weaken it, to turn it.

"Death is eternal, unchangeable; there is no comparative death, no diminutive, only an indivisible death, absolute. It does not come in minutes, hours, days, years; nor in the plural. It is worthy of worship.

"The pleasant time of our youth, the old days of our age, the sun, the moon, the night, spring, summer, fall and winter, the satin fields, the silken forests, the golden wheat, the distant white eternal snows of winter, the seas of snow, a naked tree on the riverbank, a robin flying between trees.

"A line between death and death; laughter, weeping, kisses, warm eyes, passionate hair. Then, a cold final kiss, and it all ceases. The hour is past.

"So sing, drink, love, kiss till death call you back, for only it is eternal. It and God."

It will soon show (Nov. 25, 1912)

Miss I would love

"Pity, I would share"

## WINTER IMPRESSIONS

"When the earth is covered with snow and the trees are dry and dead, I would drink much and dance. I would dance to drive away the sorrow which presses on my heart; I would drink to forget everything. I would put a tombstone on my yesterdays.

"For something of me has died yesterday, every day - an idea, a thought, a hope, a creature, a confidence, a friend. I am a cemetery.

"How many dead do I carry about within me? How many ideas have I buried which have revived in me in another form?

"Nothing dies; its form changes. A friend has proven unfaithful and I thought that I have lost faith in mankind; I have buried Friendship in solemn pomp. But suddenly I found another; soft eyes, warm hands. I told him of my last friendship, and Friendship revived, for every tombstone is a cradle, and every cradle is a stone.

"Every living being must die, but every person should have the choice about being born. Some are fortunate, they have chosen the great No - no cradle, and no stone and no cemetery where the sun is cold when the snow covers the dry earth, the artificial flowers, false gold, false diamonds.

"I recall that at the same time, somewhere else it is warm, spring, the forest is thick, the fields are green, the sky blue, flowers. All is happy as in my old home at night a gypsy plays his fiddle, at a table in the garden, with red wine in glasses, song, dance, laughter kisses, the Danube.

"Suddenly the mysterious call of the Cuckoo bird. The gypsy freezes, laughter dies.

"But soon all is happy again, forgotten. I forget. I wanted to tear a flower for my beloved, but the bird called; the man looked at me with disapproval. My love left me. A love is lost.

"Will someone tell me happy tales? Will someone play a happy song when something dies in me, when I count my dead who lie under the snow? Will someone fill my glass with intoxicating juice? What dies will soon live again in another form, in another time, in a nicer, another world.

"Play, I would dance  
Kiss, I would love  
It will soon snow." (Nov. 29, 1912)

## FLOWERS

Bercovici's "The Good Gardener" (Adler, July 15, 1912) is a sketch about a devoted owner of a garden who nourished his trees and vines very successfully. Their fruit was promising, but during a storm his produce was destroyed, for the plants had been too well cared for and the roots proved to be shallow; the ruder plants were able to withstand the tests of crises.

Bercovici's "The Tragedy of the Rosebush" (Jan. 5, 1913) narrates the tale of "a beautiful plant, cared for by gardeners and children and neighbours and by the sun; it responded by aroma and colour and full leaves. Passersby stopped to breathe its air, which they acknowledged with grateful thanks. Year by year the plant became richer. Its own children tremulously cut the flowers, bunches for family, daughters, friends and lovers, for bouquets and for their own hair on holy days; this plant was called Rosenstock and a thousand other tender names, and its fruit were called love dreams, for the honey from its bees was richer than the products of the aviaries in the nearest villages. No one drove away any of these bees, for the flowers invited, 'Come, nourish, enjoy.' Even the sun was proud to shine on Rosenstock as the dew pearls every morning set a diamond crown on it each morning.

"Near the gardener's home there was a marsh where wild weeds grew and frogs and worms could live. A spider spread its thread where flies were trapped and where no bees ever came.

"But the spider discovered the rose plant and wove its thread over it, and the bees' feet were trapped and the spider sucked their blood, and the roses lost their odour, and the people found dead flies in the flowers and threw them out in disgust. The spider wove its net further as the bees deserted the garden.

"The sun could not reach to kiss the roses. The children could not rejoice over the flowers. The lovers no longer rejoiced there or spun laurels. The spider wove ever thicker, and the rose plant...

"Will someone kill the spider?"

IN THE BASEMENT

Bercovici wrote "Criminals" in his series on "Crimes of Charity" in which he described the harshness of the investigators in the waiting room. "A delicate lady was mocked because her name - Mandela Wanderman - seemed so strange. She began to cry, and the investigator threatened to throw her out. The others in the room were terrorized. Those who received several dollars came out tearful or crying aloud.

"The symphony of poverty in many voices, of the mother who sees her children fade from hunger, of the wife whose sick husband is agonizing in pain, the fear of the young widow of the street, the despair of the old man no longer able to work - the voices mixed by the choirmaster." (Oct. 1, 1912)

xxxxxxx

Another of Bercovici's fragments of "The Crimes of Charity" "In the Basement" appeared in the Adler of Sept. 18, 1912.

"We passed through all the rooms and descended into the basement where the applications of the poor are accepted. I nearly fell on the steps. As my eyes became accustomed to the half darkness I began to make out women, children and men on the benches.

"Mr. Cramer asked my name again, shook my hand again and remembered that he had read some of my writings. He assured me that he was 'a hot socialist' and a reformer.

"I had lit a cigarette, but put it out when I saw a No Smoking sign.

"'Why are you not smoking?' he asked me as he stuffed his pipe. I pointed to the sign. 'That is not for us. That is for them, for the gang of beggars, the applicants.'

"He searched long among the papers and found one, 'Greenfeld.'

"He called Greenfeld several times, angrily, until a man of about forty came up, 'Did you call Greenfeld?'

"'Are you deaf? Can't you answer when I call? Or is this a false name that you are not accustomed to? Swindler!'

"The man cupped his ear with his palm. 'What did you say?'

"'I said you are an ox, a beggar, a swindler.'

"The man again asked, 'Please speak louder, I cannot hear.'

"How do you like that?" Mr. Cramer asked me.

"He's deaf," I suggested.

"You are a naive child. I can see that he is as deaf as you and I; excuse the comparison."

But nothing helped. The poor Jew was as deaf as a bell, and Cramer had to scream out his questions.

"How long are you deaf?"

"I am just coming from the hospital where they operated on my ears last week."

"You see," Mr. Cramer told me. "It is a swindle. He hears better than we do. Do you have a doctor's certificate?"

The old man searched in the vest pocket for the required document, but Cramer moved him away, "It is all a swindle. They buy a doctor's certificate for a dollar - beggars, swindlers, go home."

"What did you say?"

"Go to the devil," Cramer repeated, and wrote something on a paper.

"I have no home."

"I interjected, 'You hear, Mr. Cramer, he has no home.'"

"Let him find a home." Mr. Cramer was already looking for other papers.

"But he has no home, and no money."

"That is not my affair. This is no place for tramps."

"But he has no home."

"How do you know that? We have a rule that we do not give charity to vagabonds."

"But, Mr. Cramer. He is just out of the hospital and he was about to show you his certificate."

"I don't want to see any certificates; I saw no certificate. It is not my business."

"So why are you here?"

"I am here to find out how not to give. That is the main thing. There is no trick in giving. My job is to find a reason for not giving. Next: Miriam Falk."

"I was dizzy. Only the old man stood like sculpted from stone. His eyes were dripping blood, warm blood. The eyes of all who were there were dripping blood; blood in which Cramer the hot socialist was bathing."

### CHARITY OBSERVED

J.L. Becker recalls an incident which may possibly be a part of the mythology in the immigrant society related to the Institute. An applicant who came to ask for assistance in the burial of his child was refused because he spoke too loudly. "There is no screaming here," he was told. (J.L. Becker. "Reuben Brainin in Montreal," in Tzum Hundertsten Geboirntog fun Reuben Brainin, on the centenary of the birth of Reuben Brainin, edited by N. Meisel. N.Y., Ikuf, 1962, P. 104)

XXXXXX

In 1908 the Baron de Hirsch Institute, which had already long been the major social work agency of the Canadian community, engaged Stanley Bero, a serious Jewish community worker who had had considerable experience in immigration and settlement work in the northeastern United States.

Bero was scholarly and articulate, clearly influenced by the budding science of community social work then developing in America, not least in Chicago. He was an articulate lecturer and writer.

In October Bero initiated a series of free discussions, lectures and debates on various social and scientific topics. The Adler called it a reform long overdue. "Hundreds of young men have no place to meet evenings to exchange opinions, to project their ideas, to study, to criticize and analyse - a spiritual centre for the young. The first lecture will be given by S. Schneour on 'The World Jewish Association,'" the predecessor of the Canadian Jewish Congress and of the World Jewish Congress.

Remarkably, the limited professional personnel of the organized committee for some decades, initially, even the field workers on the farm settlements, were not always satisfactory. Most of them were not Jewish.

The Bero experiment was of short duration. Possibly his journalistic efforts, in the columns of the Jewish Times, which was the voice of the establishment, did not ensure his stability on the staff of the Institute.

### CONTEMPT OF CLIENTS

The new Baron de Hirsch Institute for several years had in Bero a sharpeyed observer within its walls.

In the Jewish Times of May 15, 1908 he published, "Amongst the Schnorrers, Half a Day at the Baron de Hirsch Institute. Studies in Mendacity, by 'Behtzinner.'" "

"The Baron de Hirsch Institute is not made for Schnorrers any more than synagogues are made for hypocrites. Still, there will be hypocrites in the synagogue, and so there are schnorrers at the Institute. Personally, I can vouch for it that not all who come to the Institute are Schnorrers.

"The other day I was asked by the Jewish Times to write my impression of the crowds of applicants during relief day. When, in due course, I sought admittance to the relief room, I found the door barred by a sturdy Cerberus who ordered me to go around to the ante-room and there wait for my turn in rotation. I consoled myself with telling the young man he was a fool.

"'You are a fool yourself,' he promptly returned.

"The young man of course was right to call me a fool, for imagining that there could be anything in the appearance of a newspaper man to warrant that he was not a candidate for charity. But that still does not leave me without my right to assert that not all that come to the Institute are Schnorrers.

"Thursday afternoon is Relief Day at the Institute, though the distinction is rather fine, for the truth is, every day is relief day. There is not a day in the week, nor an hour in the day when there are not numbers of miserable people hanging about the premises clamoring for relief. But we may say, at least, Thursday is the principal Relief Day.

"The whole building is literally packed with poor people - at least poor they are all of them; there are no millionaires amongst the schnorrers. In the ante-room they sit ranged in rows, awaiting their turn, more or less patiently.

"There is always a crowd of them gathered about the door, trying to peep in between the chinks. There is an overflow gathering about the hall, and in some of the schoolrooms, where some of them, of Roumanian origin probably, are passing away the time with games in burnt matches, characterized throughout with a series of mild Yiddish invectives: 'Melammed, do it this way.' 'Schlemiel, where art thou creeping.' &c.

"Some isolated men keep aimlessly wandering about the entrance hall, now and then pausing before the door, flattening their pale noses against the glass, goodness knows what might be going on through their dazed minds at the time. They look the personification of misery and despair.

"On the whole, however, relief day at the Institute presents itself as a tragicomic spectacle. But the comic side of it does not become evident till one gets into the the relief room proper and sees how the applicants are dealt with one by one - or, rather, how the applicants deal with the relief officers.

"One man asked for five dollars, for which the relief officers thought the man's case was not entitled. 'Upon my "ehrenwort,"' the man at last said, 'give me two dollars, and I'll sign my name that I have no more claims on you.'

"Another elderly man, with an easy, good-natured expression on his wizened face, was told that he could get no charity, as he was the father of several grown-up daughters, all of whom were at work. 'Nu,' said he, with a smile and a shrug of the shoulder, promptly turning on his heel to make his exit, 'is nicht gefiedelt.'

"At the bottom of this comment lies that man's view, and the views of many others like him of the Institute as a whole. It is a huge fiddle to come and play upon it, and it just happened that that old man could get no notes out of it at the time. Nu, is nicht gefiedelt.

"Here was a good story spoilt. I might have come away with the fine story of how a schnorrer made the Institute a present of a dollar. The young man craved for something to help him to live through the week, till he got a job. They gave him one dollar, which he thought too little, and to make sure there was no mistake about it, he loftily handed the dollar back. But, as the gentleman of the relief committee did not seem sufficiently impressed with this dramatic show, the young man remained hanging about for some time till he cooled down and held out his hand again for the dollar which had been given to him. And that is how a good story was spoilt.

"'Am I not also a Yid?' was the sole plea of a young man with whose case, for the rest, the committee were not quite satisfied. His idea clearly was that it was enough to be a Yid to have one's claims fully established.

"One man wanted his name entered on the coal list, when he was reminded that he was already receiving \$2 a week from the Institute, and that he ought to thank God for it. 'Nu,' said he, gesticulating with arms and shoulders, 'thank God today, thank God tomorrow, what good will that do me?' 'All right,' one of the officials said, 'don't thank God. - Next.'

"A single man, a chronic case, protested against the scanty allowance made him by the Institute.

"'Well,' one of the gentlemen of the committee said to him, for the benefit of his colleagues, 'the only way for you to improve your position would be to marry a wife with three children, when we will give you three dollars a week.'"

IN DIALECT

A fortnight later the Jewish Times published a sketch "At the Baron de Hirsch Institute", this time signed, S.B.

"'How are you getting along?' said a gentleman to a man standing about the corridor. 'May my enemies be as I am. Supposing I earn \$2.50 per week, what of it.' 'How do you earn it?' 'Why, my girl earns \$1.50 per week, and I get a dollar at the Institute.'

"It was Thursday morning. The doors of the Institute were still ajar, a large crowd was waiting without, to be first in line, for Thursday used to be Relief Day and hundreds had learned to wait for it to come around. The janitor, as he opened the doors to let in the eager crowd, pointed to a man who stood apart from all the rest. 'That man was here at half past five, sir,' said the janitor. 'My good man, what brings you out so early; don't you know that eight o'clock is the hour?' 'Believe me, when one is hungry, it is difficult to sleep.'

"'What is it, my child?' 'Please give me a pair of shoes.' 'What does your father do?' 'He swears at mother.'

"'I wish I had never lived to see this country,' said an applicant. 'At home I was a prince, here I am a pauper. I was told that I would be given land. They must have meant the cemetery.'

"'It is difficult to tell the difference between men, I admit. I, for instance, am one of those too proud to beg. Supposing I get two dollars. Do you call that money? Last week I fully made up my mind to refuse it. Why did I accept it? I did not want to insult the Committee by declining it.'

"'Give us work or give us bread,' twelve spoke in one voice. 'How many of you will leave town?' 'We travelled far enough when we came here.'

"'What is it, what I see before mine eyes, a glass windy mit a cas man. Az I am a Jew, the charities is getting to be a regular business. May my shildren be so ealthy, I tell you no lie, years ago, when I was coom before the gentleleit - I used to make faces at them and cry a little, and while I would not get much, I would get it right away. Now, what you think they do, hey? If they are no sooter - they tell you to coom next day. Maybe you don't know what they do, so I tell you. They senden arond a vestigator to your hoise, where you live, to looken up your credit and when they find out satisfactre that you got nothing you get something. Lots of changes since them old times.

"You know all them ritz Jews, and I wish they were more of them, they coom together to make a Trust, which means all must put the capital together to deal with us separately. I wish I had in it a share. I would like it, too, maybe. But we stand no schance. No use to compete with the man who comes to take. As long as he got nothing and you got it nothing, so both have something to wish for.

"Last week a fella he comet up by the Institute so they hask him maybe he wants to go away. "We will give you a show to start in a good place. We will give you a letter to another city." I kicked him to say yes. But he wanted a contract, he ought to shame himself in his bad neck. Maybe you think they did not tell him that it will take a year to draw up the papers and that meanwhile he need not coom arond.

"Another thing, what I take notice. The doctor he is getting like a regular hospital. He got in a brand new table - I wesh I had such a table in my hoise - you can lay down in it like a prince. The old chairs was alright to sit, but this table is altogether a difference. Besides, after he examinations you, he give you right away a recommendation by the druggist and you have no farther troubles. It may be a same to say it, but the way they treat you now, it's a pleasure to be sick.

"I was stendin oitside when a man, I never saw that man in my life before, he coom oiver and hasked me what is my cupation. I hanswer I do nothings and its hard work too, onle I got used to it. Besides, I got four shildren, may they live and be ealthy, what ought to work.

"Another man coom in the Relief. He take off his cap, you know, a little cap like by us in the old countre. A zentleman, so fine like silk, he tell him, Uncle, you may put on your hat, that's a nothing. I fell for that man like sugar for that.

"I could tell you more, onle mine wife, may I live to be her widower, she kill me, suer, she send me oit to ern a toller and I am stending here.

"Good-bye." (May 29, 1908)

INDEX

- ADLER, II-IV, 7-8, 13, 17  
 Asch, Sholem, 54-55  
 Ashinsky, M.A. I  
 Baron de Hirsch Institute, 7, 13, 106-114  
 Becker, J.L., 109  
 Belkin, S., III-IV  
 Benjamin, M.L., IV  
 Bennett, A.B., II-III  
 Bero, S., 109-114  
 Brainin, R., III; 1-2, 4, 7-8, 13, 54, 63-64, 109  
 Caiserman, G., IV  
 Caiserman, H.M., III-IV  
 Canadian Jewish Congress, III, 109  
 Chazanovitch, L., II  
 Christmas, 78-79  
 Cohen, H., II  
 Cohen, L.N., IV  
 Cohen, Lazarus, I  
 Cohen, Lyon, 7  
 De Sola, Abraham, I  
 De Sola, Clarence, I  
 FOLKSZEITUNG, II  
 FORWARD, 57  
 FREIE ARBEITER SHTIMME, 57  
 Freiman, A.J., III  
 Garber, M., III  
 Ginsburg, A., 54-57  
 Glazer, S., II, 11  
 Goldstein, B.J., IV  
 Goodman, J., IV  
 Gordin, Jacob, 56-57  
 Grafstein, M., 3  
 Greeks, 32-34  
 Gypsies, 39-40, 55  
 Hachnossath Orchim Society, 11  
 Hebrew Sheltering Home, 10  
 Hebrew Sick Benefit Society, 7  
 Hirshbein, Peretz, 56  
 Jacobs, S.W., I  
 Japanese, 52-53  
 Jewish National Radical School, 3  
 Jewish People's School, IV  
 Jewish Public Library, III  
 JEWISH TIMES, II; 10, 109  
 Kaufmann, Y., III  
 Klein, A.M., IV  
 Kobrin, L., 57  
 Layton, I., IV

Levine, Shmaryahu, 54-55  
 Lewis, D., IV  
 Libin, Z., 57  
 London, Jack, 52-53, 55  
 Lubarsky, A., 54  
 Malamuth, J.L., III; 1, 87-93  
 Malbish Aroomim Society, 13  
 MERCHANT OF VENICE, 72-73  
 Montel, R., 72-73  
 Montreal Hebrew Association, 7  
 Montreal Orphanage, 10-12  
 Montreal, 79-95  
 Music, 63-66  
 Napoleon, 46  
 Navy Bill, 43  
 Peretz School, III  
 Pierce, A., I  
 Pinsky, D., 56  
 Reisen, Abraham, 54-57  
 Richler, M., IV  
 Roback, A.A., III  
 ROMEO AND JULIET, 39-40  
 Rosenberg, J., II  
 Rosenberg, L., III  
 Russian Polish Sick Benefit Society, 7  
 Sack, B.G., III  
 Salonika, 6-7  
 Scheuer, E., I  
 Schiff, Jacob, 15  
 Schildkraut, R., 72-73  
 Schneour, S., III-IV; 100  
 Segal, J.I., III  
 Shmuelson, M., III-IV; 1  
 Shoemakers Protective Society, 7  
 SHOLOM ALEICHEM PANORAMA, 3  
 Shulem's, 54-58  
 Syrkin, N., 56  
 TZUKUNFT, 58  
 VEG, DER, II  
 Vineberg, H., I  
 Waddington, M., IV  
 WARHEIT, 58  
 Winchewsky, M., 56-58  
 Wiseman, S., IV  
 Wolofsky, H., II-IV; 7  
 Yampolsky, I., III; 1  
 Yanovsky, S., 56-57  
 Yiddish, 54-58  
 Zelikowitz, G., 57  
 Zhitlowsky, C., 55  
 Zionist Literary Society, 7  
 Zuker, L., III



BNQ



000 325 918