

Studies on the Life and Work of Yishag Leyb Peretz

with special reference to an Unknown Manuscript

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

The "Studies" deal mainly with Y. L. Peretz's life and work until 1878, the date to which the latest parts of the Unknown Manuscript belong.

Peretz's background is outlined in chapters dealing with the political, economic and cultural conditions in which he lived, with the character of his native town, and with his family.

The meagre sources for this period of Peretz's biography are scrutinized. They are supplemented by details drawn from allusions dispersed in his writings (and particularly in the Unknown Manuscript), and verified with the help of external sources.

An attempt is made to fix the dates of the principal events in Peretz's life and of his writings.

Solutions are offered to several intricate problems, as for instance: the ownership of a library which greatly stimulated young Peretz's intellectual development (Chapter 7); the "brewery episode" (Chapter 11); the authorship of "A Letter from Asmodeus. . ." (Chapter 16); the meaning of the signatures and the authorship of the poems included in a book published jointly by Peretz and G. Y. Lichtenfeld, and also the origin of the "first edition" of this book (Chapter 17).

A period in Peretz's life (1870-1875/6), about which very little was known is dealt with systematically for the first time (Chapter 11).

Peretz's life and his works up to 1878 are discussed in great detail. His views on many problems, his relations with his family, friends and writers, the various influences on his works, and so on, are

often followed beyond 1878.

A detailed survey of the Unknown Manuscript constitutes the last part of the "Studies". A great deal of the Manuscript is given in an English rendering and the rest is summarized. Explanatory notes and discussion are attached to each item.

The Unknown Manuscript, first identified by the writer of these lines, contributes a great deal to our knowledge of Peretz's life, views and literary evolution during the period 1873-1878.

An additional chapter briefly surveys Peretz's life and work after 1878.

Transliteration of Hebrew Words

We follow the Sefardic pronunciation of Hebrew. Peretz used the Polish vernacular of the 'Ashkenazic pronunciation¹, e.g.: "Yíshoq" and not "Yisháq".

כ	ו	ל	ו	כ	ח	פ	ש
ב	ב	ז	ז	ל	ל	פ	ט
ב	ב	ח	ח	מ	מ	ש	ט
ג	ג	ט	ט	נ	נ	ק	
ד	ד	י	י	ס	ס	ר	
ה	ה	כ	כ	ע	ע	ש	

1. On Sefardic and 'Ashkenazic Jews see below: Ch. 3, p. 8 and p. 16, notes 2 and 3.

Abbreviations.

- A: Ale Verk fun Y. L. Peretz [In Yiddish], Vols. I-XI (in 8), New York, cop. 1947-1948.
- B: Briv un redes fun I. L. Peretz, ed. by N. Meisel, 2nd ed., New York, cop. 1944.
- K: Kol Kitbey Y. L. Peretz. . ., [In Hebrew; contains also his Yiddish works translated into Hebrew], Vols. I-VIII, Tel-Aviv, 1952-1953; Vol. IX, Tel-Aviv, 1957 (in progress).
- M: N. Meisel, I. L. Peretz. Sein Lebn un Shafn, New York, 1945.
- MS: Y. L. Peretz's Unknown Manuscript.
- N: S. Niger, I. L. Peretz [In Yiddish], Buenos Aires, cop. 1952. The beginning of this book (pp. 29-66) was published in a slightly different form also in English in "YIVO Annual of Jewish Social Science" Vol. VII (1952), 9-42 as : "The Ancestry, Childhood and Youth of Yitskhok Leybush Peretz".
- R: A. A. Roback, I. L. Peretz. Psychologist of Literature, Cambridge, Mass., 1935.
- YB: "YIVO Bleter. Journal of the Yiddish Scientific Institute". Vol. XII, 1937, nos. 1-3 of this publication was reprinted as: "Peretz-bukh. . .", Wilno, 1940.
- Z: Y. L. Peretz, Mayne Zikhroynes, = A, Vol. XI, New York, cop. 1948, 3-131.

Introduction

As early as 1899, before Y. L. Peretz had written many of his masterpieces, a well-known Jewish scholar was convinced that Peretz "must be counted among the greatest writers. . . of literature in general at the end of the nineteenth century" ¹ .

Whether or not we agree with this enthusiastic statement we must admit that Peretz was, without doubt, one of the most prominent and influential Jewish writers at the end of the XIXth and the beginning of the XXth century. He was - as another scholar puts it - "the man who has succeeded, more than anyone else, in giving us an insight into the Jewish soul. . ." ² . Let us hope that "in the world's literature . . . he will some day occupy an honorable place" ³ .

Such place is already his in two literatures. Peretz wrote in three languages (Hebrew, Yiddish and Polish) and is counted among the greatest figures in two literatures: Modern Hebrew and Yiddish.

The polyglotism of the great artist is very significant. As, for instance, in the case of John Gower, this was a specific symptom of a transitional period, of an epoch full of contradictions.

Peretz's literary activity embraces the years from about 1870 to 1915. Those were indeed decisive years in the history of the Jews, years of fierce ideological discussions, of disillusionment, of shattered ideals and of new hopes, of trial and error, of doubts and crossroads, of destruction and rebuilding.

Peretz was, perhaps more than other contemporary Jewish writers, a part of his epoch, its product. His was a dynamic personality and he took part in all the struggles of his day. Like his epoch he was full of contradictions ⁴ . To understand Peretz we have not only "to go to the poet's country" but also - to his time.

To outline the life and the spiritual evolution of Peretz against an historical background and to show the artistic achievement of the great writer - those are the chief aims of this study.

Special attention will be paid to an unknown manuscript of Peretz, dating from the years 1873-1878 approximately, discovered and identified by the writer of these lines. Accordingly, the first periods of Peretz's life and his early literary works will be dealt with in great detail. The rest of his life and writing will be only outlined in an additional chapter.

In spite of the tremendous popularity⁵ enjoyed and great influence exercised by Peretz, there is not a single really complete, critical and annotated edition of his works, although several editions claim to be "complete" ⁶ .

Only one edition (still in progress) will include both Peretz's Hebrew and his Yiddish works (in Hebrew translations) together, but not all of them ⁷ .

The best existing edition of Peretz's works in Yiddish is also

not absolutely complete ⁸ .

Curiously enough, only one out of its eleven volumes is a critical edition; this is also the only critical edition of works by Peretz ever published. Unfortunately, this volume is certainly not one of the most valuable and interesting from a literary point of view. It contains mainly Peretz's Yiddish renderings from the Bible ⁹ .

A special reason for a complete and critical edition of everything written and translated by Peretz (in the original languages used by him) is the fact that his own renderings of his works from Yiddish into Hebrew and vice versa quite often differ from the original.

The importance of annotations ¹⁰ need not be specially emphasized. For example: the understanding of Peretz's highly important and interesting memoirs ¹¹ cannot be complete without a detailed biographical and historical commentary.

The above-mentioned "My Memoirs" is our main biographical source but many autobiographical details are scattered throughout Peretz's letters ¹² and literary works.

Thousands of books and articles on Peretz have been published in many languages. It is perhaps worth mentioning that a well-known Jewish bibliographer, E. H. Jeshurin, has compiled (but only partly published) a bibliography of Peretz which comprises 6765 items (854 of this number written in languages other than Hebrew or Yiddish) ¹³ . Many incomplete and selected lists of Peretz-literature have been published. The following are the most important: -

1. B. Borokhoy, Di Peretz-bibliografiye, "Literatur un leb'n", Vol. II (1915), no. 5, 103-126.

2. A. Gurstein, Hoysofes. . .tsu B. Borokhov's "Peretz-bibliografiye", "Bibliologisher zambukh", I, (1930), 487-506.
3. J. Shatzky, Hoysofes tsu der Peretz-bibliografiye fun Borokhov-Gurstein, YB, XII (1937), 329-337.
4. E. Jeshurin, Zikhroynes vegn Peretz. A bibliografiye, YB, XXVIII (1946), 165-170.
5. A. R. Malachi, Peretz in Hebreish. . ., YB, XXVIII (1946), 157-164; XXXIV (1950), 221-230; XXXVI (1952), 355-361.
6. N. Meisel, "Di Peretz-bibliografiye" in his book "Yishaq Leybush Peretz un zayn dor shrayber", New York, 1951, 383-392.
7. U. W[einreich], Guide to English translations of Y. L. Peretz, "The Field of Yiddish, . ." ed. by U. Weinreich, New York, 1954, 292-299.
8. E. Jeshurin, Tsu Yishaq Leybush Peretz bibliografiye. . ., "Pinqas Zamośc", Buenos Aires, 1957, 25-31 ¹⁴.

It is our pleasant duty to thank here the numerous institutions and friends who kindly provided us with books, microfilm, and information. May we mention at least a few of the institutions without whose help our task could not have been fulfilled: The British Museum (London), The Jewish National and University Library (Jerusalem), YIVO Institute for Jewish Research (New York) and Biblioteka Narodowa (Warsaw).

NOTES

1. L. Wiener, The History of Yiddish Literature in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1899, 110.
2. A. A. Roback, I. L. Peretz. Psychologist of Literature, Cambridge, Mass., 1935, 14. Referred to subsequently as R.
3. Wiener, o.c., 202.
4. Y. H. Zagorodski (Peretz's first biographer), Yisḥaq Leybush Peretz, "'Ahi'asaf. Luah sifrutī we-shimushi. . .", Vol. IX for the year 1901/1902, Warsaw, 1901, 356-357; S. Niger, Y. L. Peretz-'ish ha-setiroṭ we-ha-shelemut. . ., "Mesudah", Book VII (1954), 341-346; Y. A. Klausner, J. L. Peretz's Strivings for the "Higher", "Sifrut", 2 (1956), 36-37.
5. The number of translations of Peretz's works into European languages is considerable.
6. See: M. Ravitch, Vegn farsheydene oysgabes fun Y. L. Peretzes "Gezamlte" un "Geklibene" verk, YB, XXXVI (1952), 82-98.
7. "Kol kitbey Y. L. Peretz ha-'ibriim we-ha-meturgamim me-Yiddish", Vols. I-VIII, Tel-Aviv, 1952-1953; Vol. IX, Tel-Aviv, 1957. Referred to subsequently as K. The translations are (all but two) by the editor Sh. Meltzer. - Comp.: Ravitch, o.c., 93-94 and M. Starkman, Peretz oyf Hebreish, YB, XXXVI (1952), 262-267. - That even this edition will not be complete we were informed by the editor himself in his letter to us dated July 22nd, 1957.
8. "Ale verk fun Y. L. Peretz", Vols. I-XI (in 8), New York, cop. 1947-1948. Referred to subsequently as A. Comp.: Ravitch, o.c., 89-90 and 97-98. We may add, for instance, that only a selection of Peretz's Yiddish letters and speeches is included in the last volume of this edition. See also the preface of the publishers: A, I, p. x.
9. A, Vol. X. This is, as a matter of fact, only a reprint of Vol. XIII (edited by A. Fridkin and Z. Reizen) of Peretz's Yiddish works published in Wilno approximately between the years 1925-1929 in 19 volumes. Comp.: Ravitch, o.c., 86-87 and 97-98 and N, 416-417.
10. Only a few are added, for instance, at the end of Vols. VII and VIII of K.
11. "Mayne Zikhroynes": A, XI, 3-131. Referred to subsequently as Z.
12. Peretz wrote letters in Hebrew, Yiddish, Polish and Russian. Most of his letters and speeches were published by N. Meisel: Briv un redes fun Y. L. Peretz 2nd ed., New York, cop. 1944 (305 letters), - referred to subsequently as B. Unfortunately, Meisel published the non-Yiddish letters only in Yiddish translations. Some of the originals are to be found in the first edition of his book (Wilno, 1929, 180 letters) and in several volumes of YB. On letters not included in ~~Meisel~~ Meisel's 2nd. ed., comp.: N. Meisel, Yisḥaq Leybush Peretz un zayn dor shrayber, New York, 1951, 393-395.
13. See: "Yefim Jeshurin Yobel Buch. . .", New York, 1955, 172.
14. Comp. also: R, 47-57: "Sources of Peretz's Biography"; etc.

PART I

"The Mists of Childhood and Boyhood" (1852 - 1870)

I. The Importance of Peretz's Childhood and Boyhood for his
Literary Work.

In 1913, two years before his death, Peretz - on the request of S. Nizer, editor of the Yiddish journal "Di Yiddishe Velt" - published "My Memoirs".¹ They take us up to his first marriage only (1870). At the end of what he hoped to be "the first volume of my reminiscences"² Peretz wrote, summing up the period of his life embraced by it:

"The Mists of Childhood and Boyhood begin to disperse and they disappear slowly. And the homely store of sketches and pictures is locked up. Whatever I see in foreign parts, whatever I encounter in towns and villages, on ways and paths, I will see and explore! But spontaneous feeling is no longer with me. Perhaps my soul has hardened and is no more able to penetrate into another [world] to return richer, more colourful and wiser? Or, perhaps, there is altogether no way, except through the senses, to enter into a world which is outside home, outside childhood?"³

In these words Peretz tried to stress the paramount importance of his childhood and boyhood, a period that "nourishes the days to come"⁴ for all his future literary activity.

Peretz's "My Memoirs", the main autobiographical source of the first period of his life, are very unsystematic. "I do not write an autobiography", says Peretz, "nor even chronologically arranged memoirs.

I would like only to give you a bunch of keys to my works".⁵ He does not remember a single date⁶ and if a sudden reminiscence from his earlier experiences comes upon him he just throws it haphazardly into the flow of his narrative.⁷ We may add also that "My Memoirs" contains most probably not only "Wahrheit" but also some "Dichtung" too. Let us remember that Peretz was convinced that "the legend is always more truthful than reality, folk-poetry - more truthful than fact . . ." ⁸ - hence the many inexactitudes we shall find.

The autobiographical material relating to Peretz's youth provided by "My Memoirs" is enriched by only a few details to be found in a short letter to Y. Zinberg, of 3rd December 1911⁹, and in many of Peretz's literary works. Especially important from this point of view are the poem "Monish" (first published in 1888)¹⁰ and the short story "What is the Soul?"¹¹

Although only a few of the many memoirs on Peretz¹² deal with his childhood and boyhood, they nevertheless contribute, as do the many studies on the young Peretz, to our knowledge of this important period of his life.

Using those "keys" (provided by the writer himself, by his contemporaries and by scholars) we will aim to understand Peretz's spiritual and artistic evolution in this (as well as in the following) periods of his life. With the help of those "keys" we shall try to follow the accumulation of experiences, impressions and influences (of cultural trends, environment, people and books) into this "homely store" that nourished the great writer also in "the days to come".

As Peretz himself states, never in his life were all external influences on him stronger than in his childhood and boyhood:

"Sometimes I am like a lump of wax kneaded by any hand; signs of strange fingers are always imprinted on my soul".¹³ "I am like a sponge and I absorb. The absorbed is integrated somewhere inside myself; I do not even realize it. . .".¹⁴ All kinds of "'sayings', opinions, ideas, feelings, ideals and 'Weltanschauungen' drawn from foreign books, - all this mixture is cooking somewhere. . ." as in a cauldron in the young Peretz's soul. ¹⁵

Let us try to analyse this "mixture", to which was added the powerful ingredient of a great and original talent. Let us see how this "mixture" was concocted and how it served to produce masterpieces of two literatures.

NOTES

1. "Mayne Zikhroynes," A, XI, 3-131. Referred to subsequently as Z. And comp.: B, 340-342.
2. Z, 116. Peretz added later only one more chapter: "I Married" (first published in the journal "Dos Leben" in 1914, Nos. 51, 63, and 69); Z, 118-131.
3. Z, 116-117.
4. Z, 96.
5. Z, 80. See also Peretz's letter to the editor of "Di Yiddishe Velt", which serves as a preface to "My Memoirs": Z, 5-6.
6. Z, 6.
7. For instance: Z, 80-81 and 95. This may be explained also by the fact that "Mayne Zikhroynes" was printed in serial form in a journal and written in installments.
8. Z, 37.
9. B, 321-322.
10. On the various versions of this poem: M, 88-93. Two versions are printed in A, I: 3-27 and 271-285. For autobiographical details in "Monish" comp.: Z, 7, 22, (and 24), 49, 69, 05-06, 110.

11. "Ma hi' neshamah" (K, IV, pt. 1, 7-20). In Yiddish (first published in 1890): A, II, 40-53. For autobiographical details in many other of Peretz's literary works comp.: Z, passim. Some such details also in Y.L. Peretz's Unknown Manuscript, referred to subsequently as MS.

12. Comp.: E. Jeshurin, Zikhroynes vegn Peretzn. A Bibliografiye, YB, XXVIII. (1946), 165-170.

13. Z, 18. Comp.: "What is the Soul?", K, IV, pt. 1, 19 (A, II, 51).

14. Z, 18.

15. Z, 119.

2. The Political and Economic Conditions.

Y. L. Peretz was born in the town of Zamość¹ in the part of Poland which was at that time (1852) under Russian domination. After the death of the reactionary Tsar Nicholas I (1825-1855), "the policeman of Europe", his son Alexander II (1855-1881) ascended the Russian throne. Alexander II was far more tolerant and humane than his father.² Among his liberal reforms we should mention the abolition of serfdom in Russia (1861).³ However, his more or less liberal tendencies and especially his liberal attitude towards Poland, lasted only until the Second Polish Uprising of 1863. This uprising provoked in Russia strong nationalist feelings which were at the same time anti-revolutionary and quite often anti-semitic, for the Russian revolutionaries⁴ and part of the Polish Jews⁵ supported the Poles in their struggle for freedom. Echoes of the uprising and of Jewish sympathies towards the Poles are to be found in Peretz's memoirs:

"We, children from the 'heder'⁶ and 'beyt ha-midrash'⁷ were the Polish army! and we had only and solely one enemy; a [Jewish] lad who had come a short time before from Bialystok to his uncle." This poor "Russian" was badly beaten by Peretz's "Polish army".⁸ "We prayed for the success of the . . . Uprising" - writes Peretz.⁹ One of Peretz's relatives was appointed a district commissioner by the insurgents.¹⁰

After the suppression of the Uprising there followed a strong attempt by the Russian government to turn the "Vistula Provinces" (as

Poland was officially called) into a purely Russian region.¹¹ All self-government was abolished, all education "Russified" and the Russian language made obligatory everywhere. Most severe censorship was introduced. The Polish peasants were freed (1864)¹² on conditions far more liberal than the Russian ones - at the expense of the Polish country gentry, who assumed a very important rôle in the insurrection.¹³

The political situation of Russian Poland after the suppression of the rising was, as may be seen, gloomy. At the same time, however, economic conditions improved considerably. Already since 1851 the customs barriers between Poland and Russia had been abolished.¹⁴ In 1871 all the Russian markets from the western frontier to Eastern Siberia were opened to Poles¹⁵; all the more accessible because in the years following the insurrection the "Vistula Provinces" were bound to the Empire by a network of railways. Thus the vast markets of mainly agricultural Russia (protected from outside by high tariffs) were open to the young Polish industry (developing rapidly after 1863),¹⁶ in whose creation and growth Polish Jews played an important part.

Only a very small number of Polish Jews (mainly in the big cities) became wealthy. The vast majority of the Jewish masses in hundreds of small towns and villages continued to live in indescribable poverty.¹⁷ In spite of this the competition of the Jews raised strong anti-semitic feelings especially among the small Polish businessmen¹⁸, who had by this time entirely forgotten the Jewish support for the Uprising.¹⁹

During the 1870's anti-semitism grew more and more violent in Russia and in Poland, supported both openly and secretly by the Russian Government. The Jews were second-rate citizens and did not enjoy the same rights as the rest of the population. They were herded into the "Pale of Settlement"²⁰ and exposed to the hatred of their neighbours. The terrible "progroms" of 1881-1882 were the result of this "policy".²¹

NOTES

1. Pronounced approximately: Zamoshch. 3
2. G. Vernadsky, A History of Russia, New Haven, 1953, 157.
3. O.c., 158-161.
4. O.c., 170.
5. S. M. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland. . . , translated. . . by J. Friedlaender, Vol. II, Philadelphia, 1918, 177-183.
6. Jewish religious school for beginners (literally: "a room").
- 7., "House of Study" - a house where Jews (young and old) studied on their own; served also as a place of worship.
8. Z, 60.
9. L. c.
10. L. c.
11. "The Cambridge History of Poland", II, Cambridge, 1951, 365-386.
12. Comp.: Z, 58.
13. "The Cambridge History of Poland", II, 383.
14. O.c., 368.
15. O.c., 392.
16. O.c., 384.
17. See e.g. Peretz's "Pictures from a Journey", ("Siyurey masa⁶"; K, III, pt. I, 7-80).
18. "The Cambridge History of Poland", II, 375.
19. The disappointment of the Jews is expressed i.a. in Peres Smolenskin's Hebrew novels: "The Reward, or the Jews in Warsaw during the last uprising", (1867) and "The Reward of the Righteous", (1876).
20. The Russian Tsars, after acquiring (at the end of the XVIIIth century) the greatest part of Poland, confined the Jews living there to the limits of the so-called "Pale of Settlement", ("Cherta Osyedlosti"). The aim was to prevent the Jews from migrating into Russia proper. The "Pale of Settlement" was abolished only by the Revolution of 1917.
21. S. M. Dubnow, o.c., 184-205, 243-323.

3. Cultural Background.

In October 1743 a poor, crippled, 14 years old Jewish child stood at the "Rosenthaler" Gate of Berlin (the only one through which Jews were allowed to enter) and asked for permission to come in: he wanted to study in the big town. This child grew to be the famous German and Hebrew writer and philosopher Moses (in Hebrew: Mosheh) Mendelssohn (1729-1786).¹

After Mendelssohn hundreds and thousands of Jewish boys, brought up on religious lore only, made their pilgrimage from various small towns and villages, mainly of Eastern Europe, to the big towns, to seek "Enlightenment, the daughter of Heaven". They gave new direction to Jewish life and Hebrew literature.

The expulsion of the Jews from Spain and Portugal at the end of the XVth century was followed by a long period of stagnation. Spiritual life was confined to religion and mysticism, which fostered the growth of Palestinian Qabalah and of various messianic movements. Secular literature was rare and largely maintained a few of the medieval traditions. This was the cultural situation of Sefaradic,² and Eastern Judaism in the XVIth, XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries.

The cultural situation of the Ashkenazic Jews³ was even worse, especially in Eastern Europe. Here, in the "Jewish" small towns and villages, the Jews lived, almost up to the time of Peretz's birth, in an enchanted world of self-imposed cultural ghetto, with walls even

more impenetrable than those of the real one. The surrounding population of Polish or Russian peasants was totally illiterate and absolutely uncultured and the few squires and officials despised the poor Jews too much to make any cultural interrelation possible. ⁴ The Jews lived their own life, based on an exclusively religious culture. Indeed, they went so far as to forbid the reading not merely of any book not printed in Hebrew characters, but also of the Hebrew writings of their own great medieval philosophers and scholars. The study of Hebrew grammar, and even the reading of "Prophets" and "Writings" of the Old Testament (except in the synagogue, as a part of the service) was suspect in the eyes of the zealots. The only favoured occupation was the study of the Talmud and its commentaries. ⁵

The so-called "Berlin 'Haskalah'" (i.e. "Enlightenment"), started by Mendelssohn and his followers, forged afresh (after a cultural isolation lasting hundreds of years) the cultural links between 'Ashkenazic Jews and the outside world, links that were never again to be broken. ⁶

Germany became the birthplace of Jewish Enlightenment. The German language was easily understood by Yiddish-speaking 'Ashkenazic Jews, and hence German literature was the first to influence modern Hebrew literature, and with lasting effect. ⁷ German, too, was the main medium through which the first influences of other Western European literatures reached the Hebrew literature.

The literature of Haskalah ⁸ was secular. Its forms and ideas

were no more the Jewish medieval ones (partly derived from Arabic poetry, philosophy and science) but those prevalent in the Western European literatures at the end of the XVIIIth century during the period of rationalism, enlightenment and pseudo-classicism.

Strictly speaking, Hebrew rationalism is confined to the years from about 1784 to 1820, the period of the "Berlin Enlightenment"; but its ideas exerted an overwhelming influence during the whole first hundred years of modern Hebrew literature. The century between 1784 and 1881 is, therefore, justly termed the Haskalah. (Enlightenment) period.⁹

The leading ideas of Haskalah were very much the same as those of French (and German) rationalism, and its literary forms resembled those of French classical literature of the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries (and its German imitators). The Jewish adepts of the Enlightenment, the "maskilim" (sing.: "maskil"), firmly believed in the identity of the Rational and the Moral. Convinced of the benefits of education, they stressed the need to "spread the light of knowledge". Moreover, they adopted the European literary forms of the period: the heroic tragedy (e.g.: David Franco-Mendes, Yosef Ha-Efrati) and heroic epics (e.g.: Naftali Hertz Weisel-Wessely, Shalom Ha-Kohen) both mainly representing episodes from the Bible, which were also quite frequently the topics of Western European poets of the "pseudo-classical" age. Not being strong enough in the earlier years of the Haskalah to wage war against the zealots, the Hebrew writers refrained from touching on specific Jewish problems and contented themselves with general didactics. Only a few

and not very loud voices already advocated the need for reform and for closer relations with the surrounding population (e.g. Weisel).

In their search for heroic topics, for great tragic figures, for a language pure and full of majesty and pathos (to match the Western examples), the Hebrew poets quite naturally turned to the Bible. In doing this they at the same time indirectly expressed their negative attitude towards the rabbinical lore with its corrupted language, and towards the whole tradition of the ghetto-life.

The Hebrew period of romanticism (about 1820 to 1860) was very moderate and rarely free from the rationalist and didactic tendencies of the preceding epoch. It found expression in the growing interest in the investigation of the national past - not only of Biblical times but also, in accordance with the tendency prevailing in European romanticism, of the Middle Ages (e.g.: Shelomoh Yehudah Rappaport, Shemuel David Luzzatto, Nahman Krochmal). Luzzatto (1800 - 1865), who was a severe antagonist of rationalism and a Zionist before Zionism, and Krochmal (1785 - 1840) tried to create a nationalist philosophy.

In belle-lettres romanticism is represented best by the historical and lyrical poems of Mikhael Yosef Lebensohn (1828-1852) and the young Yehudah Leyb Gordon (1830 - 1892)¹⁰ and by the two historical novels of Abraham Mapu (1807-1867): "The Love of Zion" and "The Guilt of Samaria".

Meanwhile the struggle of the maskilim against the "viri obscuri" still continued and their invectives grew more and more daring

and violent (e.g.: Yishag Erter and Yosef Perl).

Realistic Hebrew literature was born in Russia in the sixties of the XIXth century ¹¹, and was strongly influenced by the ideas of the Russian "realist" critics, such as Chernyshevski, Dobrolyubov, and Pisarev. The Hebrew realists, just as the Russian ones, violently attacked "pure" poetry and "rhetorical" language (so the young Shalom Ya'aqob Abramowitz, famous later as "Mendele Mokher-Sefarim", Abraham Uri Kowner and Abraham Ya'aqob Paperna ¹²). Haskalah - the realists insisted - is not merely "the daughter of Heaven" whom we have to worship. Haskalah should serve the benefit of the people. The new generation of the maskilim believed that it could be a panacea for all the Jewish troubles. If the Jews once mastered the Russian language and acquired some secular knowledge, they would immediately be rewarded with complete emancipation, and all their problems would be solved with the help of the benevolent Government. The non-Jewish population would rejoice to behold in the Jew its fellow-citizen and brother.

Unfortunately, the Jewish masses were on the whole reluctant to acknowledge the benefits of Haskalah. They suspected, and as we know today - not without reason, that the Russian Government was not free from assimilatory and even missionary tendencies. The maskilim blamed the leaders of the Jewish communities for the obstinacy of the masses. In consequence they launched a campaign against the rabbis and the "Heads of the Community" ("ro'shey ha-qahal"; sing.: "rosh ha-qahal"). Of especial interest in this respect are Gordon's poem "The Dot on the 'i'"

("Qoşo shel Yud"), Mapu's novel "The Painted Vulture" (that is, "The Hypocrite"), and there were many others, among them also the young Peretz.¹³ Although the pages of Peretz's memoirs (written, let us remember, in 1913) dedicated to the Haskalah are flavoured with a great deal of irony ¹⁴we must not forget that in his first writings he was often a champion of the ideals of Jewish "Enlightenment".

The realists were concerned not with the remote biblical past of far-off Palestine, but with the urgent problems and the daily life of their brethren in their own country. For this purpose Biblical Hebrew, the only form of Hebrew so far used by the maskilim, was by no means sufficient. The exclusive use of Biblical language by the maskilim writers proved to be simultaneously a blessing and a curse. It introduced a "pure", poetical, noble style, in place of the language of the rabbinical literature of the previous few centuries. The latter was frequently corrupted and intermingled with innumerable Aramaic and other non-Hebrew words and expressions. On the other hand, the return to the Bible and the abandoning of the linguistic evolution of two thousand years led inevitably to an impoverishment of Hebrew.

Biblical language was quite inadequate for the expression of all the everyday thoughts, requirements and ways of life of the late XIXth century. The Hebrew purists tried to overcome this setback by the most ridiculous and impossible circumlocutions and puns. Two examples will, perhaps, serve to illustrate their methods. Instead of the foreign word "microscope" they wrote: "the glass through which the

hyssop that springeth out of the wall is to be seen like the cedar tree that is in Lebanon" ¹⁵ . The word "telegraph" was "translated": "long-jump", because of certain similarity between the sounds "telegraph" and "dilug-rap" ¹⁶ .

In this way the language was turned into a queer mosaic of Biblical quotations interspersed with most ingenious puns.

Being neither willing nor able to write in this strange and often ridiculous style ¹⁷, some realistic writers, such as e.g. "Mendele Mokher-Sefarin", abandoned the Hebrew language for many years, and, in some cases, forever. Many writers took to writing in Yiddish ¹⁸ or sometimes in the language of their neighbours. There were also writers who wrote at the same time in two or even three languages. ¹⁹

Those who remained faithful to Hebrew did not hesitate to use words and expressions from the vast post-Biblical Hebrew literature, to borrow words from foreign languages and to invent new ones, thus paving the way for the complete revival of the ancient tongue.

The roots of the great tragedy of the last maskilim lay in the discrepancy between their deep, romantic love of the Hebrew language, engendered by strong national feelings, and their struggle for a realistic approach to life, emanating from the utilitarian standpoint. For what was the use of writing in Hebrew or even in Yiddish? Those languages could only serve as temporary vehicles for bringing knowledge to such Jews as had not yet mastered the language of the country in which they lived ²⁰ . All the maskilim, rationalists, romantics and

realists alike, wanted to preserve the "holy tongue" and to preserve the Jews as a nation. But the last maskilim saw that the young generation, brought up on their own "utilitarian" ideas, went far beyond the Enlightenment towards complete assimilation.

At the same time the maskilim became aware of the real attitude of the non-Jewish "fellow-citizens" and of the real intentions of the Russian Government towards the "enlightened" Jews. This was the second tragic disappointment. There were no signs of emancipation or of increasing sympathy for the "enlightened" Jews. On the contrary: antisemitism grew stronger with the full approval of the Government. The "progroms" of 1881-1882 made no distinction between "enlightened" and "zealots". They constituted the final blow to the ideals and dreams of the Haskalah.

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There were five main groups of Polish Jewry in the days of Peretz's boyhood.

The extreme orthodox zealots were opposed to any change in the traditional way of life and to any kind of "enlightenment". To this group belonged very many "hasidim"²¹. More moderate, on the whole, were the "Mitnagdim"²², although some of them were as fanatical as the most extreme hasidim. The maskilim had still a great influence on young people, even if some of the young were already inclined towards assimilation or towards Zionism. The assimilators (Polonophil or Russophil)²³

and Zionists were still few and had only a slight influence on the life of the Jewish communities ²⁴.

The ideological struggles between these groups were often very fierce. They were all represented in Peretz's native town while he lived there.

NOTES

1. M. Kayserling, Moses Mendelssohn. Sein Leben und Wirken, Leipzig, 1888² (especially: p. 7). Comp. also chapters on Mendelssohn in the books on "Haskalah"-literature mentioned below in note 8. Peretz mentions Mendelssohn and two of his books in Z, 71 ("The Dessauer" is Mendelssohn, who was born in Dessau) and 74 (his "Phaedon" and "Jerusalem"). Mendelssohn and his works are also mentioned in a) "Kolbo" (A, II, 436: "Be'ur"); b) "Marja Konopnicka: 'Mendel Gdański'" (A, VII, 193); c) "Der Sintez" (A, IX, 210) "Der Lebens Proces" (A, IX, 395); d) "Di Prawda" (A, IX, 305).

2. The "Sefaradic" Jews (originating from the Iberian peninsula) were between the XIth and XVIIth centuries the most cultured branch of Judaism. The greatest Jewish poets, philosophers and scholars during this long period were Sefaradis: Yehudah Ha-Lewi, Ibn Gabirol, the 'Ibn Ezra's, Maimonides, etc. in the Middle Ages, Spinoza and others in modern times.

3. The Jews originating from Northern France and the lands of the so-called Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation (of whom also the Polish and Russian Jews are descendants) are called 'Ashkenazic Jews.

4. The situation in the days of Peretz's youth is reflected in Z, 55-60.

5. Comp.: e.g.: J. Klausner, A History of Modern Hebrew Literature. Authorized translation from the Hebrew by H. Danby, London, 1932, 1-2.

6. Y. A. Klausner, Ha-nobelah ba-sifrut ha-'ivrit. . ., Tel-Aviv, 1947, 114-115.

7. Among the few foreign writers mentioned by Peretz in his memoirs (Z, 76 and 110) and in his letter to Y. Zinberg (B, 321-322) he especially emphasizes the influence on his early writing of Heine, whom he has "imitated". Translations of two poems by Heine are included in MS, 121 ("Das goldne Kalb") and 122 ("König David"). Other German writers mentioned by Peretz in his memoirs and in the letter to Zinberg as those who influenced him in his youth are: Börne (B, 322), Schiller (Z, 120; comp. also Z, 72) and the philosophers K.R.E. von Hartmann and Karl Vogt (Z, 113; see below:ch. 7).

8. The most comprehensive book on the "Haskalah"-literature in

Hebrew is: J. Klausner, *Historiyah shel ha-sifrut ha-'ivrit he-hadashah*, Vols. I - IV, 2nd ed., Jerusalem, 1952-1954, Vols. V - VI, Jerusalem, 1949-1950. See also: F. Lachower, *Toldot ha-sifrut ha-'ivrit he-hadashah*, Tel-Aviv, Vol I: 1936³; Vol II: 1937². In English: J. Klausner, *A History of Modern Hebrew Literature*. Authorized translation from the Hebrew by H. Danby, London, 1932, 1-82; J. L. Landau, *Short Lectures on Modern Hebrew Literature*, London, 1938²; Sh. Spiegel, *Hebrew Reborn*, London, 1931, 1-266; M. Waxman, *A History of Jewish Literature Vol III*, New York, 1945². Comp. also: Y. A. Klausner, *Major Trends in Modern Hebrew Literature*, "Sifrut", 3 (1957), 1-6 (on which this chapter is mainly based).

9. In considering the year 1784, the starting date of the first Hebrew journal ("Ha-Me'asef"), as the beginning of the "Haskalah"-literature I am following H. N. Shapira's, *Toldot ha-sifrut ha-'ivrit he-hadashah*, Vol. I, Tel-Aviv, n.d. Comp.: J. Klausner, *Historiyah...*, Vol I, 9-11 and ours: *Ha-nobelah ba-sifrut ha-'ivrit. . .*, Tel-Aviv, 1947, 114-116.

10. On Gordon in English: A. B. Rhine, *Leon Gordon, An Appreciation*, Philadelphia, 1910.

11. On the "Enlightenment" among Jews of Russia and Poland: J. Meisl, *Haskalah. Geschichte der Aufklärungsbewegung unter den Juden in Russland*, Berlin, cop. 1919; J.S. Raisin, *The Haskalah Movement in Russia*, Philadelphia, 1913.

12. And also, as we shall see, the young Peretz (MS, *passim*). Paperna's book "The Drama" (Odessa, 1868) was known to Peretz before 1870 (Z, 119).

13. His poems: "Order in Zamość" ("Zamoshcher Pozhondik"; A, I, 323-326. Comp. Z, 75-76: quotations from this poem) and "Hayey meshorer 'ibri" (published in Peretz's and his father-in-law's G.YI Lichtenfeld's joint book of poems "Sipurim beshir ve-shirim", Warsaw, 1877, 3-97), but not Peretz's poem "Hanah" (o.c., 117-138)- in spite of Z, 76. See also the short story "Dos Shtrayml", published in 1893 (A, II, 249-260; comp.: Z, 130), etc.

14. This is sometimes Peretz's attitude towards the Haskalah already in MS (written in the second half of the 1870's). See: MS, pp. 181-183. Ironic and critical attitude also e.g. in "Temunot me'olam ha-tohu", (K, III, pt. 1, 185-203).

15. Comp.: I Kings 5, 13 (Authorized Version: I Kings 4, 33),

16. Young Peretz uses this word in "Hayey meshorer 'ibri", "Sipurim be-shir. . .", 49 (or was it the old maskil's Lichtenfeld's influence?)

17. Peretz also complained of the "obligatory" Biblical language (in MS, e.g.: pp. 4-5).

18. On Yiddish literature: M. Pines, *Histoire de la Littérature Judéo-Allemande*, Paris, 1911; A. A. Roback, *The Story of Yiddish Literature*, New York, 1940; L. Wiener, *The History of Yiddish Literature*, in

the Nineteenth Century, London, 1899; etc.

19. The MS, written in Hebrew, includes also a short (seven lines) poem in Polish (p. 254) and a small fragment (three erased but readable lines) in Yiddish (p. 129).

20. Such was also Peretz's opinion in the second half of the 1870's (MS, 4, ll. 1-9).

21. A most influential religious and mystical movement very popular among the 'Ashkenazic Jews of Eastern Europe. See below: Ch. 4.

22. Sing.: "Mitnaged", i.e. "Opponent". The ḥasidim nick-named all the Jews who did not accept Ḥasidism, "Mitnagdim".

23. Comp.: Z, 55, 59 but also: 114 (a Russophil assimilator).

24. Comp.: Z, 119.

4. Zamość.¹

There can be no doubt that Zamość, the town where Peretz was born and brought up and where he lived intermittently for more than thirty years, was one of the main sources of his inspiration throughout his life. In Peretz's "My Memoirs" (this "bunch of keys to my works" ²) he describes many real persons who served as prototypes for heroes of his works and mentions a great many topics and details used by him in his stories, plays or poems. All these persons, topics and details were drawn from his Zamość days.³ It needs no emphasis that there are also many details mentioned in "My Memoirs" which served as a source of inspiration for Peretz's works, although he does not say so explicitly ⁴.

Zamość was very far from being just another typical "Jewish" townlet in the "Pale of Settlement". The life of the Jews there differed in many aspects from Jewish life in most of the villages and small towns of Poland which were poverty-stricken and isolated from any outside influences. The Jews of Zamość never confined themselves entirely to the limits of religious lore and always tried to unite religious lore ("torah") with secular knowledge ("hokhmah") ⁵.

The town of Zamość was founded by the great Polish statesman and humanist Jan Zamoyski (1541-1605) in 1580 ⁶. Zamoyski intended to build a town resembling Padua, where he studied. The builders of Zamość were Italian architects and it was built in the style of the

late Italian Renaissance ⁷ . For the High School, which Zamoyski founded in Zamość he invited teachers from abroad, from Italy and from other countries. Zamoyski also encouraged settlers from East and West: from Turkey, Persia, Greece, Bohemia, Italy, Germany, the British Isles, etc.

The first partition of Poland (1772) put Zamość under Austrian rule. Between 1809 and 1813 it was part of the so-called Grand Duchy of Warsaw. From 1813 Zamość was under Russian rule ⁸ and remained so until the revival of the Polish State after the First World War.

Thus during the first half of the XIXth century Zamość was successively under three different rules: Austrian (until 1809), Polish (1809-1813) and Russian (from 1813). The inhabitants of Zamość, volens nolens, encountered three different languages and three different cultures in a short space of time. When Peretz was born (1852) the Russians had been ruling Zamość for nearly forty years, but the Poles lived in and around Zamość continuously and the borders of Austrian Galicia (with its dense Jewish population) were always close to Zamość.

The first Jew to make Zamość his home ⁹ as early as 1587, only seven years after the foundation of the new town, was a Sefaradic Jew ¹⁰ . A year later, in 1588, Zamoyski issued a document fixing the rights of the Jews who would like to settle down in Zamość ¹¹ . This document was published for the benefit of "Jews of the Spanish and Luzitanian [Portuguese] Nation" ¹² i.e. the Sefaradic Jews only. In

spite of this, Sefaradic Jews in Zamość were never numerous and in about 1630 they disappeared altogether without leaving any lasting impression on the further life of the Jewish community there¹³. It is worth while mentioning that some Jewish families in Zamość (including Pdretz's) claimed descent from the Sefaradic pioneers¹⁴.

An organized Ashkenazic Jewish community existed in Zamość already in the beginning of the XVIIth century¹⁵. During this century and in the beginning of the XVIIIth it grew in the number of its members, in wealth and in importance. At the same time grew also the influence of the community of Zamość in the frame of the general organization of the Jewish communities of Poland (so-called: "Council of Four Lands")¹⁶.

According to an XVIIIth century rabbi Zamość had at that time a large Jewish community and was "a town full of scholars and writers"¹⁷. Peretz¹⁸ uses the same words and adds that Zamość "had always been. . . a city of torah [religious lore], and 'where there is torah - there is also [secular] knowledge'". Many famous rabbis, rabbinical scholars and writers either were born in Zamość or pursued their activity there¹⁹.

The great majority of the Jewish community of Zamość was opposed to mysticism both heterodox (the movements of Shabtay Sebi in the XVIIth and Ya'aqob Frank in the XVIIIth century) and orthodox²⁰. Still there were people in Zamość who believed in those mysterious "Men of the Name"²¹ (i.e. men who performed miracles by the use of the

hidden names of God and the angels), that paved the way for Hasidism²².

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The years of Austrian rule (1772-1809), when Zamość¹¹ formed a part of Austrian Galicia, were a period of cultural and economic advancement for the Jewish community of Zamość²³.

The situation deteriorated under the Russians. The rebuilding of the fortress, a few years after the Russians occupied Zamość²⁴, caused the evacuation of many Jewish families. Their houses were destroyed and they were economically ruined²⁵. Jewish support for the Polish uprisings in 1830-31 and 1863 and the plight of the Polish country gentry (on whom many Jews were economically dependent) following the suppression of the uprisings, compelled numerous Jews to leave Zamość¹¹ and turned others into paupers²⁶.

The pulling down of the fortress in 1866²⁷ and the withdrawal of the Russian garrison dealt another blow to the economy of the Jews of Zamość¹¹, for the Russians were the main clients of the local Jewish trade²⁸. An epidemic²⁹ and some overtly anti-Jewish acts of the Russians³⁰ also tended to diminish and impoverish the Jewish population of Zamość¹¹ around the second half of the XIXth century³¹. This trend stopped in the last quarter of the XIXth century³², doubtless owing to the general improvement of economic conditions in Poland at this time³³.

In Peretz's memoirs we can trace only a few hints of all these changes. Throughout Peretz's childhood Zamość¹¹ was still almost a

"Jewish" town. In 1858 there were in Zamość 2239 Jews, 1822 Poles and 21 other nationals ³⁴ and "in 1884. . . 7620 inhabitants (5009 Jews)". At the same time: "The shops. . . (except two) and the whole retail and wholesale trade is in Jewish hands" ³⁵. Moreover, Zamość was surrounded by numerous small Jewish communities whom "the little Paris" (as Peretz called his native town ³⁶) served as a cultural and economic centre ³⁷.

"A particular kind of Jewish-bourgeois kingdom. A square market-place ³⁸ (back streets were added later) with two paved crossroads running through it" ³⁹. In the middle - the majestic town hall with a lofty clock-tower ⁴⁰, surrounded by beautiful late-Renaissance buildings. A few more streets, an old Jewish synagogue ⁴¹ and a "House of Study" ⁴² with its exceptionally large library ⁴³; other buildings and institutions where the communal life of the Jews of Zamość was concentrated.

Until 1866 Zamość was surrounded by walls of which later only three gates and some remnants survived: between the gates barracks and other government buildings; on the outskirts - a castle with a garden, a path to the river; beyond - meadows and woods. This was Peretz's little world that served so many times as a background to his literary works and became familiar to everyone of his readers ⁴⁴.

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Peretz states that his native Zamość was the first town in Poland after Warsaw (the capital) ⁴⁵ where the "Haskalah"-movement ⁴⁶

found adherents ⁴⁷.

In Zamość "the Haskalah-trend will pass quietly as far as possible. . ." ⁴⁸. "There will be no excesses" ⁴⁹ here ⁵⁰ against the maskilim; such excesses were not unusual during the struggles between the enthusiastic "enlighteners" and the "zealots".

"Elsewhere there is turmoil and tumult. The hasidim beat the maskilim. . . - With one hand the maskilim write poems in praise of Haskalah, on the four seasons, and also panegyrics - eulogies and praises for the Government for its benevolence towards the Jewish Community, and with the other hand they write denunciatory reports on the 'blacks' [i.e. zealots] . . . And the war goes on against the 'strong men' and the 'community' ⁵¹, war against the hasidic leaders ⁵², against the hasidim, against the rabbis. . . Here there is not a hint of all this" ⁵³. For, according to Peretz, moderation ruled the behavior of the Jewish population of his native town.

On the whole, compared with other places, this was true to a certain degree ⁵⁴ although there can be no doubt that the 61-year-old writer of "My Memoirs" saw the city of his childhood enhanced and greatly idealized.

The end of the XVIIIth century and the first fifteen years of the XIXth were a period of sudden and rapid expansion of Hasidism ⁵⁵ .

In those days the study of the Talmud was regarded as the only

way to salvation. At the same time Talmudic scholarship sufficed to open the doors to honour and riches even to the poorest and the humblest of Jews. Those who were not Talmudic scholars were generally despised ⁵⁶ . However, the large masses of the poor, persecuted and downtrodden Jews, particularly those of Podolia, Ukraine and Eastern Galicia, were ignorant of the highly scholastic Talmudic learning which prevailed at that time. To them Hasidism gave new hope. It promised salvation and esteem to everybody. This was the teaching for the unlearned, the simple, the poor in spirit. To Hasidism most important was not the knowledge but the good intention; not the study of Talmud but the prayer from the bottom of the heart; the love of God and of all that was created by Him - and not the knowledge and observation of every subtlety of religious law. The way of the "pious" was not the grave and gloomy way of serious study and grim asceticism practised by the "mitnagdim" ⁵⁷ . The joy of living expressed by ecstatic prayers, songs and dances was - according to the hasidim - the right method of worshipping the Creator.

This simple method was open to everybody, but it was also held to have a hidden, mystical meaning which endowed it with supreme significance. Hasidism was deeply rooted in Qabalah and the leaders of Hasidism ("Rabbiim" ⁵⁸ or "Ṣadiqim" ⁵⁹), were frequently qabalists and "men of the Name" ⁶⁰ . Hasidism attributed to the "Ṣadiq" a paramount importance as mediator between his followers and God. The "Ṣadiqim" preached, expounded moral teachings, advised in practical matters, but also - healed, foretold the future and performed miracles. The rule of

a "Ṣadiq" over "his" ḥasidim was unlimited.

The adoration of the "ṣadiqim" was one of the main reasons for the degeneration of the later ḥasidism, which serged as a stronghold of superstition and obscurantism. In their hatred of the "Enlightenment" the ḥasidim usually surpassed even the most zealous "mitnagdim".

The "mitnagdim" very soon realized the dangers imminent in the teachings and practices of Ḥasidism and launched a violent campaign against the new movement.

In spite of Peretz's assurance to the contrary, Zamość^{''} was not altogether free from all those struggles. Particularly strong was the opposition of the majority in Zamość^{''}, led by the rabbi of the community, to Ḥasidism⁶¹. At times the struggles between the "mitnagdim" and the ḥasidim in Zamość^{''} were even more vehement than in other small Jewish towns in Poland⁶². For a long time the victorious "mitnagdim" persecuted the devotees of the new teaching⁶³. Ḥasidism, defeated in Zamość^{''} itself, penetrated to the surrounding small communities⁶⁴ and from there slowly worked its way back into Zamość^{''}. The ḥasidim were no longer met with outspoken enmity and persecution. Approximately at the time of Peretz's birth the ḥasidim (here more moderate than elsewhere) became a recognized part of the Jewish community of Zamość^{''}. At that time in other communities the bitter struggle still went on.⁶⁵

In the days of Peretz's youth the majority of the Jews of Zamość^{''} were "mitnagdim". "The ḥasidim are few and their opinion does

not count at all" ⁶⁶; but they were not persecuted.

As a child Peretz, son of a family of "mitnagdim" was not afraid to join the prayers of the ḥasidim, held openly in their separate houses of prayer ⁶⁷. One of his teachers in Zamość was a ḥasid ⁶⁸. More than that: it was the "mitnagdic" rabbi of Zamość himself who advised Peretz's father to send his son to a ḥasidic teacher ⁶⁹. On the other hand, no ḥasidic "rabbi" was allowed to enter Zamość and for this purpose the "mitnagdim" did not hesitate to ask for the help of the Russian Government. In this way they wished to avoid quarrels ⁷⁰. The ḥasidim held back. They still remembered well the persecutions at the end of the XVIIIth century and after ⁷¹. The antagonism lasted to a certain degree even in the period covered by "My Memoirs" (1852-1870) ⁷². Peretz's above-mentioned ḥasidic teacher in Zamość hid his ḥasidism ⁷³. Another ḥasid is mentioned by Peretz as one who was "previously a secret ḥasid"; he was obviously afraid of losing his post (as a ritual slaughterer) and only when retired did he confess openly to Ḥasidism ⁷⁴. However, there were no more serious conflicts between ḥasidim and "mitnagdim" in this period because the former were few and not extreme ⁷⁵ and the latter were moderate. When Ḥasidism in Zamość grew stronger, the situation changed ⁷⁶. Towards the end of his memoirs Peretz writes about an "ultimatum" sent by the ḥasidim of Zamość to a "heretic". The "heretic" yielded. ⁷⁷

Later Peretz (then an ardent maskil) found himself in sharp conflict with the ḥasidim of Zamość ⁷⁸. This, however, belongs to a

later period of Peretz's life.

The outward appearance of Zamość itself, so different from all that its inhabitants could see around their town, must have aroused their curiosity and interest in its past. It may well be that the traditions of the heterogeneous first settlers (Jewish and non-Jewish) contributed towards this interest and at the same time also towards the existence of continuous trade relations of the Jewish merchants of Zamość with abroad. Such relations are recorded in various sources already from the XVIIth century onwards ⁷⁹.

It is worth while mentioning that several Jews from Zamość studied medicine in Italy and Germany at the end of the XVIIth and during the XVIIIth century ⁸⁰. Particularly close, in the XVIIIth century and after, were the relations (both economic and cultural) with Germany (Danzig, Leipzig, Berlin etc.) ⁸¹.

The frequent visits to Germany by Jews from Zamość could not but influence the cultural life of the Jewish population of the town. It broadened their spiritual horizon, formed a basis for a more tolerant attitude towards secular knowledge and created a narrow opening for influences from outside ⁸². The knowledge of the German language was not uncommon among the Jews of Zamość.

A kind of "Haskalah"-movement started in Zamość even before Mendelssohn ⁸³. It did not come from the outer world. It mainly grew

out of the renewed interest in Jewish medieval learning⁸⁴. The meeting of the influences from abroad and those of the old Jewish learning produced the peculiar type of autodidactic "pre-Haskalah maskilin" in Zamość⁸⁵. We must remember that there were no secular Jewish schools in Zamość before the second half of the XIXth century and no Jew before that time would have dared to dream of sending his son to a non-Jewish school.

The early pioneers of Enlightenment in Zamość⁸⁶ found a very important source of knowledge in the unusually rich library of "Beyt-ha-midrash"⁸⁷. According to A. Zederbaum (1869)⁸⁸ there were in this library not only many religious books but also "learned books, Hebrew books on astronomy and mathematics, naturally very old ones"⁸⁹. D. Shiffmann (1878)⁹⁰ stated that the library of "Beyt-ha-midrash" comprised four thousand volumes of religious books and also books on "philosophy and on all branches of knowledge and mathematics. . ." ⁹¹.

In Peretz's days there were in Zamość⁸⁶ also some private libraries and book-shops stocked with more modern books⁹².

On the background of the comparatively rich cultural life of the Jews of Zamość⁸⁶ it is easier to understand why one of the most important forerunners of the Haskalah in the XVIIIth century came from Zamość⁸⁶. Yisra'el Zamość⁸⁶ (about 1700-1772) was not born in Zamość⁸⁶, but he grew up and lived there for about forty years. Peretz in his memoirs⁹³ mentions Yisra'el Zamość⁸⁶ as "the author of 'Ha-Ṭeba'" (if I am not wrong⁹⁴).....the teacher of the man from Dessau" i.e. Moses

Mendelssohn, who was born in Dessau. Yisra'el Zamośc taught "the father of the Haskalah" mathematics and Jewish philosophy in Berlin ⁹⁵.

A relative of Yisra'el Zamośc was the first Polish Jew to write German poems. Bär Falkensohn ⁹⁶ (1746-1796,?) was born in Zamośc. His first contacts with Germany were commercial. Later he joined for some time Mendelssohn's circle in Berlin. Falkensohn's "Gedichte eines polnischen Juden" (1772) aroused the interest of Goethe and Lessing.

As a part of Austrian Galicia (1772-1809) Zamośc came under a direct and strong influence both of the Galician Haskalah and German culture ⁹⁷. This was the main reason why Zamośc became the earliest centre of Haskalah in Poland after Warsaw ⁹⁸.

It seems that there were in this period, and even earlier, some struggles between the "maskilim" and the zealots ⁹⁹, although they certainly did not leave deep traces. Still we know, for instance, that Yisra'el Zamośc "was driven out of his home-land by the anger of the fanatics who hated him for his love of learning" ¹⁰⁰. This happened before 1772. It is remarkable that even in Peretz's days still "about Yisra'el Zamośc little is said. . . . The teacher of the man from Dessau; it is better to be silent. Neither a good word, nor a bad one" ¹⁰¹. Most probably this is an echo of persecutions and struggles within the Zamośc Jewish community.

In the beginning of the XIXth century we hear again about zealots persecuting an "autodidactic" maskil, Sebi Hirsch Geliebter ¹⁰². The fanatics forced him to abandon his work as a religious teacher

("melamed"). Peretz speaks in his memoirs about Šebi Hirsch Geliebter (without mentioning his name) as of the father of F. G., i.e. Fayvl Geliebter (1808-1888), who was the father of "my friend Yishaq'1", i.e. Dr. Yishaq Geliebter (1852-1931)¹⁰³.

In spite of all this, as in the case of Hasidism so in the case of the Haskalah, we may on the whole accept Peretz's statement: there were in Zamošć (particularly in his own days) no struggles between the orthodoxy and the maskilim. This was due to a deeply rooted tradition of toleration of foreign languages and secular knowledge. The majority of the Jews of Zamošć, although faithful to all the precepts of their religion, did not see any sin in reading secular books, learning foreign languages and similar activities. Even the "heretics" were not persecuted in Zamošć towards the 1850's¹⁰⁴.

Already in the first half of the XIXth century there existed in Zamošć a distinguished circle of maskilim. They used to gather in the house of Yosef Zederbaum¹⁰⁵ (about 1772-1832).

Š. H. and F. Geliebter belonged to this circle. Fayvl Geliebter was an interesting personality. From an old Polish book on law he learned simultaneously the Polish language and law. He was versed in mathematics and was able to read in several languages. According to rumours he was a complete "heretic" (which meant only that he committed some minor transgressions). F. Geliebter used to walk bare-foot for miles when he was already an old man. "A Jew" - he used

to say "should be as healthy as a peasant" 106.

Peretz mentions in his memoirs three writers who belonged to Y. Zederbaum's circle: Eichenbaum, Ettinger and A. Zederbaum.

Ya'aqob Eichenbaum 107 (1796-1862) was born in Galicia, but lived for some time in Zamość. He was a well-known Hebrew poet. His poem "The Four Seasons of the Year" is possibly that alluded to in the above quotation from Peretz's memoirs about the struggles between hasidim and maskilim etc. outside Zamość 108.

Dr. Shelomoh Ettinger 109 (about 1801-1856) was one of the first maskilim who dared to write in Yiddish. Although the general attitude of the maskilim toward Yiddish was negative 110 the revival of Yiddish literature was the work of several "dissident" Haskalah writers 111. Characteristically enough, not a single line of Ettinger's Yiddish writings (the drama "Serkale" 112, "Fables" etc.) was published during his lifetime 113. Peretz tells us about Ettinger's participation in 1846 in founding a Jewish agricultural settlement near Zamość 114.

Yosef Zederbaum's son Alexander Zederbaum 115 (born in Zamość in 1816, died in St. Petersburg in 1893) sometimes wrote in Yiddish and edited Yiddish journals. "'Erez" (i.e. "Cedar"; this was his pen-name) was, however, mainly famous as a Hebrew journalist, the editor of the most successful and influential Hebrew weekly (later issued daily) in the Diaspora "Ha-Melis" ("The Mediator", 1860-1904). "Ha-Melis" wanted to be "The Mediator between the Jews and the Government, between Faith and the Enlightenment".

In the meetings of the Zamosc^{''} maskilim used to take part, as long as they stayed in this town, the brothers Shimshon and Shelomoh Ze'eb (Wolf) Bloch. The Blochs were related to Yisra'el Zamosc^{''} 116.

Shimshon Bloch 117 (1784-1845) is well-known as the author of a Hebrew book on geography. His brother wrote on natural sciences.

As the brothers Bloch, so had Fayvl Schiffer 118 (1809-1871) come from outside. He spent many years in Zamosc^{''} and was a friend of Ettinger. He published several books in Hebrew and was very popular among the maskilim of Zamosc^{''}. Schiffer's idyllic description of the life of a Jewish agricultural settlement ("Mata' leshem", 1843) is connected with the dreams of Dr. Ettinger and other maskilim of Zamosc^{''} about such a settlement.

When Peretz was still a young boy there lived in Zamosc^{''} an old maskil versed in Mendelssohn's philosophical works. Peretz calls him: "Kinderfreund" 119. He cannot be identified with the poet Arveh Leyb Kinderfreund 120 (1707¹²¹-1837), who was born in Zamosc^{''} but lived in Galicia, because he died long before Peretz was born and left his native town already in 1814¹²². According to J. Shatzky 123 this was the poet's brother Hermann Kinderfreund.

I did not succeed in identifying the "foremost [Hebrew] poet" of Zamosc^{''} in about 1858¹²⁴. Peretz calls him: "B. H.", erases those letters and writes: "Y. Z. Sh." 125. As Peretz speaks ironically,

it may well be that "B. H." and Y. Z. Sh." were insignificant versifiers ¹²⁶.

The tradition of writing in Yiddish, set up in Zamość by Dr. Ettinger, was continued by several writers in this town ¹²⁷.

Efraim Fischelsohn ¹²⁸ dedicated his satire in dialogue "The Theatre of the Hasidim" (written in 1839) to his friend Dr. Ettinger. Fischelsohn wrote also in Hebrew and (as many other maskilim from Zamość ¹²⁹) in Polish. In Hebrew, Yiddish and Polish have written several "Enlighteners" from this town as e.g. Peretz's friend Naftali Yehudah Neumanowicz (1843-1898) ¹³⁰. Peretz himself too used in his early writings all those three languages.

Zalman Sobel's ¹³¹ little book of Yiddish fables "Destiny. . ." ("Ziwugim. . .", 1874) was presumably influenced by Ettinger's fables, which although printed only in 1889 were probably widely read in Zamość ¹³² already during their author's lifetime. It may be of some importance that G. Y. Lichtenfeld, who was then Peretz's father-in-law, provided a Hebrew preface to Sobel's book ¹³³. It seems to ~~us~~ quite possible that Peretz alludes to him when he mentions in his memoirs "a calligraphy teacher who writes Yiddish poetry à la Ettinger" ¹³⁴.

A Yiddish comedy "à la Ettinger" was written by Leybush (Ludwig) Levinsohn ¹³⁵ (about 1844-1904): "The Women's Savings" (1874).

Levinsohn was a pupil of Ya'acov Reifmann with whom for some time Peretz maintained close relations.

Among the celebrities of Zamość we cannot omit to mention the famous local poet Isidor with whom Peretz

the famous socialist leader and writer Rosa Luxemburg (1871-1919), the daughter of 'Abraham (Eduard) Luxemburg. It is possible that she is "the only daughter, a hunchback" of "A... L..." referred to by Peretz.¹³⁶ Rosa Luxemburg was born in Zamość["], but her family left for Warsaw already in 1873.

Besides the writers and scholars there were in Zamość["] still more maskilim or people influenced by Haskalah. Many of the maskilim used to write in Hebrew, Yiddish and Polish-Jewish journals¹³⁷. Most of them subscribed to the Hebrew Haskalah-books, so that "in the years 1810-1860 there was hardly a Hebrew book published without subscribers from Zamość["]"¹³⁸.

There were in Zamość["] many people who did not write but just studied and read secular books, read and spoke foreign languages¹³⁹ and sometimes ventured to doubt things an orthodox Jew thought he was obliged to believe and even to commit some minor transgressions against the rules of religion¹⁴⁰.

A. Zederbaum¹⁴¹, D. Schiffmann¹⁴², Mosheh Altberg¹⁴³, and Peretz himself, all agree that Zamość["] boasted more maskilim than any other town in this part of Poland, that the Haskalah appeared in Zamość["] earlier than in any other town of Poland (except Warsaw) and influenced even the orthodoxy. Even the simple and poor Jews of Zamość["] were fond of learning and among them too there were "some who

understood European languages in addition to Polish in which language there was hardly anyone who could not read and write" ¹⁴⁴. Indeed, from the cultural point of view Zamość was "an oasis in the desert" of Jewish life in Poland ¹⁴⁵.

There were no conflicts between assimilators and nationalists in Zamość because there were practically no adherents to either group in the town before 1870.

"The Haskalah, when it appears, will in our town not be tainted with assimilation" ¹⁴⁶. There were, Peretz says, no assimilators in Zamość: "Nobody will even think of assimilating with anybody and moreover there is nobody with whom to be assimilated!" ¹⁴⁷. The Russians were represented mainly by soldiers and officers. The attitude of the Jews towards the Russians was not too friendly. However, there already existed social and even (very weak) cultural relations between the Russian officers and some Jews who had learnt to speak and read Russian. ¹⁴⁸ Neither the Russians, nor the more numerous Poles ¹⁴⁹ (in spite of Peretz's - somewhat ironical - statement: "we are ardent Poles!" ¹⁵⁰) were numerically and culturally strong enough to attract the Jews ¹⁵¹ who formed nearly two thirds of the entire population of Zamość.

Still, if there were in Zamość no real assimilators there certainly were Jews who just imitated the customs and the way of life

of their neighbours. This superficial assimilation was ridiculed already by Ettinger 152 (died in 1856) and by Sobel 153 (whose book was published in 1874). Sobel ridiculed inter alia the changing of Jewish names into non-Jewish 154 .

Later, after the period covered by Peretz's memoirs, the assimilation grew stronger. In 1883 A. Zederbaum published a letter from Zamość, whose author complained that all the Jewish "aristocrats" refused to read Yiddish 155 .

The estrangement and indifference of a part of the Jewish intelligentsia to Jewish social activity and to things Jewish in general contributed to the growing influence of the ḥasidim on the life of the Jewish community of Zamość 156 . The field was left free for Ḥasidism to gain the upper hand in communal life.

The spreading of Zionist ideas started mainly after 1881, although the first nationalistic writings of Peres Smolenskin (1840-1885), the famous Hebrew novelist and champion of the Jewish revival, were published by the end of the 1860's 157 .

However, in the years of Peretz's youth Zionism (or, as it was then called: "The Love of Zion" - "Ḥibat Ṣiyon") had probably no influence on Jewish life in Zamość. Peretz occasionally remarks that in those days "there was no question about speaking the holy tongue" 158 i.e. Hebrew. Yet it is of interest to note that two of the three poems he quotes as being favourites with Jewish youth of Zamość 159 expressed

Zionist dreams and longings ¹⁶⁰.

Zionism became an influential force in the Jewish life of Zamość only at the beginning of the XXth century ¹⁶¹. It is worth while mentioning that Peretz's close friend Dr. Yisshaq Geliebter ¹⁶² became an ardent follower of the Jewish revival movement.

The spiritual leader of the unusual Jewish community of Zamość was from 1834 ¹⁶³ until his death ¹⁶⁴ Rabbi Mosheh Wahl ¹⁶⁵ (1797-1873), a man of the highest moral standards, vast rabbinical knowledge and a strong character, wise, kind and tolerant. Although an ardent "mitnaged" he did not hesitate to advise Peretz's father to send Peretz to a teacher who was a hasid ¹⁶⁶. On the other hand he protected the "heretic" Reifmann from persecutions by hasidim ¹⁶⁷.

Rabbi Wahl was deeply religious but not rigorous. He never consulted the tremendous rabbinical literature - he knew everything by heart ¹⁶⁸. Instead, he was fond of reading secular books, e.g.

Qalman Shulmann's (1819-1899) hebrew version of the famous novel "Les Mystères de Paris" by Eugène Sue (1804-1857), published in 1857-1860 ¹⁶⁹.

Rabbi Wahl subscribed to nearly all the Haskalah-books published by the authors of Zamość ¹⁷⁰. Zederbaum ¹⁷¹ praises Wahl's Hebrew style. Unfortunately Rabbi Wahl published nothing. Only a few of his "recommendations" to books written by others were printed ¹⁷².

Rabbi Wahl was greatly esteemed by all members of his

community, who - according to Peretz - always obeyed him ¹⁷³. Rabbi Mosheh Wahl made a deep and lasting impression on Peretz. The pages on him in "My Memoirs" are full of admiration and love. Wahl is the prototype of Rabbi Zishele in Peretz's short story "On the Decline" ¹⁷⁴, of the rabbi in the short story "Shma'yah the Hero" ¹⁷⁵, and of the benign religious judge ("dayan") in the short dramatic scene "In the Next World"¹⁷⁶.

This was the cultural atmosphere in which Peretz grew up and from which, as already mentioned, he drew so much inspiration throughout his life.

In his youth Peretz was never persecuted for joining the prayers of the hasidim or for reading secular books. He saw a tolerant attitude towards hasidim on the one hand and towards maskilim and even "heretics" on the other. Consequently Peretz never became a fanatical adherent of a particular ideology. He was always able to see truth and beauty wherever they were - in the new as well as in the old. Here is one of the clues to numerous contradictions and inconsistencies within Peretz's personality and works.

The cultural atmosphere of the Jewish Zamość (as well as the general cultural situation of the Jews in Russian-dominated Poland in the 1860's and 1870's) is responsible, inter alia, for Peretz's multilingual beginnings: Hebrew, Yiddish and Polish ¹⁷⁷.

The roots of Peretz's devotion to both Hebrew and Yiddish are to be traced to the tradition of his native town: Zamość was the city of Eichenbaum, Zederbaum and other Hebrew writers, but also - the city of Ettlinger and his followers.

NOTES

1. Pronounced approximately: Zamoshch.
2. Z, 80.
3. Z: 7, 8, 22, 24, 25, 29, 30 (alludes to the wrong short story; should be: "Vos amol veyniker"; A, IV, 66-75), 34 (one of the two allusions, the second, points to the wrong short story; should be: not "She-ha-simhah bi-me'on" but "A shmues"; A, IV, 141-144), 41, 49, 51, 52, 69, 75-76 (the quotations are from "Zamoshcher Pozhondik"; A, I, 323), 77, 78, 85, 86, 89, 92, 94, 97, 98, 99, 100 (should be: "Ruhot mesaprot" and not: "Shtey ruhot mesaprot"; K, II, pt. 1, 132-139), 102, 103, 104 (again mentions the wrong short story; should be: "In Keler-shtub"; A, II, 221-228), 108, 110, 130.
4. e.g.: "Mikhal shamash" (i.e. the beadle; Z, 38) is mentioned in "Zamoshcher Pozhondik" (A, I, 325); the death of "K. [on], the wine-merchant" (as described in Z, 108) may have influenced the description of Leybl's death in "Le-mera'shotaw shel goeses" (K, I, pt. 1, 10-11); the story of the bankruptcy of Peretz's grandfather Shelomoh (as told in Z, 9) may be compared with Act 3, Scene 3 of "Hurban beyt sadiq", (K, II, pt. 1, 196-201); etc. Particularly interesting from this point of view is the poem "Tsurik in der alter heym" (A, I, 303-310).
5. Z, 69.
6. On Zamość see: "Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego. . ." pod redakcyą B. Chlebowskiego, T. XIV, Warszawa 1895, 375-379; J. Shatzky, Peretz-Shtudies. I, Zamość un Peretz, YB, XXVIII (1946) 40-41; J. Shatzky, Sefaradin in Zamość, YB, XXXV, (1951), 93-98 (In Hebrew: Yehudim Sefaradin be-Zamość, in "Zamość bi-ge'onah u-b'e-shibrah" ed. by M. Tamar, Tel-Aviv, 1953, 11-14)
7. Those Renaissance buildings still existed in Peretz's days and deeply impressed him when he compared his native town to other small Polish-Jewish towns and villages. See: Z, 34; Y. Na'aman, "Em ha-ayarot, "Zamość. . .", 272-274.
8. "Słownik. . .", XIV, 377; J. Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, YB, XXXVI, (1952), 30.
9. On the history of the Jews in Zamość: D. Schiffmann, Masa' Zamość, "Ha-Melish", Vol XIV (1878), 390, 414-415; J. Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, "Ha-Melish", Vol. XIV,

in Zamość, o.c., 24-39; Y. Lewin, Le-toldot ha-Yehudim be-Zamość, "Zamość. . .", 33-73.

10. J. Shatzky, Sefaradim in Zamość, YB, XXXV (1951), 93-120 (particularly: 108).

11. Printed in "Jutrzenka", Tom III (1863), no. 43, and reprinted in YB, XXXV (1951), 119-120 and in "Zamość. . .", 320-322.

12. YB, XXXV (1851), 119.

13. Shatzky, YB, XXXV (1951), 108-110, 114-115, 117-118; J. Shatzky, Peretz-Shtudies, I. Peretz un Zamość, YB, XXVIII (1946), 40-41.

14. Shatzky, Peretz-Shtudies I., o.c., 41 and see below Ch. 5.

15. Lewin, o.c., 37.

16. "Wa'ad 'arba' ha-'arashot". See: Lewin, 37, 39 ff.; E. Kupfer, Pinqas Hebrah Qadicha we-G.M.H. be-Zamość, "Zamość. . .", 299-302.

17. Lewin, o.c., 50.

18. Above, and note 5.

19. On the rabbis and religious writers of Zamość: Sebi Ha-Lewi Horwitz, Sefer Kithey ha-Ge'onim, Piotrków, 1928, 138-140; Lewin, o.c. 44-54; "Zamość. . .", 215-220, 224, 229-230; D. Schiffmann, Masa' Zamość, "Ha-Melis", vol XIV (1878), 390; Perhaps the most famous was rabbi Ya'aqob Krantz, known as "The Preacher of Dubno" who died in Zamość in the beginning of the XIXth century. See e.g.: N. Waxman, A History of Jewish Literature. . ., Vol. III, New York, 1945, 741-745.

20. Lewin, o.c., 38, 46-50, 52.

21. "Ba'aley-shem" (sing.: "Ba'al-shem").

22. The well-known qabalist Yo'el "Ba'al-Shem" (in the XVIIIth century) was probably from Zamość. See: Shatzky, Peretz-Shtudies, I, o.c., 42.

23. Shatzky, Peretz-Shtudies, I, o.c., 41-42; Lewin, o.c., 56.

24. "Słownik. . .", XIV, 377.

25. D. Schiffmann, Masa' Zamość, "Ha-Melis", Vol XIV (1878), 414; Lewin, o.c., 55.

26. Schiffmann, l.c.; Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, o.c., 33, 35-36; Lewin, o.c., 37, 55; "Zamość. . .", 319; A. Zederbaum's evidence in 1869, reprinted in YB, XXXVI (1952), 53 (comp. also above: Ch.2.) On Zederbaum see below.

27. "Słownik. . .", l.c. Peretz was at that time 14 years old and not a small child (as he says in Z, 13-14: it happened "a short time after" an event that occurred when he was between 6 and 9 years old).

28. Schiffmann, l.c.; Zederbaum, o.c., 52; Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, YB, XXXVI (1952), 31.

29. Schiffmann, l.c.; Lewin, o.c., 55.

30. Schiffmann, l.c.; Lewin, o.c., 55 and 56. Peretz relates (Z, 61-67) how several Jews of Zamość were falsely indicted (in 1870). See: J. Shatzky, Der Bilbul oyf Zamoshcher Yiddn in 1870. . ., YB, XXXVI (1952), 329-331 (in Hebrew: "Zamość. . .", 74-75).

31. Schiffmann, l.c., 390; Lewin, o.c., 55-56.
32. Lewin, o.c., 56.
33. Above: Ch. 2.
34. "Słownik. . .", XIV, 375.
35. L.c., See also: Lewin, o.c., 35; Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, o.c., 35.
36. Z, 21, 50, 54, 55, 67.
37. D. Schiffmann, A short letter in "Ha-Melis", Vol XIV, (1878), 259; Lewin, o.c., 56.
38. The scene of Peretz's drama "At Night in the Old Market-Place" ("Bay Nakht oyfn altn mark"; A, VI, 181-280).
39. Z, 55.
40. See e.g.: Z, 30-31, 34, 98, 106. The Peretz's lived at the Franciszkańska (now Staszica) St., opposite the town hall. See: "Der Wikah", A, VIII, 130 (and also Z, 127); plan: St. Herbst, Zamość, Warszawa, 1955, 38 (and comp. M.N. Pieszko, Przewodnik po Zamościu i okolicy, Zamość, 1934, 46). In about 1865 they lived (according to Y. Gelipter, see below: Ch. 7, note 6) at "Bazylińska St. in the house of Grzełiński".
41. See e.g.: Peretz's dramatic poem "In polish oyfder keyt", (A, VI, 335-372).
42. "Beyt-ha-midrash" (above: Ch. 2, note 7.)
43. Schiffmann, Masa' Zamość, "Ha-Melis", Vol XIV (1878), 390, 414-415.
44. On Jewish Zamość see: Z, 55-56 and passim; "Zamość. . .", passim (contains illustrations); Zederbaum, o.c. 50-59; D. Schiffmann, Masa' Zamość, "Ha-Melis", Vol XIV (1878), 414-415; N. Sokolov, 'Ishim, Book II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 40-43. Comp. the description in Peretz's short stories: "The Days of Messiah" ("Mashiahs tsaytn"; A, II, 516-523; the town "in Galicia" is Zamość according to Z, 34) and "Children" ("Kinder"; A, III, 273-275) and also in A. Zederbaum's novel "Bevn ha-mesarim", Odessa, 1867, particularly: 1-5 ("Sameret" is Zamość). General description of the town: St. Herbst, Zamość, Warszawa, 1955 (beautiful illustrations); M.N. Pieszko, Przewodnik po Zamościu i okolicy, Zamość, 1934; Z. Serafin-Sochańska, Zamość, Lwów, 1938; "Słownik. . .", XIV, 375.
45. Total population in 1876: 307,451; Jews: 98,698. See: "The Jewish Encyclopedia", Vol. XII, 472.
46. Above: Ch. 3.
47. Z, 55. See also: MS, 181; Schiffmann, o.c., 390.
48. Z, 68.
49. Z, 69. See also: Z, 67-68.
50. Z, 68 (toleration of non-Jewish clothes and of general education).
51. "Qahal".
52. "Rabbiim".
53. Z, 75.

54. Schiffmann, o.c., 390; Lewin, o.c., 53; J. Klausner, Yosarin u-bonim, Vol. II, Jerusalem, 1929, 125.
55. "Ḥasid" (pl.: "Ḥasidim") means literally: "The Pious". On ḥasidism see e.g.: S. Dubnow, Geschichte des Chassidismus. Aus dem Hebräischen übersetzt von Dr. A. Steinberg, BB I-II, Berlin, cop. 1931; S.A. Horpoezky, Leaders of Hassidism, Tr. by M. Horpoezky-Magasanik, London, 1928; S. Schechter, The Chassidim, "Studies in Judaism", London, 1896, 1-55.
56. Comp. above: Ch. 3.
57. Sing.: "Mitnaged", i.e. "Opponent" (see above: Ch. 3, note 21).
58. See above: note 52.
59. Sing.: "ṣadiq", i.e. "The Just".
60. See above: note 21.
61. Lewin, o.c., 38, 46.
62. Shatzky, Peretz-Shtudies, I, o.c., 41-42.
63. Lewin, o.c., 52.
64. Peretz mentions in his memoirs the ḥasidic "rabbis" of Beṭz (a town not far from Zamość; Z, 34), Izabica (a village near Zamość; Z, 77) etc. One of the most famous and most attractive "ṣadiqim", Lewi Yishaq of Berdichev (about 1740-1809) was born in the district of Zamość (Dubnow, o.c., II, 43).
65. Lewin, o.c., 53.
66. Z, 76. See also: Z, 14.
67. Z, 20.
68. Z, 14.
69. Z, 30 and 40.
70. Z, 76. Comp. also: Z, 78.
71. Z, 76-77.
72. Z, 76, 78.
73. Z, 14.
74. Z, 67. Comp. also the episode in Z, 14.
75. Zederbaum, o.c., 52, 56-57; Schiffmann, o.c., 390; Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, o.c., 36; Lewin, o.c., 53.
76. Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, o.c., 37, 49.
77. Z, 115.
78. D. Schiffmann in "Ha-Melis", Vol. XVIII (1882), 669-670, 690-691, 729-730; H. Spieseisen, Me-"Heder metugan" - le-sifriyah, "Zamość. . .", 260. Peretz's relative Dr. Aharon Peretz probably refers to the same episode. See: Y. Egit, Y. L. Peretz's layblikhe Groybim. . ., Y. L. Peretz. Zamlbukh zum hundertsten geboyrn-tog, Warsaw, 1951, 129. - The negative attitude of the future "poet of Ḥasidism" to this movement in the 1870's and 1880's can be seen from the poem "Ha-shutafut" (K, IX, pt. 2. 14-16), an acid outburst in the oldest version of "Monish" (omitted in later versions) published in YB, Vol. XII (1937) 271, etc. See also: MS, 46, l. 34 and 61, ll. 3-14.

Comp.: N, 274-281. Anti-hasidic tendencies can be traced in the writings of many authors from Zamość: Y. Zamość, Sh. Ettlinger, A. Zederbaum, Sh. Bloch, E. Fischelsohn, L. Levinsohn, and also in those of G. Y. Lichtenfeld, Peretz's father-in-law.

79. Lewin, o.c., 42.

80. Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, o.c., 27.

81. Shatzky, o.c., 34. On the relations of Peretz's family with Germany see below (Ch. 5.).

82. Comp.: Shatzky, o.c., 26.

83. See above: Ch. 3. On maskilim in Zamość see: N. Sokolow, 'Ishim, Vol. II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 40-43.

84. As we shall see this was also the way by which Peretz first approached secular knowledge.

85. Shatzky, o.c., 33. Comp.: Z, 70-71.

86. E.g.: F. Geliebter ("Zamość", 225; on him see below) and others. Later even the young Peretz.

87. Mentioned above (see note 42).

88. "Qol Mebaser", 1869. Reprinted in YB, XXXVI (1952), 52.

89. Certainly not "Haskalah"-books properly, as can be understood from Shatzky, o.c., 34 and 36.

90. "Masa' Zamość", "Ha-Melish", Vol. XIV (1878), 414-415, (see also: 390).

91. Comp. what is certainly a description of this library in Peretz's short story "Hesis we-nifga" (not included in K.; see "Kitbey..", Vol. IV, Tel-Aviv, cop. 1926, 103-104). Comp. also Peretz's letter to Y. Zinberg of 3rd December, 1911, (B, 321).

92. Z, 25. ("a book-shop of books 'in all languages'"); 72 (a private library of "mine uncle"; the uncle mentioned here is Yosef Altberg, see: YB, XII, 1937, 303-305); 73 (a big private library used by Peretz), 84 (David Schiffmann's shop, where he kept "Haskalah-books"); 109-113 (on this library see below Ch. 7.) On Sh. Khodak's rich private library (not mentioned by Peretz) see: Shatzky, Peretz Shtudies I, YB, XXVIII, (1946), 45. On Khodak see below: Ch. 7.

93. Z, 71.

94. He was wrong. Zamość's only printed scientific work was "Nesah Yisrael" (1741). His other scientific work "'Arubot ha-shamayim" was never printed. See: Y.A. Ben-Ya'aqob, 'Osar ha-sefarim, Wilno, 1880, 49, no. 957.

95. Y. Euchel, Toldot. . . . Mosheh ben Menahem [i.e. Mendelssohn], Lemberg, 1860, 28-29 (first printed in "Ha-Me'asef", 1787-1789); M. Kayserling, Moses Mendelssohn, Leipzig, 1888², 11-12 and 15.

96. J. S. Raisin, The Haskalah Movement in Russia, Philadelphia, 1913, 90-91; "Zamość", 239.

97. Shatzky, Peretz Shtudies I, YB, XXVIII, (1946), 41-42.

98. Z, 55 (and above).

99. Shatzky, l.c.

100. Eichel, o.c., 28
101. Z, 71.
102. A. Zederbaum in "Ha-Melis", 1888 nr. 95 (comp. "Zamość", 225).
103. Z, 36. On F. Geliebter see: Z, 36-40 and 63; "Zamość", 225-226 (following Zederbaum's necrology in "Ha-Melis"; comp. above: note 102). On Dr. Yishaq Geliebter see: Z, 36-37, 39, 68, 93 and also (without mentioning his name) 52-53 (comp. the statement of Dr. Geliebter himself in "Zamość", 230); Dr. Geliebter is mentioned several times in Peretz's letters, one of which is addressed to him (B, 293 and index s.v.); Dr. Y. Schipper, Dr. Yishaq Geliebter, Warsaw, 1931 [in Yiddish] (comp. "Zamość", 234-236).
104. Z, 36-40: F. Geliebter; 72 and 78-79: Ya'aqob Reifmann (on Reifmann see below: Ch. 6).
105. A. Zederbaum (his son), YB, XXXVI (1952), 53-54; Schiffmann, o.c., 390; Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, o.c., 39-40; "Zamość", 62-63.
106. Z, 39. Comp. also his grandson's memoirs: Dr. Y. Geliebter, Peretzes kinder-yorn, "Literarische Bleter", Vol. VIII, no. 14/15 (April 1st, 1931), 258-259.
107. Z, 36 and 72. See e.g.: M. Waxman, A History of Jewish Literature, Vol. III, New York, 1945², 261.
108. Z, 75. Comp. also: Z, 93 and "Temunot me-olam ha-tohu", (K, III, pt. 1, 191).
109. Z, 18, 22, 72, 73. See e.g.: Z. Reisen, Lexikon fur Yiddisher literatur. . ., Vol II, Wilno, 1930³, 725-739; A.A. Roback, The Story of Yiddish Literature, New York, 1940, 85-87; Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, o.c., 44-45.
110. Roback, o.c., 81-83, 90-92. Such was also the attitude of Peretz in MS, 6, ll. 8-14.
111. Roback, o.c., 72-92.
112. The prototype of the principal character, Serkale, was a relative of Peretz (Z, 18).
113. ~~Roback~~ o.c., 86. Only one hebrew poem by Ettinger was printed when he was still alive. See: Shatzky, o.c., 34-35.
114. Z, 22 (comp.: Shatzky, o.c., 34). Peretz's statement (l.c.): "In my days Dr. Ettinger was already long dead" is incorrect. Peretz was four years old when Ettinger died (Shatzky, o.c., 44-45).
115. Z, 36 and 72; MS, 6, ll. 2-3: "The first who began to write in this free way [in a simple hebrew not composed only of quotations from the Bible] was Mr. Smolenskin". Above "Smolenskin" is written and erased: "Zederbaum"; 99, l. 1: "Mr. Zederbaum" (erased); 101, ll. 1 ff. (polemics against Zederbaum). On Zederbaum and his "Ha-Melis" see e.g.: M. Waxman, o.c., Vol. III, New York, 1945², 338-343, Vol. IV, New York, 1947², 433-437; J. Klausner, Historiyah shel ha-sifrut ha-librit he-hadashah, Vol IV, Jerusalem, 1954², 120-123. On his activity in Yiddish: Reisen, o.c., 325-350; L. Wiener, The History of Yiddish Literature in the XIXth century, London, 1899, 148-150 and 177-179.

116. Klausner, o.c., Vol II, Jerusalem, 1952², 351.
117. Not: "Shime'on" (as in M, 17). He arrived in Zamość in 1804 and his brother in 1802. On the Blochs (particularly on Shimshon Bloch) see e.g.: M. Waxman, o.c., Vol. III, 195-196; Klausner, o.c., Vol. II, 350-368; Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, o.c., 40. Shimshon Bloch and his book are mentioned in Peretz's "Be-'olam ha-'otiyot ha-mahkimot", 24. (K, VII, 363.)
118. "Zamość", 226; Shatzky, o.c., 42; Shatzky, Peretz-Shtudies I, YB, XXVIII (1946), 42; F. Lachower, Toldot ha-sifrut ha-'ibrit he-hadashah, Vol. II, Tel-Aviv, 1937², 164.
119. Z, 74.
120. Waxman, o.c., Vol. III, 197-198; Lachower, o.c., Vol. II, 5-6 and 297. N, 41: "'Abraham Leyb Kinderfreund" is a mistake; should be: 'Aryeh Leyb.
121. Not: 1797 as: Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, o.c., 41.
122. L.c.
123. L.c.
124. Peretz states: "I was six years old. . ." (MS, 182, l.1.)
125. "B. H."; "Y. Z. Sh" (MS, 182, l. 12; the last initials also: 183, l. 6. See "Gilyonot", Vol. XXV, (1951²), 226-267). It may be that B. H. stands for "Barukh [Ha]-Kohen from Zamość" whose translation of a German epigram is quoted by G.Y. Lichtenfeld in his "Şofnat pa'neah", Warsaw, 1874, 15.
126. On the well-known scholar Ya'aqob Reifmann and the maskil and writer David Schiffmann we will speak later, in connection with Peretz's biography (Chapters 6 and 7.)
127. A. Zederbaum's activity in this field has already been mentioned.
128. Shatzky, o.c., 45; Shatzky, Peretz Shtudies I, YB, XXVIII, (1946), 44.
129. Comp. e.g. : Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamosc, o.c., 35.
130. Shatzky, o.c., 46. He was from a well-known family from Zamość but he himself was not born there.
131. o.c., 59-62; Wiener, o.c., 96; Z. Reisen, o.c., Vol II, Wilno, 1930³, 589-590. He is not to be confused with Shelomoh Sobel, author of an Hebrew book "Dorot 'Olamim" (So Reisen and Shatzky).
132. So was his drama (not "story" as 'Ashkenazi puts it) "Serkale" (printed in 1861) and other works. See: Sh. 'Ashkenazi (Peretz's friend) in "Zamość", 222 (and Reisen, o.c., Vol II, 731). Peretz mentions (Z, 72) both "Serkale" and fables (!) as already printed.
133. Shatzky, o.c., 59.
134. Z, 73.
135. Wiener, o.c., 167 and 371; Shatzky, o.c., 44 (Levisohn!)
136. Z, 73. See: J. Shatzky, Der Bilbul. . ., YB, XXXVI, (1952)
331. Comp. e.g.: M. Hochdorf, Rosa Luxemburg, Berlin, n.d., 15: "Sie hinkte auseinander angeborenen Hüftlähmung".

137. See e.g.: Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, o.c., 35 and passim.
138. Shatzky, Peretz-Shtudies, I, YB, XXVIII (1946), 42. See also: Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, o.c., 46-47.
139. The knowledge of foreign languages (particularly of Polish but also of German, Russian and sometimes French) was - as already stated above - quite common among the Jews of Zamość. Interesting is Peretz's statement to the contrary in MS, 181, ll. 10-11 (published by the writer of these lines in "Gilyonot", Vol. XXV, 1951, 266). Peretz refers to the youngsters only.
140. Comp. the humorous description of those quasi-maskilim in MS, 181, ll. 4-9 ("Gilyonot", l.c.).
141. YB, XXXVI, (1952), 51, 52, 56, 58-59.
142. "Masa' Zamość", o.c., 390.
143. Peretz's relative: YB, XII (1937), 304.
144. Schiffmann, l.c. A large section of the audience at the performance of the Polish theatre, which visited Zamość, consisted of Jews (Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, o.c., 35.)
145. Zederbaum, l.c., 51.
146. Z, 55.
147. L. c. Comp. also: Z, 56-60.
148. Z, 58-60, 63, 73, 75, 79. Peretz also learnt Russian: Z, 60, 85, 86, 93.
149. Z, 56-60 and passim.
150. Z, 60.
151. Z, 59.
152. "Zamość", 222.
153. Shatzky, YB, XXXVI (1952), 61.
154. Very far from Judaism was Dr. Josef Kinderfreund (1825-1903), the nephew of the poet Aryeh Leyb Kinderfreund. He left Zamość as early as 1857 and later became a Christian (Shatzky, o.c., 27-28, note 7). On Sh. Khodak see farther: Ch. 7. Comp. also Peretz's "Temunot me-^lolam ha-tohu" (K. III, pt. 1, 185-203).
155. Shatzky, o.c., 36-37.
156. L. c. Comp. also above.
157. J. Klausner, Historiyah shel ha-sifrut ha-^librit he-hadashah, Vol V, Jerusalem, 1949, 55 ff.
158. Z, 119.
159. Z, 80.
160. "Siyon, Siyon" (by M. Ha-Lewi) and "Yonah ^homiyah" (by M. Letteris). See below: Ch. 7.
161. "Zamość", 253-258. Comp. also: "Temunot me-^lolam ha-tohu", (K, III, pt. 1, 185, 200-201).
162. See above.
163. Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, o.c., 47.
164. Altogether 39 years and not "already. . . about fifty years" ("a yoybel^m) as stated by Peretz (Z, 77).

165. Z, 30, 63-64, 77-80, 91-92, 126; Schiffmann, o.c., 415; Zederbaum, o.c., 56; Y. Reifmann in "Ha-Magid", (1873), 172.
166. See above.
167. Z, 78.
168. Z, 80. According to Peretz Wahl was the pupil of the Rabbi of Lissa (Z, 77) i.e. Rabbi Ya'acob ben Ya'acob Mosheh Lorberbaum (died in 1832). According to Reifmann (l.c.) Wahl's teacher was the well-known Rabbi of Lemberg Ya'acob Meshulam Orenstein (1775-1839). Reifmann is probably right.
169. Z, 80.
170. Shatzky, o.c., 47.
171. L. c.
172. Shatzky, l.c. One of these "recommendations" is to a book written by Peretz's uncle Mosheh Epstein "Beyt Mosheh" (1848-1851) (l.c. and "Zamosc", 220).
173. That Peretz (Z, 78-79) exaggerates we can see from Schiffmann's remark (o.c., 415), that in a certain case some people tried to upset Wahl's plans.
174. "Vos amol veyniker" (A, IV, 67-71) and not: "Fir doyres" (i.e. "Fir doyres - fir savo'es"; A, III, 175-180) as erroneously stated in Z, 30.
175. A, IV, 170-178. Comp.: Z, 78.
176. "Olam ha-ba'" (A, VI, 376-377).
177. To the best of my knowledge Peretz never wrote literary works in Russian as A.A. Roback thinks (R, 39). However, he wrote many Russian letters. Some of them are printed e.g. in YB, XII, (1937), 7 ff; and comp. below: Ch. 14.

5. Peretz's Family.

Whether or not Peretz's father was from a Sefaradic family, a descendant of the Jews expelled at the end of the XVth century from the Iberian Peninsula, is not certain¹. Even if this is an interesting hypothesis it is hardly important. Peretz himself in his writings never mentions his supposed semi-sefaradic origin.

What we know positively is that Peretz's family, both from his father's and his mother's side, excelled in Jewish religious learning, was generally respected and comparatively prosperous². Connections with Germany brought with them, for both his father's and his mother's families, the first seeds of secular knowledge.

The Peretzts did not originate from Zamość³. The writer's paternal great-grandmother Neyche came from Frankfurt-on-Main. She lived in Lubartów⁴, a Polish town north of Lublin. Her studying Talmud and her singing were exceptional for a Jewish woman in those days⁵. Neyche's husband, Yonah Yehoshua⁶ was a merchant. He went abroad often and was already slightly influenced by the secular spirit. At the same time he was a charitable man and very learned in Jewish religious lore⁷.

Yonah Yehoshua's son, Mosheh Peretz was also a merchant. He maintained commercial relations with Danzig⁸.

The son of Mosheh, the writer's father Yehudah Peretz, settled down in Zamość⁹ after he married Ribqah Lewin (in about 1845)⁹.

The Lewins had lived in Zamość for generations ¹⁰. Ribqah Lewin's grandfather Leybush Kohen was called "the head of the community" ("staroste") because of his "grand" style of living. He spoke fluent German and certainly also Polish. Peretz was called after him ¹¹. Kohen's wife had a store where she sold merchandise from Leipzig etc. A part of the income of her shop was always given away to charity ¹².

Ribqah's father Shelomoh Hirsh (Sebi) Lewin was a learned man and a rich merchant, respected by the Jewish population of Zamość ¹³. Like Peretz's paternal grandfather so also his maternal grandfather maintained commercial relations with Danzig ¹⁴. Shelomoh Hirsh Lewin's and his wife's Hanah's behaviour after his temporary bankruptcy served as a source of a beautiful scene in Peretz's drama "The Fall of Sadiq's House" ¹⁵.

Peretz's father Yehudah Peretz ¹⁶ (died in 1895 or 1898 at the age of 68 ¹⁷) spent some time after his marriage in the house of his father-in-law who provided the young couple with all their needs, as was customary in those days. ¹⁸ He started his independent life as a merchant and transacted business with Polish country gentry. Yehudah Peretz bought from them the right to fell trees in their forests. The timber was floated down river to Danzig ¹⁹. It seems that he was not very successful as a merchant. Later ²⁰ he was a part-owner of a distillery or a brewery. His wife had a shop ²¹. Yehudah Peretz never became rich but he was always vivacious, gay and good-hearted (he was well-known

for his care of the poor of his town)²². Rooted deeply in Jewish tradition he had nevertheless certain "liberal" tendencies. His opinions were sometimes quite "anarchistic" in the eyes of his neighbours, as e.g. his demand to allow Jewish school-children to play outside for an hour every day²³. Peretz's father was influenced in some degree by secular trends and by Haskalah²⁴. In 1887, when about 60 years old, he urged his grandson (Y. L. Peretz's son Lucjan) to study diligently general subjects and particularly the Hebrew language. From what he wrote to Lucjan Peretz we can assume that Yehudah Peretz knew some Polish, although he admitted that "in Polish, as you know, it is not easy for me to write"²⁵.

There are some hints in "My Memoirs"²⁶, and Peretz's best friend Dr. Y. Geliebter says so openly²⁷, that Peretz's father could not always understand him. This may be ascribed to Yehudah Peretz's preoccupation with business, his impatience²⁸ and his frequent absences from home²⁹. Still, his independent opinions, and more than anything else, his good heart made a deep impression on his son.

Ribqah (Ribale) Peretz (1828-1914), the writer's mother, was a shy and quiet woman, full of love and understanding for her gifted but unruly son³⁰. She saved from her household expenses to be able to give more for charity³¹ "Although she and her husband were never rich, they were both among the most charitable people of the town³²". Ribale Peretz was extremely religious (she never even agreed to be photographed³³); in spite of this she was tolerant and her religious feelings did not degenerate into sheer formalism.

Through her sensitivity, love and lofty moral standards ³⁴ Ribale Peretz had a great influence both on her husband and on her son. Quiet and shy as she was, she had probably a strong character and practical sense ³⁵. According to her daughter Hesva Goldstein she liked her shop and was very successful in business (more than her husband and, as we shall see, certainly more than Peretz himself) ³⁶. Yehudah Peretz did not dare to agree to Rabbi Wahl's suggestion without first consulting his wife: "What will Ribale say?" ³⁷. She prevented Peretz from being sent to a secular school ³⁸ and from studying at a Government rabbinical seminary ³⁹.

Peretz was much attached to his mother. He visited her in Zamość as late as the end of 1913, when she was already very old and senile, and did everything to please her ⁴⁰.

The figures of mothers in some of Peretz's literary works were prompted by the image of his own mother; for instance in the poem "Monish" ⁴¹ and in the short stories "Three Calls" ⁴² and particularly "What is a soul?" ⁴³.

The Peretz's had very many relations in Zamość. "My Memoirs" show their author mostly surrounded by uncles, aunts, cousins, etc., ⁴⁴ learned and simple, rich and poor, nearly all of them mitnagdim, perhaps with one known exception ⁴⁵. Ribale's brother Shemu'el Leyb (or: Leybush) Lewin ⁴⁶ was a hasid. The family of Peretz was traditionally

extremely opposed to Hasidism⁴⁷. Not so perhaps his mother's family, the Lewins. Is this the reason why Peretz's mother agreed to send him to a teacher who was a hasid? Is there here some explanation of Peretz's ambiguous attitude towards Hasidism?⁴⁸

One of Ribale Peretz's sisters, Le'ah was married to Mosheh Epstein the rabbi of "New Town" of Zamość^{''} and author of religious works⁴⁹. Her second sister, Tema⁵⁰ was the first wife of Yosef Altberg (1801-1873), the uncle who preserved Peretz's earliest writings⁵¹ and had a library of Haskalah-books⁵². Their son Mosheh Altberg was a close friend of Peretz⁵³.

Among Peretz's other relatives it is worth mentioning Yehoshua^c Margulies (Margaliot)⁵⁴ (1805-1878) and his family. Margulies was a very rich contractor, the great philanthropist of his town and patron of the maskilim of Zamość^{''}. He was for many years the head of the local Jewish Community. In 1854 the freedom of the city of Zamość^{''} was bestowed on him in recognition of his services to this town. In 1862 he was a member of the Zamość^{''} municipality.

It may be seen that Peretz's family was one of the respected and progressive families of Zamość^{''}. In the true spirit of this town most of Peretz's relatives combined orthodoxy with tolerance and certain liberal principles and did not despise secular knowledge. The

traditional ties with Germany, no doubt, played some part in this attitude.

NOTES

1. Above: Ch. 4; R. Peretz-Laks (Peretz's relative), "Farbn un shtrikhn fun Peretz's privat lebn", "Forverts", May 12th, 1929; comp.: N, 31-32.

2. Z, 49-50 and passim; Z. Reisen, Lexikon fun der Yiddisher literatur. . ., Vol II, Wilno, 1930³, 974-976. Reisen's article (coll. 974-1043) is important (coll. 1031-1043: an extensive bibliography). Comp. also Peretz's poem "Monish" (autobiographical to some extent), A, I, 4.

3. Dr. Aharon Peretz's statement to the contrary is very dubious (see Y. Egit, Y.L. Peretz's layblikhe qroybm. . .", "Y.L. Peretz. Zamelbukh zum hundertstn geboyrn-tog", Warsaw, 1951, 122).

4. Pronounced: Loobartuv.

5. R. Peretz-Laks, l.c.; Reisen, o.c., 974.

6. Not to be confused with Peretz's brother who was also called Yonah Yehoshua⁴.

7. Reisen, o.c., 974-975.

8. O.c., 975. M. Peretz's portrait: YB, XII (1937), facing p. 313.

9. M. Schweid, Treyst mayn folk. Dos lebn fun Y.L. Peretz, New York, Cop. 1955, 7. (Schweid's book is a "biographical novel" rather than a scholarly work and is not always reliable).

10.. Z, 49; Reisen, l.c.

11. Reisen, l.c.; Z, 49-50. Peretz is not sure if everything that was told about Leybush "staroste" was true. The story of the conversations between him and the "nobleman Zamoysky. . . who built Zamosc" (Z, 50) is certainly a chronological impossibility. Jan Zamoyski died in 1605 (above: Ch 4). It must have been one of his descendants. See: "Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego. . .", T. XIV, Warszawa, 1895, 375 ff. Comp.: "Motiprints" (A, V, 213).

12. Z, 50.

13. Called "Shelomoh" in Z, 7-8, 9, 21 (to Z, 21 comp.: M, 29); M, 28-30 (the statements of Sh. H. Lewin's son Shemu'el Leyb Lewin and of Peretz's brother Yonah Yehoshua⁴ Peretz); Reisen, l.c.; see also: "Zamość. . .", Tel-Aviv, 1953, 220-221.

14. Z, 9. According to Reisen (l.c.) and N.(33): [also?] with Leipzig.

15. "Eurban beyt sadiq". Comp. above: Ch. 4, note 4.

16. On Peretz's parents: Z, passim; M, 28-29 (statement of Peretz's brother-in-law Shemu'el Leyb Lewin), 29-30 (statement of their son Yonah Yehoshua' Peretz), 33, 35, (Y. Peretz's epitaph); R. Peretz-Laks, l.c.; "Zamość", 87 (statement of their daughter Hesya Goldstein), 231 and 233 (statement of Peretz's friend Shemu'el Ashkenazi), Dr. Y. Geliebter, "Literarische Bleter", Vol. VIII, no. 14/15 (April 1, 1931), 258; N. Sokolow, 'Ishim, book II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 43; Reisen, o.c., 975-976; N, 33-35.

17. M, 35.

18. Z, 10.

19. Z, 15, 19, 26, 28, 29-30, 90-91; "Zamość", 87, 230; Reisen, o.c., 975. Peretz mentions floating rafts to Danzig in his works; comp. e.g.: "Siyurey masa': 20. Reshimot" (K, III, pt.1, 72); "Der Ba'al-shem firt oys a shidukh" (A, V, 339-340); a poetical description in the fragments of the unpublished poem "Ha-serefah" (MS, 124, l. 12-126, l. 10); etc.

20. Perhaps after 1863 (comp. above: Ch.ch. 2 and 4).

21. Z, 26; Y.Y. Peretz in "Forverts", April 13th, 1930; Reisen, l.c.; "Zamość", 87.

22. Sokolow, l.c.; Reisen, l.c.

23. Z, 16, 12, 13, 28; M, 28.

24. "Zamość", 231; Sokolow, l.c.; Reisen, l.c. Comp. also: Y.Y. Peretz, Y. L. Peretz praktitsirt als advokat un shraybt lider", "Forverts", April 13th, 1930.

25. YB, XII (1937), 141.

26. Z, 11, 12, 52, 94, etc.

27. L. c.

28. Comp.: Z, 124.

29. Z, 15. Comp. also: "Monish" (A, I, 18).

30. Z, 8, 11, 12, 35, 41-42, 52, 94, 116; M, 28-29.

31. Z, 10.

32. R. Peretz-Laks, l.c.; Comp.: N, 35.

33. Peretz's remark published in YB, XXXVI (1952), 342; Reisen, o.c., 976. See also: Z, 41: "O, how religious my mother is!".

34. Z, 10, 42.

35. Comp.: Y.Y. Peretz, Y. L. Peretz praktitsirt als advokat. . .; "Forverts", April 13, 1930; and: Peretz vert oys advokat. . ., o.c., April 20, 1930,

36. "Zamość", 87; Reisen, l.c.

37. Z, 30. Comp. also: Z, 71.

38. Reisen, l.c.

39. Z, 115-116. A different version was told by Peretz's brother Yonah Yehoshua' (M, 31) but he also attributed the course Peretz took to their mother's influence. See below: Ch. 7.

40. "Zamość", 233 (and comp.: 81).

41. Z

(111)

41. 41. A, I, 3-27; especially: 18-20 (sensitivity to her son's secret sufferings).

42. "Dray mol geruf'n", A, III, 23 (behaviour towards her husband; lacking in the Hebrew version: "Shalosh Periot", K, V, pt. 1, 43).

43. "Mah hi' neshamah?" (K, IV, pt. 1, 7-20): The mother of the narrator had a shop (10-20); she was very religious (11, 17, 20) and was afraid of her son being taught "heresies" e.g. the Bible (11; comp. above, Ch. 3); she had a great influence on him (19; comp: Z, 18).

44. R, 62.

45. YB, XII (1937), 145 note 36, and YB, XXXVI (1952), 342.

46. Already mentioned above, Z, 6 ("a son" of Peretz's grandfather Shelomoh Hirsh Lewin), 46-47 ("my uncle Leybush"), 102 ("my uncle Shemu'el-Leybush").

47. Reisen, o.c., 974 and 975. The hasidic rabbi of Beżz (pronounced approximately: Baooz) was related to the Peretz through the Margulies family (comp. below) See: Y.Y. Peretz in "Y. L. Peretz als kelal-tuer in Zamość. . .", "Forverts", April 6th, 1930.

48. However, according to Y.L. Peretz ("Forverts", April 13th, 1930) it was the father who had some inclination towards Hasidism and the mother sided with "mitnagdim".

49. Above: Ch. 4, note 172; "Zamość". . ., 220-221; his brother-in-law's, Shemu'el Leyb Lewin's statement in II, 28; Reisen, o.c., 975. The "New Town" ("Nay-shtot") is mentioned in Z, 19, 22, 35, 36, 43, 62-63, 65. It was called in Polish "Nowa Osada" (see "Słownik Geograficzny. . .", t. XIV, Warszawa, 1895, 375; St. Herbst, Zamość, Warszawa, 1955, 31-32) and "Nowe Miasto" (see: M. Pieszko, Przewodnik-po Zamościu i okolicy, Zamość, 1937, 61; Peretz's letter in YB, XII, 1937, 34.)

50. Peretz's remark published in YB, XXXVI, (1952), 342 (comp. also: YB, XII, 1937, 146, remark to letter no. 53); Z, 103 ("aunt Teme") and perhaps also the sick aunt mentioned in Z, 127 and 128-129.

51. Not: Mosheh Altberg as in II, 42, etc. See: Z, 6, 50, 72, 89, 125, 126-127 and perhaps also 128-129 ("uncle Yosef"); Mosheh Altberg, (his son), YB, XII, (1937), 303-305; J. Shatzky, Maskalah in Zamość, YB, XXXVI, (1952), 48. Yosef Altberg's portrait: YB, XII, (1937), facing p. 313.

52. Z, 72.

53. YB, XII, (1937), 303-304. The name "Altberg. Altb" is written by Peretz in Latin letters in MS, 142, before line 6.

54. "Y.M." in Z. See: Z, 24, 28, 57, 58, 60, 64, 65, 72, 73-74, 78, 79; Peretz's letters: YB, XII, (1937), 93, 95; A. Zederbaum, YB, XXXVI, (1952), 56; D. Schiffmann, Masa' Zamość, "Ha-Melish", Vol XIV, (1878), 415; Shatzky, o.c., 43-44, 45, 48-49; "Zamość", 44.

6. Childhood (1852-1865).

The date of Yishaq 'Aryeh Leyb Peretz's ¹ birth has been established with the help of official documents, as Tuesday, 18th May, 1852 (29th 'iyar, 5652 according to the Jewish calendar) ². He was the oldest although not the first-born child of his parents. They had two or three children before Peretz was born but he was the first to survive ³. He was followed by a sister Hesva (later: Goldstein) ⁴ and by two brothers Hayim Yosef ⁵ and Yonah Yehoshua ⁶, both very able ⁷.

The language first heard and learned by Peretz was Yiddish ⁸, a language used from the Middle Ages (and in some degree still in use) by the 'Ashkenazic Jews in their relations between themselves. Since the end of the XVIIIth century in Western Europe and since the second half of the XIXth century also in Eastern Europe it has been gradually replaced by the languages of the states in which the Jews live. Yiddish is basically one of the medieval German dialects but it is still undecided which one. It absorbed a great many Hebrew and Aramaic words and expressions. The tremendous influence of Hebrew and a very important influence of Aramaic on Yiddish was natural. Hebrew was "the Holy Language", the language of the Bible, of the Prayer Book, the Mishnah ⁹ and of most of the religious books. At the same time Hebrew was and still is the bearer of an uninterrupted literary tradition for about three thousand and five hundred years. Aramaic was used already in the Bible

It was the language of the Targum ("Translation") of the Pentateuch which was always read together with the Hebrew text, it was the main language of the Talmud and of the Qabalah-literature and even part of the prayers was written in this language ¹⁰. We must add that Yiddish, spoken in many different countries, was always influenced in some degree also by the language of the place in which it was used ¹¹. In Zamość this was mainly Polish, although modern German and Russian elements were not entirely excluded.

The knowledge of Yiddish could, as we can see, easily serve as a bridge to the understanding of some German; it made Hebrew and Aramaic not entirely unfamiliar and provided a certain number of Polish and Russian words.

Hebrew was the second language which Peretz learned. From his earliest days he had the opportunity to listen to many Hebrew prayers said at home by the members of his family.

Peretz was three years old when he was first sent to a Jewish religious school for beginners ("heder", literally: "a room"). His parents gave him a traditional Jewish education and this was the normal start. The boy was very able ¹² and already knew some Hebrew. According to the usual curriculum he started immediately ^{with} of all the possible books! - "Leviticus" ¹³. We may be sure that he had to translate portions of this book word by word into Yiddish and learn the famous commentary of Rabbi Shelomoh Yishaqi of Troyes (1040-1105), best known as RaSHI. Although Yiddish is nearly always written and printed in Hebrew letters,

in those days Jewish children never started their reading in Yiddish.

When Peretz was six years old he began to study Talmud. There was nothing unusual about this: "This was the common practice in those days" ¹⁴.

Peretz had many teachers. In his memoirs he always tells us what about each one impressed him most although he is not often able to remember what they taught him.

His second Gemara' teacher, whom he calls Mikhal, was a "secret" hasid ¹⁵ and "a great mathematician". Peretz believed that some indiscernable hasidic impact was left on his soul by the silent, sad and good-hearted Mikhal ¹⁶.

When Peretz was about 9 or 10 years old ¹⁷ he was transferred to a "superior" teacher of Gemara' ¹⁸. By this time he was already "learned" enough to put before his next teacher most embarrassing questions - carefully prepared beforehand by him and his fellow pupils out of the various Talmudic commentaries ¹⁹. This teacher, although cruel towards the boys (he pinched them as a punishment) and not very much of a scholar, was loved by Peretz and his other pupils because of the beautiful legends he used to tell on the days on which there were no set lessons ²⁰.

The atmosphere of the numerous "schools" Peretz attended was rather depressing. Most of his time Peretz was playing practical jokes on his teachers or meditating. He was not at all eager to learn. If he knew more than other boys this was due not to his teachers' influence

or his perseverance but only to his exceptional gifts and to the almost entire lack of recreations other than reading ²¹.

Books play a role out of all proportion in Peretz's description of his childhood and boyhood. He mentions many books he read and was influenced by, but he also mentions books he saw other people reading or which they had in their possession ²². As we shall see later, perhaps the most important experience of his youth was his gaining access to a big library.

A Jewish child was not supposed to play or stroll ²³, neither was he supposed to start his education with fairy tales or childrens' books (such books practically did not exist in Hebrew in those days),. From the time a Jewish child from the "Pale of Settlement" ²⁴ learned to speak he was hardly regarded as a child any longer. He was already a little Jew, a little member of the "People of the Book". For the Book was everything to a Jew, from his childhood until his death. It was the quintessence of all his life which had to be devoted to the study of holy books - mainly of the Talmud and its commentaries ²⁵.

Between Peretz - a very able, very sensitive and rather mischievous little fellow - and the outer world stood the Book.

Although living in a comparatively small town he knew Nature mainly from the holy books. All he treasured in his childhood was "a little handful, very little, of Nature. . ." ²⁶.

From the Bible he knew all about Palestine, he knew about Jerusalem, Safed, Lake Tiberias etc., but with his own eyes he had

not seen even the closest surroundings of his native town except the village of Stabrów²⁷.

He had never seen a hare but had known since he was three or four years old from Leviticus²⁸ that a Jew is not allowed to eat it. He knew about foxes from the Bible and from the Talmud, "that they used to run through the ruins of the Temple. . .²⁹ and from 'The Song of Songs'³⁰ I knew that they devastate vineyards in Palestine". From the Talmudic lore³¹ he knew also something about their cunning³².

"Bless the Lord, O my soul,³³ and all other descriptions of Nature in Biblical poetry have already made on me their powerful impression, but my eyes have not yet seen any growing plant. . ." ³⁴.

Peretz was still a child, fond of childish games, playing with his playmates at bride and bridegroom "and through my big, swollen brain, all the economic, legal and sexual complex connected with the relations between 'Adam and Eve' starting with 'refusal'³⁵ and ending with 'levirate' have already passed. . ." ³⁶.

At the same time in his heart, "the heart of an old child"³⁷, he was already well aware of the tragic fate of his homeless people, dispersed and persecuted all over the world for two thousand years. And as early as that time he started to ask Job's question of the hidden ways of the Lord's justice³⁸.

Peretz was a prodigy even among the precocious Jewish "old" children of his environment and he was concerned earlier and more deeply than his fellow-pupils with problems of this kind.

For a short time Peretz learned entirely on his own because there was no suitable teacher for him in Zamosc³⁹. "I am set free! with a strong appetite I attack scholarly and qabalistic books. . ." 40. This statement is most interesting because it reveals the polarity of Peretz's inclinations: towards the logical and towards the irrational at the same time.

"I was, as people used to say, a boy prodigy⁴¹, with a quick-grasping logical brain and with - much feeling"⁴². Those are the very first words of Peretz's memoirs and they may serve as a clue to his divided soul and to his writings. "Much feeling" and imagination - this was his by nature; sharp-witted he was made more and more by books. Problems and contrasts⁴³, "anecdotal" plots and mysteries of the human soul - in these Peretz was always interested, true to his statement: "logical brain" and "much feeling".

In his writings there are very few descriptions of Nature⁴⁴, of environment or of people: "I don not describe people, but only their images as they were impressed on my mind, and those images only rarely are like to the people themselves. . ." 45.

There are in Peretz's writings few colours⁴⁶, sounds and scents but an abundance of deep thoughts and deep feelings. The discrepancies of two very different elements in one soul made Peretz anything but a harmonious, quiet observer and true painter of life. He is abrupt, nervous, rhapsodic. His stories are often brilliant but always short. The mark of punctuation most beloved by him was the three dots, signifying an unfinished thought⁴⁷.

Set free from his teachers Peretz did not only read and study. He was a child fond of playing. Moreover, he was a wild boy, a "naughty" one. Books, with all their heavy burden, were not able to suppress his natural vitality but for comparatively short periods. Stimulated by his imagination he was always very fond of listening to stories ⁴⁸ and was early impressed by Hasidism ⁴⁹. He studied but "more than that I rush about here and there. . . cutting capers. . ." ⁵⁰.

The annoyed parents decided finally to send their mischievous son to a new teacher and, not finding a proper one in Zamość, they "banished" Peretz to the nearby Szczebrzeszyn ⁵¹. This time even his mother who was, it seems, at first reluctant, agreed to it ⁵². Peretz was then about twelve years old ⁵³.

Szczebrzeszyn was a quiet little town ⁵⁴ in beautiful rural surroundings where Peretz spent a great deal of his time wandering about ⁵⁵. However, the town itself was far from beautiful. Most of its small, low houses were wooden. Concentrated around the market place they formed a few narrow streets of which all but one (this one being a part of the Zamość-Szczebrzeszyn road) were unpaved. The only large building of the town, called "Oberza" (i.e. "The Inn") stood in the middle of the market place ⁵⁶.

Peretz lived in a tiny, dark corner of his teacher's poor, dark and untidy house ⁵⁷. He saw around himself nothing but extreme

poverty, ugliness and dirt. All this aroused in his heart an insuppressable yearning for Zamość. In Szczebrzeszyn for the first time Peretz "saw Zamość" 58. Here he realized for the first time how much he loved his beautiful native town, because he saw the difference between Zamość and Szczebrzeszyn, this "place of banishment" 59. We may well believe his brother Yonah Yehoshua Peretz's statement that Peretz used to run back to Zamość on foot 60.

Peretz's new teacher, to whom he was sent by his parents according to the advice of Rabbi Wahl 61, was a hasid, named Rabbi Pinhas 1. Unfortunately Rabbi Pinhas 1 was too busy to teach his pupil 62. "The main thing - he used to say - is reading. . . learning on your own. To sharpen your mind by yourself. . . To the teacher you have to go only when in doubt, when you have questions to ask. . . when you come across 'a difficult matter'. . ." 63.

Consequently Peretz studied Talmud with an older friend whom he grew to like very much. They used to rise for their studies at 4 o'clock in the morning 64.

When he was asked later in Zamość what Rabbi Pinhas 1 taught him his answer was: "It seems to me he did not teach me a thing. . ." 65. Still at least one important thing Peretz learned from Rabbi Pinhas 1: to be more and more independent in his reading and studying.

Peretz did not enjoy his short stay in Szczebrzeszyn and did not like to tell much about his doings in this period of his life: "There is no wish to remember. It is good that I am delivered, set free. . ." 66.

A few details only are known from other sources. Shemu'el Leyb Lewin, Peretz's uncle, remembered that Peretz studied in Szczebreszyn inter alia certain rabbinical works and that his teacher prophesied that "he will be a rabbi or a doctor" ⁶⁷. Peretz's relative and friend Mosheh Altberg ⁶⁸ has written about Peretz's "banishment" to Szczebreszyn: "I suppose, but I am not able to verify it, that his parents sent him to Ya'aqob Reifmann, the well-known Talmudic and Hebrew scholar" ⁶⁹.

Ya'aqob Reifmann ⁷⁰ (1818⁷¹ -1895) was born in the village of Lagów ⁷², but when he was four years old his family moved to the nearby town of Opatów, which he describes as a town without learning and without books but full of superstition ⁷³. Here he spent his youth in terrible poverty, studying diligently. Probably not long after 1833 he married and moved to Szczebreszyn, where his father-in-law "the venerable scholar. . . Yosef Mayymon" lived. In his house Reifmann found a rich library ⁷⁴. In Szczebreszyn Reifmann lived the rest of his life in appalling poverty, studying and writing. He was one of the outstanding Jewish scholars of his time and published many books and articles on Talmud, rabbinical literature, etc. ⁷⁵. At the same time he also tried his hand at poetry ⁷⁶.

Peretz most probably met Reifmann or heard about him even before his "banishment" to Szczebreszyn. In 1862 Reifmann was invited by Peretz's rich relative Yehoshua Margaliot ⁷⁷ to his house in Zamosc¹¹ as a teacher of his sons ⁷⁸. Peretz remembered, as late as 1913, that

when Reifmann was in Zamość he was excommunicated by the hasidim, but Rabbi Wahl (who was on friendly terms with him ⁷⁹) protected him ⁸⁰.

Reifmann succeeded in gathering around himself a circle of able young men striving for Haskalah ⁸¹. Every Saturday evening during 1862 he lectured to his pupils from Zamość on topics of Jewish scholarship. Part of these lectures was published in 1863 with the help of two of his pupils, the sons of Yehoshua Margoliot ⁸², under the title "The Evening Hours" ⁸³.

In 1862 Peretz was 10 years old and even if he met Reifmann could hardly have been influenced by him at that age.

In spite of Peretz's not mentioning Reifmann in this connection at all ⁸⁴, we can take it for granted that in Szczebrzeszyn the 12-13-year-old boy prodigy met the 46-year-old scholar and was perhaps even his pupil in some way ⁸⁵. Szczebrzeszyn was a small town with a small Jewish population ⁸⁶ and Reifmann was the only "famous" person in Jewish Szczebrzeszyn. He was already known to Peretz from Zamość, he was supported by Peretz's relatives, and - according to his own statement ⁸⁷ - he was "fonder of friendship with young people than with the elderly". Peretz, on the other hand, was lonely in Szczebrzeszyn and striving for knowledge. It may well be that although the main aim of Peretz's parents in sending him to Szczebrzeszyn was to make him Rabbi Pinhas'1's pupil in Talmud, they at the same time commended their gifted son to the attention of the great scholar of Szczebrzeszyn. This would explain Mosheh Altberg's statement quoted above ⁸⁸.

Why does not Peretz mention all this? It can not be ascribed to the unsystematic character of "My Memoirs" only ⁸⁹. It can perhaps be explained by Peretz's general attitude towards his sojourn in Szczebrzeszyn ("there is no wish to remember"). Still the main reason was probably Peretz's aversion to Reifmann. The name of Reifmann, "the great 'heretic' ⁹⁰ and 'investigator of antiquities' . . ." ⁹¹ appears several times in "My Memoirs", ⁹², in the Unknown Manuscript, and in some other of Peretz's works. ⁹³ On the whole Peretz speaks about him with a great deal of irony ⁹⁴. After mentioning a number of other people Peretz adds: "Ya⁶aqob Reifmann makes on me the worst impression" ⁹⁵. Peretz's attitude towards Reifmann has puzzled some scholars ⁹⁶. It was dictated to a certain degree by the discrepancy between Reifmann's scholarly work and his strictly orthodox way of life, by his conceit about his own works, and by Peretz's deep dislike of "dead scholarship" ⁹⁷. Whenever Peretz speaks about an "investigator of antiquities" he is ironical and acid ⁹⁸. Most probably between 1866 and 1867 Peretz belonged to a group of young men of Zamosc¹¹ that eagerly listened to Reifmann's teachings ⁹⁹. Therefore we may assume that Peretz's dislike of Reifmann (to whom he probably had some objections earlier) developed later. It seems that Peretz's father-in-law's, G. Y. Lichtenfeld's, antipathy towards Reifmann ¹⁰⁰ was not without influence on Peretz ¹⁰¹.

Peretz did not stay in Szczebrzeszyn for long. Still it

seemed to the poor boy, away from home for the first time, a very long period. He speaks of staying there "a whole 'zeman'" 102. "Zeman" is a term; usually six months. Somewhat farther in his memoirs Peretz says that he was Rabbi Pinhas¹'s pupil for even less than a "zeman" 103. This is in accordance with Mosheh Alberg's statement about the time Peretz remained in Szczebrzeszyn 104.

Rabbi Pinhas¹ and his wife, annoyed by the capers cut by the "crazy" pupil, sent him home. This was not long before the end of the "zeman". Passover approached; a busy time for Rabbi Pinhas¹ 105. And the end of the "zeman" was anyway due on the eve of the holiday.

The Szczebrzeszyn "intermezzo" in Peretz's life lasted probably from the end of October or from November 1864 106 until March 1865 107.

NOTES

1. In Latin letters he used to write his name: Izaak (which is the Polish form of the Hebrew name Yishaq i.e. Isaac) Leon (which is the translation of 'Aryeh into Polish, just as Leyb or (diminutive) Leybush, is the translation of it into Yiddish) Peretz (which is the German spelling; Hebrew: Perek; Polish: Perek). See e.g.: MS, 184-185 and passim.
2. Z. Reisen, Lexikon fun der yiddisher literatur. . . , Vol II, Wilno, 1930³, 974. - However, according to his first biographer, Y. H. Zagorodski (in his article published in "Ahi'asaf. Luah sifrut we-shimushi. . .", Vol IX, for the year 1901/1902, Warsaw, 1901, 359), Peretz was born on the day of the festival of "La.G ba-'omer" (that is to say: on 'iyar the 18th) [5] 611 i.e. on Tuesday, May 20th, 1851. This is also the opinion of N. Meisel in his book: Yishaq Leybush Peretz un zayn dor shrayber, New York, 1951, 396-398). And comp.: N, 37.
3. Reisen, l.c.; Z, 44 and 100 (?)
4. Mentioned above Ch. 5. Z, 26; comp.: "Shalosh Qeri'ot" (K, V, pt. 1, 43) and "A yungn shraybers hanukah" (A, III, 338-339); see: "Zamosc". Tel-Aviv, 1953, 87. Her portrait: YB, XII(1937), facing p. 313.
5. Z, 10 (?); N, 37. He lived later in Galicia, comp.: YB, XII,

(1937), 6 and 144 and R. Peretz-Laks, Farben un shtrikhen tsu Peretz's privat-lebn, "Forverts", 12th May, 1929.

6. Mentioned above: Ch. 5. Z, 10 (?), 26; M, 27, 29-32; "Zamość", 233, 269 (here also his portrait). On Peretz's brothers and on his sister see: R. Peretz-Laks, l.c.

7. Zagorodski, l.c.

8. I.e. "Jewish".

9. A book of laws which forms the basis for the commentaries and discussions of the Gemara'. The Talmud consists of Mishnah and Gemara' but is often called just: Gemara'.

10. On the Aramaic literature of the Jews see e.g.: Y.A. Klausner, Toldot ha-sifrut ha-klalit, Vol II, Tel-Aviv, 1952, 5-6.

11. A.A. Roback, The Story of Yiddish Literature, New York, 1940, 35-44.

12. Reisen, o.c., 976. Stories about his cleverness: Z, 7-8; M, 29-30 and 33.

13. Z, 8. Comp.: "Yonim seluyot" (K, VII, 204).

14. Z, 9.

15. Z, 14. Comp. above: Ch. 4.

16. Z, 14-15. See also: Z, 38.

17. N, 48 and 49, note.

18. Z, 15-16.

19. Z, 17.

20. Z, 16-17; see also Peretz's letter to Y. Zinberg of 3rd December 1911 (B, 321). This teacher served as a model for "Zerah the Pincher" in "Mah hi' neshamah?" (K, IV, pt. 1, 8-11). Comp. also: "Der holem" (A, II, 335-341).

21. Reisen, o.c., 976-977.

22. Z, 25, 56, 59, 60, 72, 73, 74, 80, 84, 109, etc.

23. Comp. Yehudah Peretz's "anarchistic" demand mentioned above: Ch. 5.

24. See above: Ch. 2, note 20.

25. Comp. above: Ch. 3, p. 9.

26. Z, 96.

27. Z, 97-98. On Stabrow (mentioned also: Z, 28; pronounced: Stabruv) see: "Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego. . .", t. XI, Warszawa, 1890, 170-171.

28. Leviticus, 11, 6.

29. Lamentations, 5, 18 and various Talmudic legends.

30. The Song of Solomon, 2, 15.

31. E.g.: Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin, 38b.

32. Z, 27. Another source of his knowledge about animals was the stories told by an old peasant woman who nursed his sick brother (Z, 26-27; comp. also: "Der holem", A, II, 335-341).

33. I.e. Psalm 104, called so according to its first words.

34. Z, 96. In his short letter to Zinberg (B, 321-322) Peretz mentions the influence of the Bible on him no less than three times.

35. "Me'un": woman's refusal to accept a marriage imposed upon her while a minor.
36. Z, 97.
37. Z, 121.
38. Z, 97.
39. Z, 30.
40. L.c.
41. "Iluy".
42. Z, 7.
43. Z, 33-34, 95-96.
44. Z, 112: "I do not read. . . descriptions of Nature, they remind me of nothing, awake in me no images! I have so little acquaintance with Nature" (Comp. also: Z, 113).
45. Z, 43. Also: Z, 21: "People I will see. . . later".
46. Comp.: Z, 110.
47. S. Niger, Y. L. Peretz - ish ha-stirot we-ha-shlemut. . ., "Mesudah", Book VII (1954), 341-346.
48. Above: p. 59. See also: Z, 17, 26-28 and particularly 69-70; letter to Zinberg (B, 321).
49. Above: p. 59. See also: Z, 14-15, 40-41, etc. and particularly: 20.
50. Z, 30; see also: 31.
51. Pronounced: Shchebzheshin. On Szczebrzeszyn see: "Słownik Geograficzny. . .", t. XI, Warszawa, 1890, 827-830; M.M. Pieszko, Przewodnik po Zamościu i okolicy, Zamość, 1934, 74-77.
52. Z, 30 and 32, 35; N, 50.
53. M, 28 (statement of Peretz's uncle Shemu'el Leyb Lewin).
54. In 1860 there were in Szczebrzeszyn 4018 inhabitants. 1683 of them were Jews ("Słownik Geograficzny", T. XI, 827).
55. Z, 49.
56. Z, 34; "Słownik Geograficzny", l.c.
57. Z, 44-45.
58. Z, 20 and 34.
59. Z, 20, 34, 41, 45, 46. Very interesting humorous fragments of memoirs on Zamość and Szczebrzeszyn are included in MS (181-183 and 187-188). See: "Gilyonot", Vol. XXV (1951), 266-267. MS, 187, ll. 2-3 and 12-15 resemble very closely the beginning of "Sivurey Masa' 16. Be-abrayut shel 'esh" (K, III, pt. 1, 60). Szczebrzeszyn is also mentioned in Peretz's short-story "Pohet we-holekh" (K, II, pt. 1, 119); in "Gedanken un ideen! 20", (A, VIII, 310); and in one of his Polish letters (YB, XII, 1937, 51): "Szebelrzyn" is certainly a misprint for Szczebrzeszyn.
60. M, 30 (see also: 35).
61. Z, 30. Comp. above: ChCh. 4 and 5.
62. Z, 46, 49, 52. That Rabbi Pinhas'1 told Peretz hasidic stories (Y. Lewin, "Zamość. . .", 69) is a hypothesis which cannot be proved. From Rabbi Pinhas'1's wife and her friends Peretz heard a lot about his own family (Z, 49-50).
63. Z, 46.
64. Z, 46-47.
65. Z, 52.

66. L.c.
67. M, 28.
68. See above: Ch 5, p. 53.
69. YB, XII, (1937), 304.
70. Autobiography (and portrait): "Keneset Yisra'el", Book III (1888), 173-184. (See also: "He-'Asif", Vol. VI, 1893, 200-206); J. Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, YB, XXXVI (1952), 42-44; Y. Lewin, Le-toldot ha-Yehudim be-Zamość, "Zamość. . .", Tel-Aviv, 1953, 64-66; W. Zeitlin, Bibliotheca Hebraica Post-Mendelssohniana, Leipzig, 1891-95², 300-304; "The Jewish Encyclopedia", Vol. X, 365-366.
71. According to his autobiography Reifmann was born "on the new-moon of nisan" ("Keneset Yisra'el", III, 173) and not on the "Day of Atonement" ("Yom Kipur") or on the "9th of 'ab as in Z, 85.
72. Pronounced approximately: Ooaguv.
73. "Keneset Yisra'el", III, 174.
74. O.c., 176; Shatzky, o.c., 42. Peretz mentions in an ironical passage in MS (187, ll.17-19) "a big and tremendous library" in Szczepreszyn used by Reifmann. This library is probably "to be identified with Mayymon's." ^{not}
75. Lists of Reifmann's writings: Zeitlin, l.c.; "Keneset Yisra'el", III, 178-180, 182-184; "The Jewish Encyclopedia", X, 366. At the end of the copy of his book "Mo'adey 'areb", (Wilno, 1863) presented by Reifmann is added a leaf, written by the author himself, which contains a list of nine of his unpublished works and his usual appeal for support. This "Announcement" ("Moda'ah") is signed: Zawichost near Opatów [1863] 15 Kislev" i.e. 19th of November 1869.
76. "Keneset Yisra'el", III, 176-177; comp.: Z, 85.
77. "Y.M." in Z. On Margalot see above: Ch. 5, p. 53.
78. J. Shatzky, o.c., 43 and 48; Z, 72, 73, 78.
79. Shatzky, o.c., 47.
80. Z, 78 (see above: Ch. 4, p. 38); Shatzky, o.c., 42-43.
81. Comp.: J. Shatzky, Pereb Shtudies. I, YB, XXVIII (1946), 44. Some details are dubious e.g.: Shimshon Bloch (one of "the brothers Bloch"; see above: Ch. 4, p.33) could not have belonged to Reifmann's circle in 1862 because he died in 1845.
82. "Mo'adey 'areb", Wilno, 1863, 4; Shatzky, o.c., 43 and note 43. Not with the help of Y. Margalot himself (as: Shatzky, o.c., 49).
83. "Mo'adey 'areb (Aberstunden). . .", Part I [the only published], Wilno, 1863.
84. This was not the only time that Peretz did not mention his relations with Reifmann.
85. M. Y. Freyd, in his memoirs "Yamim we-shanim. . .", tr. by 'A. Zamir (Vol II, Tel-Aviv, 1939, 60), suggests that Peretz made use of Reifmann's library.
86. Above: note 54.
87. "Keneset Yisra'el", III, 178.
88. Was this not the reason (or one of the reasons) why Rabbi Wahl advised sending Peretz to Szczepreszyn? No doubt he must have known that

Rabbi Pinhas¹, the hasid, was hardly a better teacher than those available in Zamość.

89. See above: Ch. 1, pp. 1-2.

90. "Apikoros". This is a corruption of the name of the famous Greek hedonist philosopher Epicurus (Greek: Ἐπίκουρος).

91. "Hoqer gadmoniot"; Z, 72.

92. Z, 72, 73, 78 and 85.

93. MS: 3, ll. 5-9 (RYR = Rabbi Ya'aqob Reifmann); 187, ll. 17-19; 188, ll. 5-18. Reifmann is also alluded to in "Nagni'el" ("Ha-boqer 'or", Vol I, 1876, 101-102, and particularly 102, note 2, where he is quoted without being explicitly mentioned). Comp. below: Ch. 19.

94. Contrary to Shatzky's statement: Haskalah in Zamość, YB, XXXVI (1952), 42.

95. Z, 85.

96. M. Wakser, Dos lebn fun a yiddishn dihter, YB, XII (1937), 247.

97. Z, 85.

98. Letter to Y. Denson (undated; B, 158); "Halugat ha-hokhmot", (K, IX, [pt. 2], ll); "Hesis we-nifga'" (not included in K, but see: "Kitbey. . .", Vol. IV, Tel-Aviv, cop. 1925, 101-126); "Yorshey far'oh", (K, III, pt. 1, 209-221); "Medinat ha-gorbim" (K, VII, 133-135); "Bontsye Shvayg" (A, II, 412-413), etc. Comp. also MS, 170, ll. 6-10.

99. A fact never mentioned by Peretz himself (see below: Ch. 7).

100. Lichtenfeld spent many years in Opatow. It is perhaps possible that Reifmann's aversion to this town (as mentioned above) and Lichtenfeld's aversion to Reifmann had their common background in a conflict between Reifmann and some of the Jews of Opatow. See: Lichtenfeld's poem "Tabnit doresh ha-gadmoniyot. . ." published in Peretz's and Lichtenfeld's joint book of poems "Sipurim be-shir. . .", Warsaw, 1877, 122-127, and particularly notes 1 and 2 on p. 116. Comp.: Wakser, o.c., 247-248 (and see below: Ch. 17).

101. Peretz joined Lichtenfeld also in polemics against H.Z. Slonimski and his supporters.

102. Z, 20.

103. Z, 52.

104. YB, XII, (1937), 304.

105. Z, 52.

106. After the Jewish Autumn holidays (i.e. after 22nd October, 1864).

107. Before Passover (i.e. before 10th April, 1865).

7. Boyhood (1865-1870).

A short time after his return to Zamość, Peretz had his "Bar Mišwah" ¹ ceremony - on the 25th May, 1865. Curiously enough he does not mention this event at all in his memoirs ², although this is usually the most important event in the life of a Jewish boy. Perhaps this is due to the peculiar character of Peretz's memoirs and to the fact that in certain parts of Poland quite often the "Bar Mišwah" was not celebrated ³.

Not for long was Peretz "delivered" from his religious teachers. Probably some time after his "Bar Mišwah" it was decided that he would study at home, "a couple of hours every day" with a friend (whose name he could not remember). The teacher was a former "dayyan" ⁴ "Rabbi 'Abraham-Yehoshu'a" ⁵. The teacher's full name was 'Abraham-Yehoshu'a Tempeldiener and his second pupil, whose parents together with those of Peretz engaged him, was Peretz's best friend Yiṣḥaq Geliebter ⁶. Their studies did not last long ⁷. Peretz's "latest religious teacher" ("rabbi") ⁸ was hardly more successful than his predecessors ⁹.

Once again Peretz was left to study on his own without a teacher. He studied in the "beyt ha-midrash" ("House of Study") ¹⁰,

where Geliebter probably often joined him until about 1867 ¹¹. Geliebter says ¹² that while studying with Tempeldiener Peretz began his "searchings" for something different from the Talmud and its commentaries. Peretz himself states that even before he was sent to Szczebrzeszyn he started to read "scholarly and qabalistic books. . ." ¹³. It is worth while mentioning that already in Szczebrzeszyn Peretz had some doubts about the importance of the ingenious Talmudic research ¹⁴, albeit he was still deeply religious ¹⁵.

We know near to nothing about Peretz's reading in Szczebrzeszyn, but there can be no doubt that after his return to Zamość he devoted himself with great zeal to reading and studying. His main source was the big library of the "beyt ha-midrash" ¹⁶. When Peretz was between twelve and fourteen years old he was well versed in Talmud and its commentaries ¹⁷. As already mentioned ¹⁸ Peretz was deeply impressed by the Bible and particularly by the prophets ¹⁹. Although the influence of the Bible became more profound later ²⁰, no doubt the first impact, and a stronger one, was there when he was still a young boy ²¹. In about 1864-1865 there must have occurred an important inner change in Peretz ²². He was no more satisfied with the dry Talmudic study. He began to look for something that would appeal not only to his "quick-grasping. . . brain" but also to his soul, full of feeling ²³.

He read and studied without any guidance, unsystematically, changing book, frequently, often skimming. Putting aside a book full of rationalistic scepticism, Peretz would take a work of a strictly

orthodox writer and after that - some mystical dreams of a qabalist ²⁴.

Among the books he studied, most probably when he was between twelve and fourteen years old, Peretz mentions books on Jewish religious law ("halakhah"). On their most subtle casuistry he used "to sharpen his mind as on a grindstone" ²⁵.

He was early ²⁶ influenced by the lofty ascetic morals of the very popular book of Bahya 'ibn Baqudah ²⁷ of Saragossa (XIth century) "The Duties of the Heart" ²⁸.

Browsing among the books in "beyt ha-midrash" Peretz also found books on "qabalah" ²⁹ - the Jewish mysticism ³⁰. Although a few years later he was even able to explain to other people difficult passages in qabalah-books ³¹, he obviously did not think much of at least some of them ³². And at the same time, while he was studying qabalistic books Peretz also reached for the works of the greatest medieval Jewish philosopher and thinker ³³.

Rabbi Mosheh ben Mayymon (abbreviated: Ra.M.Ba.M.) of Cordova (1135-1204) is known as Maimonides. Peretz studied diligently his theological and philosophical works and became an ardent follower of "The Guide of the Perplexed" ³⁴. He was about fourteen years old when he read Maimonides' magnum opus ³⁵; according to Geliebter not in "beyt ha-midrash" ³⁶ but in a private house ³⁷. Geliebter joined Peretz in admiration of Maimonides ³⁸.

Besides Maimonides Peretz studied other medieval Jewish philosophers ³⁹ and his naive faith was shattered by the rationalistic ideas

of some of them:

"And I know already that according to Ra.L.Ba.G. 40. . . the prophet 'Eliyahu [Elijah] did not ascend to Heaven at all. . . And according to Ra.M.Ba.M. the wonders of the Bible were hardly wonders at all, there was nothing in them 'to disturb the natural order'" 41.

Peretz had no free choice and had to limit himself mainly to the books available in "beyt ha-midrash", the only "public library", or rather, "reading room" of Jewish Zamosc in those days. The library of "beyt ha-midrash" contained solely Hebrew and Aramaic pre-Haskalah works, mainly medieval. Most of them were on religious law ("halakhah"), ethics, mysticism and philosophy, but some also on astronomy and mathematics 42 . It is therefore not by chance that Peretz (for whom the "beyt ha-midrash" was at that time perhaps more important than home 43) doesn't mention in his memoirs a single book read by him in this period of his life that was written later than the XVIIth century. Neither does he mention a single volume of fiction or poetry, modern or even medieval. This kind of book was obviously not included in the library of the "beyt ha-midrash".

Peretz read or went through all the books he could lay his hands on (not always understanding everything he read), just as he did later when he was given access to another big library. We can be sure that the contradictory elements in his soul enabled him to be influenced simultaneously by the different trends represented by all the books he read.

Peretz's fellow-townsmen testified that Ya'acob Reifmann ⁴⁴ used to come to Zamość and meet a group of young men outside the town. There they spent hours in discussions on religious and secular topics. Among the young men who listened to Reifmann's teachings are mentioned: Peretz, Yishag Geliebter and David Schiffmann ⁴⁵.

Geliebter entered the "pro-gymnasium" ⁴⁶ in Zamość a short time after it was opened ⁴⁷. Since then, according to Geliebter's own recollections, he did not meet Peretz often, and when he did meet him this was mainly on Saturdays in "beyt ha-midrash" ⁴⁸. The pro-gymnasium" was founded in 1867 ⁴⁹. It follows that Geliebter and Peretz were Reifmann's pupils most probably in 1866 (or?) and 1867. It may be that Peretz and other young men continued to meet Reifmann after Geliebter left this circle.

In 1869 Reifmann published a letter to "my pupils. . . . in Zamość" ⁵⁰. This was certainly addressed not to his pupils of 1862 ⁵¹, but to those of 1866-1867 (and later?). In his letter Reifmann urges his pupils to study again "all the books of the philosophers of our nation, which I taught you" ⁵². Thus we can take it for granted that Peretz's particular interest in medieval Jewish philosophy was - at least to a certain degree - aroused by the great scholar whom he later disliked so much ⁵³.

Peretz never mentions that he was at any time Reifmann's pupil or that he attended his lectures. Still in "My Memoirs" Peretz speaks about Reifmann after mentioning his Hebrew and German teachers

and before mentioning his Russian teacher. We may therefore assume that Reifmann was also one of Peretz's lay teachers. He made on Peretz "the worst impression", worse than all others 54.

When Peretz was 15 years old he had already a sound knowledge of the Talmud and its commentaries, of the Bible and of medieval Jewish philosophy, which dealt mainly with theological and moral problems. All this Jewish religious education Peretz owed far more to himself than to his many religious teachers. His secular, Jewish and general, education was very limited. He was already able to understand and to speak some Polish - his first non-Jewish language 55. Geliebter remembered that already in the days of their common studies Peretz was attracted by poetry. He read the "dedication poems", composed mostly by dull versifiers in praise of religious or philosophical books (and their authors) at the head of which those "poems" were printed 56. From the questions (on physics) Peretz and Geliebter asked Tempeldiener (to heckle him) it is obvious that they were already reading Haskalah-books 57. These were available in many private libraries in Zamość 58.

As already mentioned, in 1867 a Russian "pro-gymnasium" was opened in Zamość and after a short time Yishag Geliebter began to attend it. Geliebter and Peretz had been born in the same year; they were bosom friends; and they studied together under Tempeldiener and later probably often also in "beyt ha-midrash". It is sure that when Geliebter was sent to the pro-gymnasium" the question of Peretz's future education

especially in general subjects, also arose.

The Unknown Manuscript contains a vivid description of a family council about the future education of a boy ⁵⁹. In the council participates "his whole family. . .the close and the distant [relatives]". They sit "round a big, wide table" and discuss the boy's future ⁶⁰. This all happens "in Z." ⁶¹. There are, no doubt, some autobiographical trends in this picture.

Yehudah Peretz was prepared to send his son to the newly-established "pro-gymnasium" but this was too much of a "heresy" for Ribale Peretz. Peretz's father yielded to his wife's extreme religiosity ⁶². Perhaps the negative decision was also influenced by the financial situation of the Peretz family. Those were years of economic crisis of the Jews of Zamość. Several events following each other contributed to the substantial worsening of their economic situation: the Second Polish Uprising (1863); the liberation of the Polish peasants by the Russian Government (1864); the consequent plight of the Polish country gentry (with whom many Jews - and among them also Yehudah Peretz - had business contacts); the pulling down of the fortress of Zamość (1866) ⁶³.

Peretz continued to study on his own in "beyt ha-midrash" ⁶⁴ and perhaps also to participate in Reifmann's circle. At the same time ⁶⁵ (probably by way of compromise ⁶⁶) Peretz's parents engaged for him private lay teachers.

"A little later ⁶⁷ I started to learn Hebrew" - says Peretz in his autobiographical letter to Y. Zinberg, quoted several times above ⁶⁸.

Of course Peretz had known Hebrew since he was a small child, but his "rabbis" never cared to teach Hebrew grammar and most probably were even opposed to it ⁶⁹. Now his parents gave him lay teachers who were to teach the boy Hebrew, German and Russian systematically. He did not like it. It did not matter to him "what a shoe is called in several languages" ⁷⁰.

Peretz's Hebrew teacher was David Schiffmann (1828-1903) ⁷¹. Schiffmann was a typical "autodidactic" maskil. He was influenced by Yosef Zederbaum's circle ⁷². From Yosef Zederbaum himself he perhaps derived his particular interest in biblical commentaries of the famous rabbi 'Abraham 'ibn 'Ezra' (1092-1167) ⁷³.

Schiffmann owned a tobacco-shop (where Peretz, when six years old, bought his first tobacco and started to smoke). Later he also kept stationery and Haskalah-books in his shop ⁷⁴. He used to encourage young maskilim and supply them with books and journals ⁷⁵. Schiffmann was a friend of Zederbaum's son Alexander Zederbaum ⁷⁶ and served as a kind of permanent correspondent from Zamosc ⁷⁷ for A. Zederbaum's journal "Ha-Melis" ⁷⁸. As we already know Schiffmann was, with Peretz and Yishaq Geliebter, among the disciples of Ya'aqob Reifmann whose great admirer he remained until Reifmann's death (in 1895) ⁷⁹.

In addition to being a shopkeeper, a journalist and a scholar, Schiffmann was also "a teacher of the holy tongue" ⁸⁰. Peretz, as already mentioned, was one of his pupils - not a very enthusiastic one. From Schiffmann's ⁸¹ Hebrew conjugations - says Peretz - "I run away as from fire; boredom!" ⁸².

"From the little hunchback Stern, the son of the great Stern, who came to teach German from Ollendorff: 'Gut Morgen, Herr!' 'Wie sind sie geschlafen?' 'Gut' - I have learned - to play preference" ⁸³.

"The great Stern", the father of Peretz's German teacher, was Abraham Ya'acob Stern (1769-1842) ⁸⁴, inventor ⁸⁵, mathematician, one of the founders of the Rabbinical College in Warsaw and a Hebrew poet. He was born in Hrubieszów ⁸⁶, near Zamość. His son used, during the few lessons he gave Peretz ⁸⁷, one of the textbooks by Heinrich Godefroy Ollendorff. "The Ollendorff Method" for learning languages was very popular in those days ⁸⁸. It was based mainly on numerous exercises in the ^{form} of everyday conversations ⁸⁹. No doubt Stern's lessons were useful ⁹⁰, although Peretz claimed to have learned only a card game ("preference") from him.

Peretz's ^{teacher} Russian ⁹¹ was - according to "My Memoirs" - not more successful than his Hebrew and German ones: "My Russian teacher, with the insipid little eyes and a vodka-mouth certainly did not attract me" ⁹². This was a Russian sergeant-major ("Feldwebel") ⁹³ who served as a scribe in his unit ⁹⁴; a drunkard who always smelled of spirits ⁹⁵. He chose one of the text-books of Russian grammar by N. I. Grech (1787-1867) ⁹⁶, educationalist, journalist and writer. Grech was an ardent supporter of the official reactionary tzarist ideology. Grech's textbooks were as dry as dust.

We do not know how long Peretz was taught Russian. He mentions "his [ex?] teacher" as disappearing from Zamość during a false accusation

against the Zamość Jewry, which took place in 1870 97.

It is obvious that Peretz tries to show that he owed his general education, just as his Jewish one, far more to himself than to his teachers. This is probably true to a certain degree. Surely to an able boy, used to talmudic casuistry and to philosophical problems, the grammatical rules and exercises in Hebrew and Russian must have seemed dull, and the everyday questions and answers of his German "Ollendorff" - rather silly.

Peretz, no doubt, preferred to learn languages his own way; and a strange way it was. The Hebrew books he found in "beyt ha-midrash" often contained some short sentences printed in other languages, e.g. a censor's remark: "Permitted to be printed". These odd sentences served Peretz as a start to learn to read Polish 98. When the days of his first childish romances began it was a girl friend who lent him a Polish book 99. Soon he was able to read Polish without any difficulties 100. Although not only Polish but also Russian and German were widely known among the Jews of Zamość 101, it was the Polish language Peretz learned first and best 102. Later he learned by himself also "a little German and Russian" 103.

Before 1870 Peretz was probably able to read and to converse in Russian, the official language of the country, but had still some difficulty in reading German 104. Peretz also tried to learn French: he learned "an Ollendorff" 105 by heart from the beginning to the end - but to no purpose; as easily as he learned he forgot 106 107.

Ultimately (in addition to Yiddish) Peretz knew "Hebrew, Polish, Russian and German perfectly" 108.

David Schiffmann, Peretz's Hebrew teacher and friend, who used to lend books and journals to the young adepts of Haskalah, no doubt also introduced Peretz to the Haskalah literature: "I started to learn Hebrew: 'Adam Ha-Kohen'¹⁰⁹ and the later writers - says Peretz in his letter to Y. Zinberg¹¹⁰. The only other Haskalah writer of whom Peretz speaks in this letter is Nahman Krochmal¹¹¹.

Peretz does not explicitly mention in "My Memoirs" a single Haskalah book¹¹² which he read before he got access to a large library, somewhat later. Instead he mentions several writers who were active in Zamość: Y. Zamość, Y. Eichenbaum, Dr. Sh. Ettlinger, Y. Reifmann, D. Schiffmann and A. Zederbaum¹¹³. Speaking about the Haskalah movement in his native town, Peretz alludes occasionally to a few Hebrew poems, favourites with the youth of Zamość¹¹⁴: "Mercy"¹¹⁵ and "The Complainer and the Poet"¹¹⁶ - both by 'A.D. Lebensohn¹¹⁷, "The Cooing Dove"¹¹⁸ by M. Letteris (1800-1871)¹¹⁹, and a poem now nearly forgotten but in those days very popular - "Zion, O Zion"¹²⁰, whose author was Mordekhai Ha-Lewy¹²¹. He cites the creator of the Haskalah movement Mosheh Mendelssohn¹²², the Hebrew and Yiddish poet and founder of the Yiddish theatre 'Abraham Goldfaden (1840-1908)¹²³ and Qalman Shulmann's translation of "Les Mystères de Paris" by E. Sue¹²⁴. In addition Peretz names four Haskalah writers prominent in natural sciences and in mathematics: 'Aharon Berenstein (1812-1884)¹²⁵, Hayim Zelig Slonimski (1810-1904)¹²⁶, 'Abraham Ya'aqob Stern¹²⁷ and

G. Y. Lichtenfeld (Peretz's future father-in-law) 128.

Probably at about the same time Peretz read 'Abraham Ya'acov Paperna's critical study "The Drama" (1868) 129.

In "My Memoirs" we also come across the names of a few writers whose works Peretz did not read in Hebrew or in Yiddish 130, but there is no evidence that Peretz had already read foreign books before he got access to a large library 131.

In a humorous fragment of reminiscences included in the Unknown Manuscript 132 Peretz relates about the particularly strong influence exercised on him and his friends, when they were still very young boys, by four well-known Hebrew poets: Mosheh Hayim Luzzatto (1707-1747) 133, Naftali Hertz Weisel 134, M. Letteris 135 and 'A.D. Lebensohn 136. Thus we can take it for granted that Peretz was already familiar with the Hebrew and Yiddish Haskalah literature in the period covered by "My Memoirs" (before 1870) and even before he approached the foreign literatures through a big library.

In spite of this, both in his letter to Zinberg and in his memoirs Peretz tries to minimize the influence of Haskalah on himself and his writings. Although he admits that he read "Adam Ha-Kohen and the later writers", he adds: "however I only understood, but did not feel. I admired the trick, no more." ". . . I never did become a maskil" 137. For Haskalah meant in those days to Peretz: "what a shoe is called in several languages", "some poems on the four seasons" 138, Schiffmann's conjugations, Stern's "Ollendorff", his Russian teacher's "Grech" 139 and

perhaps also Reifmann's "investigation of antiquities" ¹⁴⁰. All this certainly held no charm for Peretz ¹⁴¹. However, when he attempts to convince his readers that he never was an adept of Haskalah and that his writings in the spirit of this movement were simply imitations, a tribute paid to a prevailing vogue ¹⁴², we should not consider his statement as wholly correct. On the contrary, Peretz's early writings ¹⁴³ show that he was, without doubt, a champion of the ideology of "Haskalah-realism" ¹⁴⁴, even if for a comparatively short period only, and not always entirely without reservations. This, however, happened later. The first impression of the Haskalah on Peretz was obviously not a deep one.

At this time he was occupied with quite different problems. With Maimonides (and against Aristotle ¹⁴⁵) he was convinced that the world was created by God and created ex nihilo, or at least from "cosmic matter" ¹⁴⁶. But why? What is the purpose and the meaning of human life? And death, what does it mean? ¹⁴⁷. In his critical years of puberty Peretz was overcome by a wave of deep pessimism ¹⁴⁸, and the problem of death and of the fate of the soul after death ¹⁴⁹ weighed heavily on the young boy's heart. Peretz devoted much space in his memoirs to this problem and to recollections of dying people ¹⁵⁰. No doubt he remembered those scenes particularly because of his occupation during the writing of "My Memoirs" (1913-1914) as an official in the burials department of the Jewish Community of Warsaw. Peretz worked there for nearly twenty-five years (from 1891 until his death in 1915) ¹⁵¹.

The circumstances in which Peretz obtained access to a big library constitute the most puzzling passage of "My Memoirs" ^{150a}. Peretz was then probably between 17 and 18 years old ^{151b}. One evening he went out of the town. Leaning on a fence he watched the sun setting in purple flames and the pale moon ascending slowly. He was deeply plunged in his thoughts on the problem of death: "Why do people die, what for?". Suddenly someone touched him: this was "Mikhal Fiddler - already mentioned ¹⁵². It was the fence of his little 'house of retreat' near which I was standing. He came out to me, quiet, walking noiselessly, with sad, watery eyes, in one of his hands - a little book, in the other - a little lantern. . . ." ¹⁵³. Mikhal asked Peretz to explain to him a difficult passage in the little book on qabalah which he held in his hand. As a reward he gave the boy prodigy -

" . . . a big, heavy, rusty key - -
The key to his locked library in town. . .
- You deserve it. . . "

"I take it and go away with it in silence. The key will open to me - a new world of books. . . ." ¹⁵⁴.

The man called by Peretz "Mikhal the Fiddler" was the rarely sober head of the Jewish musical band of Zamość ¹⁵⁵. He appears (with his band, composed of his many sons) as "Mikhal the musician" in Peretz's short story ¹⁵⁶ "The Death of the Player" and as Yo'el in his play "What is Hidden in the Little Fiddle" ¹⁵⁷.

The real name of the head of the Jewish players' family of Zamość was Benjamin Schnitzer, but he and his sons were commonly known ~~as~~

as "The Blooms" ¹⁵⁸. They were simple people but good musicians. They took part in every religious or official celebration and played during theatre performances, dancing parties, etc. "The Blooms" were quite often invited to play in the surroundings of Zamość, especially in the houses of the rich Polish country gentry.

The library was stored in the loft of a new house, "then the newest" ¹⁵⁹, where "no Jews live. It may be an accident, or perhaps because it is near to the castle!" ¹⁶⁰. The loft was full of books, heaped in complete disorder. Most of them were in Polish, some in German and a very few in French ¹⁶¹. There were no books in Hebrew or Yiddish and, as far as we know, no books on Jewish subjects. Neither were there any books in Russian. This library could not have been stored in the loft for many years (in spite of the rusty key and the old lock ¹⁶²) - probably about a year only. The house itself was a new one and some of the books were published as late as the end of the 1860's ¹⁶³.

There cannot be the slightest doubt that such a library did not belong to Benjamin Schnitzer. Instead, it is perhaps possible that he was merely entrusted with the key to somebody else's library. If so, whose? On the face of it it would appear that this library belonged to a non-Jew, certainly to a Pole. After the uprising of 1863 many members of the Polish country gentry were impoverished and some were forced to leave their native surroundings for political reasons ¹⁶⁴. The library may have belonged to one of the Polish aristocrats in whose house "The Blooms" played and who gave the key to Benjamin Schnitzer.

H However, there is in "My Memoirs" an interesting remark which provides us with a more plausible solution. ". . . When. . . our assistant surgeon ¹⁶⁵ won the big prize. . . he bought a house in town, where he opened a book-shop of books 'in all languages', to educate the town, and a little house outside the town. . . The house in town with the shop he handed over to his sons and he himself (already a widower) moved. . . into the little house outside the town, to live a solitary life devoted to pious contemplation" ¹⁶⁶.

The assistant surgeon had the money, the knowledge of foreign languages and the interest in acquiring such a library as the one to which Peretz got the key. The musician had none of these. We do not know by whom (probably by the "Feldscher's" sons?) and why the library was stored in the loft. It is quite possible that when, in his old age, the assistant surgeon turned to religion (and to mysticism) he lost all interest in foreign books and took to his little 'house of retreat' only all the Hebrew and Jewish books out of his library. It was certainly he and not Benjamin Schnitzer who asked for an explanation of a passage in a book on qabalah, it was he and not the always drunken "Kapellmeister" ¹⁶⁷, who gave Peretz "the key to his locked library in town" ¹⁶⁸.— With great excitement, after an inner struggle, Peretz decided to enter the forbidden world of "their beyt ha-midrash" i.e. the non-Jewish "House of Study", as he calls the library ¹⁶⁹. Peretz was at that time no more a naïve, orthodox believer, but the very sources of his doubts were as yet only Jewish: Maimonides, Gersonides and others. He was afraid of new problems

and new doubts he would have to face when reading the non-Jewish books. Ultimately his thirst for knowledge overcame the hesitations; yet his hand trembled as he touched the door to this "new world" ¹⁷⁰.

Books...books...books...The four walls of the loft were covered by books and books were scattered all over the floor.

Peretz did not read the French books, although he had made an (unsuccessful !) attempt to master this language especially to be able to read them ¹⁷¹. Neither was he willing to start on German books. He had no patience to spell out the words. He began to read the books written in Polish, the non-Jewish language he knew best. These were mainly translations from French and from other languages.

He read "systematically" - starting from the right hand side of the entrance ¹⁷². Unfortunately the books, as already mentioned, were in complete disorder, and Peretz read "the tenth volume of Sue ¹⁷³, followed by the ninth of Dumas, and immediately afterwards volume three - of Hugo. . ." ¹⁷⁴.

Novels and scholarly works were mixed up together but Peretz was not worried by this. He read everything in the order in which he found it.

When reading novels he was never attracted by descriptions of landscapes or scenery ¹⁷⁵, neither was he interested in plots. He was fascinated only by the dialogue, the conversations. There he saw the crevices through which he was able to peep into human souls. This - as

Peretz observed himself - was most significant for all his own future writings 176.

Peretz read everything: Sue, Dumas, and Hugo, Polish novels (Korzeniowski? 177) and Napoleon's code of law in Polish translation by Zawadski 178, Buckle's "The History of Civilisation in England" (no doubt also in Polish translation 179), books on physics and on zoology, on botany and on philosophy.

He probably spent several months reading diligently and with a great deal of excitement¹⁸⁰ although he did not read all the books in the library, as he had first decided to do.

Napoleon's code reminded Peretz: (who later worked for many years as a lawyer) of the well-known code of Jewish religious law by Maimonides; Buckle's book - curiously enough - reminded him of a medieval homiletic-philosophical Hebrew book by Yishag 'Ar'amah 181. Most of what he read on natural sciences was new to him, with no parallels at all in the Old Hebrew books of "beyt ha-midrash". Peretz was interested in physics and he liked to read about the habits of plants and animals, but he was not interested in the description of their appearance - strange and unknown to him¹⁸².

Peretz admitted that the books he read opened for him a new, marvellous world. "Lord, how big is the world, how many-sided, how great the wisdom, how much spiritual power. . . ." 183. At the same time the unprepared mind of the young intellectual adventurer was invaded by ideas entirely new and revolutionary to him, ideas which ruined much of his

old belief.

The most striking and painful were the ideas of the materialistic philosophers ¹⁸⁴. From numerous leaflets - as he tells us - he learned that there is no free will. Hartmann and Vogt taught, that the entire world, and men in it, consists only of material substance. Nothing spiritual exists.

The first works of the well-known German philosopher Karl Robert Eduard von Hartmann (1842-1906) were published in 1868, and the first book which gained him a name - "Die Philosophie des Unbewussten" - appeared in November 1868, although it bears the date 1869 ¹⁸⁵. Let us remark that we take Peretz's statements in "My Memoirs" at their face value (in spite of their being written more than 40 years after the last events described there), except when we have some reason to doubt their exactitude. On the whole we can rely on Peretz's good memory, and sometimes we simply have no choice but to do so. If it was "The Philosophy of the Unconscious" which Peretz read in the library (certainly in German) we must conclude that the library was stored in the loft less than a year before Peretz got access to it, or that this last event happened not in 1869, but in the beginning of 1870.

Karl Vogt (1817-1895) was one of the main representatives of materialistic philosophy in Germany in the XIXth century. Peretz quotes from Vogt's Köhlerglaube und Wissenschaft ¹⁸⁶ (first published in 1854) his famous comparison: "The brain produces thoughts, as another organ [Vogt: "as kidneys"] - urine. . ." ¹⁸⁷.

All these ideas came as a terrific shock to Peretz's young soul: "Something in me petrifies and freezes. Something is dying slowly. No more creation, no more epiphany ¹⁸⁸. There exists no Heaven at all. . . . No more reward and punishment for there is no free choice for a Man . ." ¹⁸⁹. In his distress and doubt Peretz had no one to whom to talk. There was nobody to listen to the "lamentations over the ruins in the mind and over the dead corpses in the heart" ¹⁹⁰. And how could he talk about all this to his friends when there were not even appropriate words in Yiddish to discuss his new problems? ¹⁹¹

Ultimately Peretz confessed his "doubts and sorrows to Sh. H. because - as he says- "only Sh. H. can save me" ¹⁹². These initials stand for Shim'on Hodak, the teacher of Jewish religion in the "pro-gymnasium" of Zamość ¹⁹³. Hodak was a son of a very poor Jewish family in Lithuania. ¹⁹⁴. According to Peretz he graduated at the rabbinical seminary in Zhitomir (Ukraine). However Alexander Zederbaum writing in 1869 ¹⁹⁵ about his recent visit to his native town, states that the teacher of Jewish religion in the new "pro-gymnasium" was a graduate of the rabbinical seminary in Wilno (then: Russian Lithuania) ¹⁹⁶. Although Zederbaum does not mention the teacher's name, there can be no doubt that he alludes to Hodak and that Peretz's memory did not serve him right in this case.

Both the rabbinical seminaries, in Wilno and in Zhitomir, were sponsored by the Russian government and both were opened simultaneously at the end of 1847 ¹⁹⁷.

Hodak was an ardent maskil and a Russophil ¹⁹⁸. He did not

want to speak to anybody in any other language but Russian. Appointed by the government as a teacher of Jewish religion, Hodak kept at a distance from the Jewish community, did not attend the prayers at the synagogue and openly transgressed the precepts of the very religion he himself taught (with the help of a Russian book).

Later he was appointed by the government as a rabbi and started to behave as a religious Jew. He was then threatened by the ḥasidim of Zamość, resigned and went to Warsaw.¹⁹⁹ There he was appointed a censor of Jewish books²⁰⁰.

Hodak's advice was that Peretz should study at the rabbinical seminary. Systematic education would solve all his doubts and problems. It was decided that Peretz was to run away from his house, because his parents - and particularly his mother - would never have agreed to his going.

According to Peretz, Hodak advised him to study either at Zhitomir or at Wilno, but Peretz's brother Yonah Yehoshua^a remembered that he intended to go to Wilno and not to Zhitomir²⁰¹. This statement is supported by Zederbaum's assertion that Wilno and not Zhitomir was the "alma mater" of the Lithuanian teacher²⁰².

Hodak was ready to help and he even pawned his golden chain to provide Peretz with money for the journey. Peretz's girl-friend (already the bride of someone else) also approved this plan. Everything was ready for the escape, but Peretz's mother succeeded in keeping him back²⁰³.

Yonah Yehoshua^a Peretz says: "The mother, Ribale fasted a

whole year every Monday and Thursday and ate meat only on Saturdays - to prevent Leybush [i.e. Y.L. Peretz] from going, to prevent him from becoming a heretic. . ." ²⁰⁴. The deeply religious and understanding mother had guessed, probably long ago, that her beloved son was in distress, that he was straying further and further from orthodoxy. Perhaps she even knew something about his scheme. On the night fixed for Peretz's escape she entered his room noiselessly and quietly shedding tears, kept watch over her prodigal son's bed. Peretz, who was not asleep, decided to abandon his plan; he could not inflict this great sorrow on his mother ²⁰⁵.

With Hodak he later participated in an educational enterprise in Zamość.

Peretz's father was not at home on the critical night. When he returned a few days later, he let Peretz know that he had arranged his betrothal to Sarah the daughter of the well-known scholar and writer G.Y. Lichtenfeld ²⁰⁶.

Peretz was about 18 years old ²⁰⁷. In those days the parents of Jewish boys very often arranged their marriages just after their "Bar Miṣwah" ceremony and it was generally considered that by the age of 18 a Jewish boy must be already married ²⁰⁸. It was customary too in those days that the bridegroom-to-be was not even informed beforehand and caught his first glimpse of his bride only at the wedding. We may assume that the decision to marry Peretz was taken by his parents not only in view of the

prevailing custom but also in the hope that married life would make their son more stabilized and turn his mind from "heretical" thoughts.

Peretz did not try to resist: "I surrender; I do not see any alternative. A sacrifice to my mother's tears! . . ." 209. However, this was obviously not the only reason why Peretz did not try to revolt. From the supplementary chapter of "My Memoirs", headed "I Married" (published in 1914) 210, it follows that there were other reasons for his submissiveness too. "As I get older the cloud of melancholy that enveloped me is gradually lifting; I am less and less of a tragic figure. After I became engaged I felt even easier" - says Peretz 211. His new position made him feel more sure of himself and - outwardly - quieter. He enjoyed being a fiancé, and wished to be a real adult, independent like other boys of his own age and even younger 212.

Yet, according to Peretz, the main reason for his obedience was his hopes with regard to his future father-in-law. Peretz expected that Lichtenfeld would relieve him of the heavy burden of problems and doubts "about God and the world" that upset his soul. Therefore he "waits for the day of the wedding as for the Messiah" 213.

Peretz already knew of Gabri'el Yehudah Lichtenfeld (1811-1887) 214. Favy'l Geliebter 215, the father of Peretz's best friend Dr. Yishag Geliebter, had published a letter in which he took Lichtenfeld's side in the latter's polemics with H.Z. Slonimski 216. In the house of the Geliebtters, and certainly in many other houses of the maskilim in Zamość also, Lichtenfeld's name was mentioned with appreciation. Peretz

describes him as "a mathematician, a philosopher and a man renowned for his vast 'knowledge'" ²¹⁷. Peretz expected him to be far removed from rigid orthodoxy and thought he would be pleased to know that his future son-in-law did not care either to observe all the minor religious precepts ²¹⁸.

As a matter of fact Lichtenfeld was far from being "a philosopher". He was a convinced maskil, mainly interested in mathematics, and a mediocre Hebrew poet ²¹⁹. Lichtenfeld was a kind, gentle man (he reminded Peretz of rabbi Mosheh Wahl ²²⁰), when not involved in polemics on mathematical problems.

Peretz agreed to the marriage with Lichtenfeld's daughter thinking far more about his future father-in-law than ^{about} his future wife. He did not "think about the bride" ²²¹ - at first. As the wedding day drew nearer he could not sleep because of the thoughts about her (perhaps "she is blind in one eye", or "lame", or "a monster"?) and because of his sorrow at having to marry a woman he had never seen, a woman chosen by somebody else, without love, without romance. And the one to whom he would have agreed - his girl-friend - already belonged to another man ²²².

Peretz's consent was, no doubt, a "surrender". He suffered, was nervous and uneasy. His "rebellious" mood found its (somewhat childish) expression in demonstrations against some customs and even against certain religious precepts etc., before and during the wedding ²²³.

Once he went so far as to provoke general consternation when he publicly, in "beyt ha-midrash", crossed out from a venerated book of rabbinical responsa a few lines directed against "The Guide of the Perplexed"

by Maimonides ²²⁴. This was merely a demonstration, for "inwardly I have long ago passed The Guide of the Perplexed, that together with Aristotle has disappeared from the 'agenda'. . . - - -" ²²⁵.

The wedding took place a short time after Yehudah Peretz told his son about the arrangement ²²⁶.

Peretz does not remember whether his marriage was preceded, as it was customary, by preliminary settlement of the conditions of the marriage ²²⁷, etc. According to Peretz's relative and friend Mosheh Altberg ²²⁸ Lichtenfeld arrived "probably" for this purpose in Zamość before the wedding. This is possible. However, Altberg is certainly wrong when he suggests that Peretz and Lichtenfeld did not only meet during the latter's visit to Zamość (which is probable) but also that on that occasion they together composed a book of poems "Sipurim be-shir. . ." ²²⁹. This statement is very dubious and contradicts Peretz's account in the supplementary chapter of his memoirs ²³⁰. It seems that the meeting between Lichtenfeld and Peretz on the morning after the wedding described in this chapter ²³¹, if not the first, was the first to provide an opportunity of a longer conversation between them. This, let us observe, is not the only mistake in Altberg's short recollections ²³². Altberg was only between 8 and 10 years old at the time of Peretz's marriage ²³³ and his recollections were written in 1935, i.e. 21 years after the publication of Peretz's supplementary chapter and 65 years after Peretz's wedding.

Characteristically enough, Peretz does not even remember where

his wedding took place: "in a village somewhere halfway between Apt²³⁴ and Zamość (I do not remember the name of the village; I have no documents from there. . .)"²³⁵. However, Peretz's brother Yonah Yehoshua^c remembered this name: "Garajec"²³⁶, which is probably the Yiddish form for Gorajec. The geographical position of the village Gorajec fits Peretz's statement²³⁷. Yonah Yehoshua^c Peretz remembered also the age of the bridegroom: "Leybush [i.e. Y.L. Peretz] married at the age of 18"²³⁸. It follows that the marriage of Peretz and Sarah Lichtenfeld took place in the autumn²³⁹ of 1870.

From the very beginning Peretz's marriage brought him two painful disappointments.

The morning after the wedding he awoke to the "grey-creeping thought in his mind:

" - And nothing more? Is this all?"²⁴⁰.

Peretz's meeting with the "philosopher", the "heretic" Lichtenfeld was his second great disappointment. They met during the hours of the daily morning prayer. Lichtenfeld's first words to his son-in-law were: "Are you not praying?"²⁴¹. This was enough. After that Peretz, who so much disliked Reifmann for the discrepancy between his scholarship and his orthodoxy²⁴², did not want to ask Lichtenfeld any questions. He no longer desired his answers and solutions. Moreover, the very questions and doubts themselves seemed to wither and to recede into a dark

corner of his soul for a long, long time 243.

A sad start indeed to the young man's independent life. No more illusions, no love, only a great pity for himself and for his youthful wife "as for some little fishes, that will writhe together in one net. . . ." 244.

His was a soul bereft of hopes and beliefs, bereft of doubts and questions, bereft even of thoughtful pessimism. An empty soul. Nothing to worry about, nothing to think about - for nothing was important any more. For many years after, says Peretz, he was to bear in his heart the sensation of having no ideals at all, no aims, no strivings, only the irresistible wish to "whistle" at everything, to express his profound, cynical "don't care" attitude 245 Nevertheless he knew (or was it the old author of "My Memoirs" who knew?) that he would ultimately find his way and acquire the means of expressing his inner life - again rich and diverse.

The last sentence of "My Memoirs" resounds with hope:
" - You will! You must listen to me!" 246.

NOTES

1. Literally: "The Son of the Commandment". Every Jewish boy is obliged to observe all the precepts of his religion from his thirteenth birthday onwards *ve Frömt h'is rday p'he* as "Earr Mišwah".

2. This detail has been stressed already by A.A. Roback (R, 85-86).

3. My attention to the possibility of this explanation was drawn by Mr. I. Wartski.

4. A religious judge; an assistant rabbi.

5. Z, 52-54; comp. also: Z, 17 and 71.

6. Dr. Geliebter's recollections: Peretz's Kinder-yorn, "Literarische Blätter", Vol.VIII, no. 14/15, (April 1st, 1931), 258. According to Geliebter he and Peretz were Tempeldiener's pupils in 1864. This is obviously a mistake for 1865. A little farther on he mentions that in this time they were 14 years old (!): both Peretz and Geliebter were born in 1852.
7. Z, 52.
8. Z, 71.
9. Z, 52-54; Geliebter, l.c.
10. Comp. above: Ch. 2, p. 71, note 7.
11. Geliebter, o.c., 59 and "Zamość", 86; Z. Reisen, Lexikon fun der yiddisher literatur. . ., Vol.II, Wilno, 19303, 977-978.
12. Y. Geliebter, Peretz's Kinder-yorn, o.c., 258.
13. Z, 30; above: Ch. 6.
14. Z, 48.
15. Reisen, l.c.
16. Comp. above: Ch. 4, p. 23.
17. Letter to Y. Zinberg, dated December the 3rd., 1911 (B, 321); Reisen, l.c.; comp. also: "Monish", A, I, 4-6 (and the parallels in other versions).
18. Above: Ch. 6, p. 69, note 34.
19. Letter to Zinberg, (B, 321-322). Peretz's Yiddish renderings from the Bible: A, I, 29-33, 144-145, 252-253, 311-316; A, X, 25-272. Comp. also his article: "Der dikhter, dos bukh un der lezer" (A, VII, 283-298).
20. Letter to Zinberg, o.c., 321.
21. Above: Ch.6. Z, 21, 27, 29, 31, 34, 90, 96, 97, 100.
22. Reisen, l.c.
23. Z, 7; above: Ch.6.
24. Z, 19-20; Geliebter, o.c., 258-259; Reisen, o.c., 978-979.
25. Z, 20. See also: Geliebter, l.c. Comp.: "Monish", A, I, 272.
26. N, 53: "perhaps even before 'Bar Miswah'".
27. Commonly known as: Bahya 'ibn Paqudah.
28. Z, 19 and 97; Letter to Zinberg, (B, 321); Geliebter, o.c., 258; Reisen, o.c., 978.
29. Literally: tradition.
30. Z, 20, 109; Letter to Zinberg (l.c.); Geliebter, o.c., 259; Reisen, l.c.
31. Z, 109.
32. Geliebter, l.c.; Reisen, l.c.
33. Z, 20.
34. This was the name given to Maimonides after his main philosophical work. On Maimonides' great influence on the young Peretz: Z, 7, 11, 19-20, 36, 100, 101, 107, 112, and particularly: 119-120; Letter to

- Zinberg, o.c., 321; Geliebter, o.c., 258 and "Zamość. . .", 86; Reisen, l.c. Comp. also: "Monish", A, I, 5 (and parallels in other versions).
35. Z, 11.
 36. As in Z, 20 and 36.
 37. Geliebter, o.c., 259.
 38. Geliebter, "Zamość. . .", 86.
 39. Gersonides (see below): Z, 20; letter to Zinberg, l.c. Yishag 'Ar'amah (XVth century): Z, 112; Reisen, l.c. Yosef 'Albo (XVth century): Geliebter, Peretz's Kinder-jorn, o.c., 259; Reisen, l.c.
 40. Abbreviation of: Rabbi Lewi ben Gershon (1288-1344), a Jewish rationalistic philosopher from Provence, author of "The Wars of the Lord". Known as Gersonides (see above: note 39).
 41. Z, 20. Comp. the sequence of a Jewish boy's reading in "Yonim Seluyot" (K, VII, 204): "Leviticus", other books of the Pentateuch, Talmud and commentaries etc. ("Posqim"), Maimonides, Gersonides, 'Ar'amah, Heine and Börne, etc.
 42. Above: Ch.4, p. 29.
 43. M, 33.
 44. On Reifmann see above: Ch.6, pp. 65-67.
 45. M, 17-18. Comp. also: Y. Lewin, "Zamość", 65-66. The man from whom this statement originated hardly could have had first hand information; he was fifteen years old when Reifmann died (in 1895). On Schiffmann see below.
 46. A lower secondary school.
 47. Z, 68.
 48. "Zamość", 231.
 49. J. Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, YB, XXXVI, (1952), 36.
 50. "Ha-Shahar", Vol. II, (1869), 95-100.
 51. Above: Ch.6, p.66.
 52. "Ha-Shahar", Vol. II, (1869), 100.
 53. In his autobiography ("Kenesset Yisra'el", Book III, 1888, 176) Reifmann mentions among the books he found in the library of his father-in-law and studied eagerly, the works of Maimonides, Gersonides, 'Albo, etc. Comp. above: Ch.6, p. 65.
 54. Z, 84-85.
 55. Z, 26-27, 31; for later period: Z, 86-87, 111-113. Shemu'el Leyb Lewin, Peretz's uncle was the first to teach him the Latin letters (Lewin's statement; M, 28).
 56. "Zamość", 230.
 57. Z, 53-54.
 58. Above: Ch.4, p. 29, and p. 44, note 92. Peretz borrowed a book on physics from "a big private library" (Z, 73). Comp. also Geliebter's statement about Peretz's reading "The Guide of the Perplexed" by Maimonides in a private house (above).
 59. MS; 211-212 (this is a nameless fragment).
 60. MS: 211, ll. 11-13.
 61. MS: 211, l.16. "Z" is most probably Zamość.

62. Reisen, o.c., 976. Comp. above: Ch.5, p. 51.
63. Comp. above: Chch. 2, 4 and 5.
64. Where he may have heard from his fellow-students many hasidic stories (Geliebter, "Peretzes Kinder-yorn", o.c., 259)
65. Or even earlier (?).
66. Peretz's envious attitude towards his friends entering secondary school can be clearly felt in his short-story "In the Mail-Coach" ("Inem Post-vogn", 1891): ". . . I went to the dirty, dark 'heder' and he to the bright, free gymnasium. . .", etc. (A, II, 75).
67. After reading works of medieval Jewish philosophers, etc.
68. B, 321.
69. Comp. above: Ch.3, p. 9.
70. Z, 84-85 and the same phrase again: Z, 93.
71. Z, 84, 93. Comp. also: Z, 60. Obituaries: Sebi ben Remalyahu [pseudonym] in "Ha-Melis", 1903, no. 49 and F. Zederbaum in "Ha-Sefirah", 1903, no. 63 (comp.: "Zamość. . .", 228). See also: J. Shatzky, "Haskalah in Zamość", YB, XXXVI, (1952), 44 (not he - as Shatzky has it - but his son was Peretz's secretary; see below: Ch.12).
72. Above: Ch.4, pp. 31-33.
73. Comp.: "Zamość", l.c. and Alexander Zederbaum's statement about his father reprinted in YB, XXXVI, (1952), 54. - 'Abraham 'ibn 'Ezra', who stayed in London in 1158, is the hero of Robert Browning's poem "Rabbi ben Ezra".
74. Z, 84; above: Ch.4, p.44, note 92; "Zamość", 260 (concerns the situation in the 1890's).
75. Sebi ben Remalyahu, l.c.
76. Above: Ch.4., p.32.
77. Where both he and Alexander Zederbaum were born.
78. Sebi ben Remalyahu, l.c.; Shatzky, l.c. Schiffmann's article (not an "ode" as: M, 16 and N, 38 and 41). "Masa' Zamość" ("The Burden of Zamość"), quoted many times above (Chch. 4 and 5) was published in "Ha-Melis", Vol. XIV, (1878); see also e.g.: "Ha-Melis", Vol XIV (1878), 259; Vol XVIII (1882), 669-670, 690-691, 729-730, etc. Some of his articles were published in other periodical publications. Comp. e.g.: "Zamość", 226 (originally published in "Ha-Sefirah", 1892, no.31) and the statements of S. ben Remalyahu, and Zederbaum in "Zamość", 228.
79. S. ben Remalyahu, l.c.; M, 18; Shatzky, l.c.
80. Z, 84; Shatzky, l.c.
81. Not: Reifmann's (as: R, 82).
82. Z, 84 (and comp. also: Z, 60 and 93). See Peretz's short-story: "The Miracle of Hanukah", ("Nes hanukah"; 1894. A, II, 393, 395.)
83. Z, 84. Comp. also: Z, 60, 93 and 111.
84. See e.g.: "The Jewish Encyclopedia", Vol.XI, 548.
85. "The greatest inventor Russia had till then produced", (J.S. Raisin, the Haskalah Movement in Russia, Philadelphia, 1913, 201).
86. Pronounced: Khroobyeshu.

87. Z, 111.
88. Peretz mentions Ollendorff's textbooks for German (Z, 60,84) and for French (Z, 73, 111). Comp. also: "In Europe un bay undz hintern oyvn" (A, VIII, 81).
89. Comp.: "Meyers Konversations-Lexikon", B, XVI, Leipzig und Wein, 1897⁵, 267.
90. Z, 111.
91. Z, 60, 63, 85, 93.
92. Z, 85.
93. Z, 93.
94. Z, 60.
95. Z, 60, 63, 85.
96. Z, 60, 85, 93. The most popular of Grech's grammars were: "Nachalnyia pravila russkoy grammatiki" and "Kratkaya russkaya grammatika", both published in many editions. On Grech see e.g.: "Entsiklopedicheskiy slovar" (F.A. Brokgauz - I.A. Efron), t. IX, 686-687.
97. Z, 63. Comp. below: Ch.8.
98. Z, 86.
99. Z, 86-87. This book was "Kollokacya" (1847) [not: "Kollikacje" as in Z, 87], a novel by Józef Korzeniowski (1797-1863). Korzeniowski is also mentioned in Z, 112. On Korzeniowski see e.g.: B. Chlebowski, La Littérature Polonaise, du XIX^e siècle. . ., Paris, 1933, 260-264.
100. Z, 111-113.
101. Above: Ch.4, pp. 35-36 and passim.
102. Z, 111 and comp. above.
103. Z, 86. We do not know for certain if Peretz's attempts to learn languages by himself preceded those of his teachers, were contemporaneous or followed them.
104. Z, 114-115.
105. Z, 111. Contrary to a statement in "Zamość", 208, probably relating to a later period.
106. This may have been: H. G. Ollendorff, Novoye ruškovodstvo k izucheniyu. . . yazyka sostavlenoye dlya frantsuzkavdk upotrebleniyu russkikh, Leipzig-Paris, 1861, or a Polish equivalent of this book (?).
107. Z, 111.
108. Mosheh Altberg's statement, YB, XII (1937), 304.
109. This is the well-known Hebrew poet Abraham Dob Lebensohn (1794-1878). See e.g.: M. Waxman, A History of Jewish Literature, Vol.III, New York, 1945², 217-226; J. Klausner, Historiyah shel ha-sifrut ha-'ibrit he-hadashah, Vol.III, Jerusalem, 1953², 171-227.
110. B, 321.
111. L. c. On Krochmal see above: Ch.3, p.11. There is a very dubious story on Krochmal's influence on Peretz (in about 1873) related by D. Kogut in "Kanader yiddishe post" (September, 1951).
112. With the one exception perhaps of a book on physics (Z, 73).
113. Above: Chch. 4, 6 and this chapter.
114. He does not mention their authors.

115. "Ha-hemlah" (Z, 80).
116. "Ha-mit'onem we-ha-meshorer" (Z, 93; a quotation without the name of the poem).
117. Above: note 109.
118. "Yonah homiyah" (Z, 80). Comp. above: Ch.4, p.47, note 160.
119. On Letteris see e.g.: J. L. Landau, Short Lectures on Modern Hebrew Literature, London, 1938², 253-261; J. Klausner, o.c., Vol.II, Jerusalem, 1952², 369-400 - Peretz mentions him also in "In Eyrope un bay undz hintern ovvn" (A, VIII, 81).
120. "Siyon, Siyon" (Z, 80).
121. See: "Kinor Siyon". Mibhar shirey siyon. . . sudru. . . al-yedey hosa'at 'Tushiyah', Warsaw, 1900, 60-61. Comp. above: Ch. 4, p. 47, note 160.
122. Above: Ch.3, p.8.
123. Peretz mentions Goldfaden and his works many times, always ironically: Z, 55 and 74; K, VII, 203; A, VII, 13, 39, 49, 62, 63; VIII, 322 (= Z, 74); IX, 92, 94, 98, 153; B, 406. On Goldfaden's influence on Peretz see also below: Ch.15. - On Goldfaden see e.g.: A. A. Roback, The Story of Yiddish Literature, New York, 1940, 154-159.
124. Read by rabbi Wahl; above Ch.4, p.38.
125. Z, 54. He is known also as a journalist and an author of Ghetto-stories written in German. His popular books on natural sciences were translated into Yiddish. See e.g.: "The Jewish Encyclopedia", III, 97-98; L. Wiener, The History of Yiddish Literature in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1899, 171 and 249.
126. Z, 38, 121. See e.g.: Waxman, o.c., Vol.III, New York, 1945², 331; J. Klausner, o.c., Vol.IV, Jerusalem, 1954², 130-131.
127. See above.
128. See below.
129. Z, 119. See above: Ch.3, p.12.
130. Heine (who was a Jew, but wrote in German; Z, 76,110), Schiller (Z, 72, 120), etc.
131. Except for a novel by Korzeniowski. (See above: note 99) and perhaps for Heine's poems (see below: Ch.8).
132. MS, 181-183. Published by us in "Gilyonot", Vol.XXV, (1951), 266-267.
133. On him see e.g.: Landau, o.c., 47-52.
134. Above: Ch.3, p.10.
135. Cited also in "My Memoirs".
136. Mentioned also in Peretz's letter to Zinberg and quoted twice in "My Memoirs".
137. Letter to Zinberg (B, 321).
138. Z, 75, 93. Comp. also: "Temunot mi-'olam-ha-tohu" (K, III, pt. I, 191).
139. Z, 93.
140. Above: Ch.6, p.67, and Y. Lewin, "Zamość", 70.

141. Z, 93. Comp. also: Z, 91.
142. Z, 75-76.
143. Including many of those in the MS.
144. Above: Ch.3, pp. 12-15.
145. On Peretz's attitude towards Aristotle (known to him only from the works of medieval Jewish philosophers) see: Z, 94, 101, 120.
146. "Homer hiyuli" (Z, 94), i.e. חילוני. This last opinion is, by the way, rather contrary to Maimonides.
147. Z, 94.
148. Z, 94 and 118 (comp. also: Z, 11-12).
149. Comp. also (to a certain degree autobiographical) story: "Mah hi' neshamah?" ("What is a soul?"; K, IV, pt.1, 7-20), quoted already above (Chch. 5 and 6).
150. Z, 94, 100-109.
151. This explanation is contrary to A.A. Roback (R, 91) who saw in young Peretz's peculiar preoccupation with the problem of death and his later position "a remarkable coincidence, if not a quip of fate". Echoes of young Peretz's particular inclination towards contemplation are perhaps to be heard e.g. in his story "The Love of a Weaver" ("Veber-libe"; 1897; A, II, 504).
- 151a. Z, 108-109.
- 151b. R, 95; 17.
152. Z, 99; comp. also: Z, 29.
153. Z, 108-109.
154. Z, 109.
155. Z, 99.
156. "Petirat ha-menagen" (K, IV, pt. 1, 136-140). The Yiddish version: "A klezmer toyt" (A, II, 95-98).
157. "Vos in fidele shtekt" (A, VI, 77-99), Comp.: Z, 29 and 99.
158. S. Gebat, Ha-keley-zemarin shel Zamosc, "Zamosc", 279-280.
159. Z, 111.
160. Z, 110-111.
161. Z, 111.
- 162., Z, 109, 110 and 111.
163. Z, 111-113 (and see below).
164. E.g. Andrzej Zamojski (1800-1874). See: "Wielka Ilustrowana Encyklopedia Powszechna", t. XVIII, 256.
165. "Feldscher".
166. Z, 25. This assistant surgeon is mentioned also in Z, 39 and perhaps in Z, 57 (?). Comp. L. Wiener, The History of Yiddish Literature in the Nineteenth Century, London, 1899, 111 (some inexactitudes).
167. Although he too, no doubt, must have been an interesting man, judging by Peretz's heroes for whom he served as a model.
168. Unless the key was entrusted by the ex-"Feldscher" to Benjamin Schnitzer, which is not very likely.
169. Z, 110-111.
170. Z, 111.

171. Z, 111 (and comp. above).
172. L.c.
173. Z, 112. Suez is mentioned also in: Z, 80; in Peretz's first (never published) story "The Revenge" ("Ha-neqamah"; MS, 26, 1.10) and in his story "He, who has given life. . ." (K, II, pt.1, 99).
174. Z, 112. Peretz mentions here Hugo's novel "Les Travailleurs de la Mer", which was first published in 1866 and in the same year translated twice into Polish by F. Faleński and by E. Sulicki and Włodz. Górski. Both translations were published under the same title - "Pracownicy morza", in Warsaw.
175. Comp. above: Ch.6, p. 62.
176. Z, 112.
177. L.c.; Korzeniowski is mentioned also in Z, 87 (above: note 99).
178. Certainly: "Prawo cywilne obowiązujące w królestwie Polskiem" i.e. Napoleon's "Code Civile" wydał Stanisław Zawadski, tt, I-III, Warszawa, 1860-1863. ✓wyd. oryginalne...
179. "Historia cywilizacji w Anglii". Według drugiego przełożył Wł. Zawadski, tt. I-III, Lwów, 1862, 1863, 1868.
180. Z, 111 (a statement about his studying French "after some time"); Schweid, o.c., 51 and 52. It is quite certain that he often just browsed through the books. See Z, 112-113; comp. also Geliebter's statement that Peretz used not to read books from the first to the last page (Peretzes Kinder-jorn, "Literarische Blätter", Vol.VIII, no.14/15, April 1st, 1931, 258).
181. Above: note 39.
182. Z, 112-113.
183. Z, 113.
184. L.c.
185. It is not our purpose to show if Peretz was right to derive his conclusions from Hartmann's early writings. See e.g.: F. Ueberweg, Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie, IV Teil, Berlin, 1923¹², 331-339. On the publishing date of the first edition of "Die Philosophie des Unbewussten" see: C. Heymons, Eduard von Hartmann, Berlin, 1882, 60 and Ueberweg, o.c., 332.
186. Without mentioning the work.
187. Z, 113. See e.g.: W. Ziegenfuss und G. Jung, Philosophen-Lexikon, II.B, Berlin, 1950, 801-802.
188. "Ma'aseh bere'shit" (this is the name given to the first chapters of Genesis) and "Ma'aseh merkabah" (this is the name given to the first prophecies of Ezekiel).
189. Z, 113.
190. L.C. Comp. also: Z, 119. It is ~~even~~ possible that Peretz contemplated suicide (see: "Mikhtab 'Ashmeday. . .", "Ha-boqer 'or", Vol.II, 1876, 375; and comp. below: Ch.16) and that his meditations on death belong to this period.
191. Z, 113-114.
192. Z, 114-116.

193. „J. Shatzky, Peretz-Shtudies. I, YB, XXVIII (1946), 45; Haskalah in Zamosc, YB, XXXVI (1952), 37. Hodak's personality probably contributed something to the figures of the "government-appointed rabbi" in "Temunot me-'olam ha-tohu" (K, III, pt. 1, 185-203) and of the teacher of calligraphy in "Mahhi neshamah?" (K, IV, pt. 1, 7-20).

194. According to Y.Y. Peretz. ("Peretz vert oys advokat. . .", "Forverts", April 20th, 1930) Hodak came from Minsk (Byelorussia).

195. Peretz approached Hodak probably in 1870; certainly before his wedding which took place in autumn of 1870 (see below).

196. "Qol me'as'er", 1869, nos. 47, 48 and 50. Reprinted in YB, XXXVI, (1952), 50-59. (See: pp. 56-57).

197. See e.g.: S.M. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland. . ., tr. . . by J. Friedlaender, Vol. II, Philadelphia, 1918, 59; J. Klausner, Historiyah shel ha-sifrut ha-'ibrit he-hadashah, Vol. III, Jerusalem, 1952, 185.

198. Above: Ch.3, p.18, note 23.

199. Z, 115. Comp. above: Ch.4, p.27.

200. Z, 115; Shatzky, Peretz-Shtudies. I, YB, XXVIII (1946), 45.

201. M, 30; see: Y.Y. Peretz, Y.L. Peretz praktitsirt als advokat un shraybt lider, ("Forverts", April 13th, 1930).

202. From the whole episode our conclusion about Peretz's knowledge of Russian before 1870 was drawn (above).

203. Z, 115-116.

204. M, 31. Y.Y. Peretz, l.c. (here he states that Ribale Peretz fasted two years !).

205. Z, 116. Comp. also: "Ha-tehom beyn he-'abot we-ha-banim", (K, VII, 6A; probably autobiographical to a certain degree).

206. Z, 116.

207. His brother's Yonah Yehoshua Peretz's statement (M, 30); his relative's R. Peretz-Lak's memoirs: Arum Peretz, Warsaw, 1935, 44: "17-18".

208. According to the Talmudic tractat "The Fathers" ("'Abot"), V, 21: "At eighteen - for the [wedding-] canopy".

209. Z, 116.

210. Z, 118-131 (comp. above: Ch.1, p.1 and p.3, note 2).

211. Z, 118; comp. also: Z, 130.

212. Z, 118-119.

213. Z, 118.

214. Z, 38, 76, 116, 118, 120, 121, 123, 124, 126-127; Letters: to Lichtenfeld (undated; YB, XII, 1937, 183-184), to Shalom Aleykhem of July 4th, 1888 ("Briv un Redes", ed. by N. Meisel [1st ed.], Wilno, 1929, 16), to Y. Dinezon (undated; B, 157), to Y. Zinberg of 3rd December, 1911 (B, 322). On Lichtenfeld: H.Y. Bornstein in "Keneset Yisra'el", Vol. II (1887), 356-358; "The Jewish Encyclopedia", Vol. VIII, 78; "Encyclopedia Judaica", X, 941; W. Zeitlin, Bibliotheca Hebraica Post-Mendelssohniana, Leipzig, 1891-952, 209-210; Z. Reisen, Lexikon fun der yiddisher literatur. . ., Vol. II, Wilno, 1930, 980, note; N. Sokolow, "Ishim", Vol. II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 37, 39-40, 43-44, 47, 49; J. Klausner, Historiyah shel ha-sifrut ha-'ibrit he-hadashah, Vol. IV, Jerusalem, 1954, 131; M. Wakser in YB, XII, (1937), 212-213, 233-234, 258.

215. Above: Ch.4, pp. 31-32.
216. Z, 38. I failed to discover where and when (before or after Peretz's marriage) this letter was published.
217. Z, 118.
218. Z, 118, 120, 121.
219. On his Hebrew preface to a book of Yiddish fables see above: Ch.4, p.34.
220. Z, 126.
221. Z, 118.
222. Z, 120-121.
223. Z, 116, 119-120, 121, 122, 124.
224. Z, 119-120; Y. Geliebter's statement in "Peretzes Kinder-yorn", ("Literarische Bleter", Vol.VIII, no. 14/15, April 1st, 1931, 258-259) and in "Zamość. . .", 86. Geliebter himself took part in this episode. According to Y. Geliebter ("Peretzes Kinder-yorn", o.c., 258) this was the book of responsa by rabbi Shimon ben Semah Dur'an (died in 1444). On Peretz's dislike of another adversary of Maimonides see Geliebter, l.c.
225. Z, 120.
226. Z, 116.
227. "Tena'im", literally: "Conditions".
228. YB, XII, (1937), 304-305. On M. Altberg see above: Ch.5, p. 53.
229. This book was published in 1877.
230. Particularly: Z, 126-127.
231. L.c.
232. See: YB, XII (1937), 305, note 1.
233. O.c., 303 and 304.
234. The Jewish name for Opatów, the residence of the Lichtenfelds (comp.: Z, 120).
235. Z, 120.
236. M, 30; D. Kogut's version (in "Kanader yiddishe post", September, 1951) "Gritsa" is no doubt erroneous.
237. "Słownik Geograficzny. . .", t. II, Warszawa, 1881, 692 (1145 inhabitants; 30 of them - Jews).
238. M, l.c.
239. Comp.: Z, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126.
240. Z, 124.
241. Z, 126.
242. Above: Ch.6, p. 67.
243. Z, 127.
244. Z, 124.
245. Z, 130.
246. Z, 131.
- ~~247.~~

8. "The Sins of Youth" - Peretz's Earliest Writings.

In a letter to Y. Zinberg of 3rd December (already quoted many times) Peretz says that he started to write in Polish, abandoned this language for Hebrew and later switched over to Yiddish, "This happened about 35-40 years ago" ¹ i.e. between 1871 and 1876. Obviously Peretz, when writing to Zinberg, ignored his earliest literary attempts because he did not ascribe any importance to these "sins of youth" ², as he called his "childish" ³, "amateurish" ⁴ poems.

However, the first endeavours of a great writer, even if meagre and poor, deserve the attention of everyone interested in his artistic evolution. Sometimes it is possible to discover in them the first weak, often dimly discernible, signs of a rich harvest in the days to come.

If applied to his literary beginnings Peretz's statement is certainly not correct. It is worth while mentioning that according to his best friend, Dr. Y. Geliebter, Peretz had already started to write poems in 1866, when he was 14 years old - in Hebrew ⁵.

In "My Memoirs" Peretz often mentions his earliest writings ⁶. Peretz's uncle, the maskil Yosef Altberg ⁷ (1801-1873), was the first to recognize the poetic gift of the young boy. He assiduously collected Peretz's earliest literary products ⁸. His son, Mosheh Altberg ⁹, says that the old maskil was interested only in Peretz's Hebrew writings and was sorry when Peretz wrote in Yiddish ¹⁰. However, from Peretz himself, we

know that Yosef Altberg showed interest in Yiddish literature too and kept Yiddish books in his private library ¹¹. At least one of Peretz's Yiddish poems was saved by him ¹².

Most probably Peretz's first poems (possibly childish humorous and satirical verses about his nearest surroundings) were written in Yiddish ¹³. A short time later, when he started (under the influence of David Schiffmann) to be interested in the Hebrew Haskalah poetry - probably in or just after 1867 ¹⁴ - he began to write also in Hebrew - on more serious topics. He certainly continued to write simultaneously in both languages on these lines ¹⁵. Peretz regarded his Hebrew poems as "literature", not so the Yiddish ones. When Lichtenfeld asked his son-in-law at their meeting after the wedding: "Is it true that you write poems?" and Peretz admitted it ¹⁶ - they both, no doubt, had in mind Hebrew poems. Characteristically enough the word for "poems" used by Lichtenfeld (who, of course, conversed with Peretz in Yiddish) was a Hebrew one: "shirim" ¹⁷.

Yosef Altberg joined in the conversation and said to Lichtenfeld: "Does he write? He writes and allows his writings to go astray, writes and tears them up, writes and burns them. . . . I steal his works from under his hands. . . I collect and put together scraps of paper. . . . A writer is emerging. . ." ¹⁸. It follows that Peretz was already prolific before 1870, but unfortunately his Hebrew poems ("shirim") did not survive. Not even their names or contents are known ¹⁹. Some echoes of them may perhaps resound in Peretz's later writings.

The earliest work about which we have any details was in Yiddish and only partly by Peretz. An ugly wife of a Russian official served as the subject of a facetious poem composed by some Jewish boys and known as "The Wife of the Superintendant"²⁰. Relating this Peretz added: "No doubt I also lent a hand. . ." ²¹. The poem was composed shortly after the demolition of the fortress of Zamość²², which took place in 1866²³. It did not survive.

A change of affections is responsible for the first poem by Peretz to survive. When the jilted girl demanded explanations Peretz, in a jocose mood, answered in a Yiddish poem, beginning with the words: "You complain I've kissed you. . ."²⁴. This poem, written probably in 1867 or 1868 was preserved by Josef Altberg²⁵. Peretz regretted having included it in the "Jubilee" edition of his works, published in 1901²⁶. However, it is remarkable that on the very page on which he uttered his regret he reprinted it again²⁷. Sh. Niger is right when he speaks of the light, frivolous and ironic tone of the short poem, which already foretells Heine's influence on Peretz. It is certainly not worse than some of Peretz's later poems²⁸.

We do not know whether Peretz also wrote in this period some literary prose. He always speaks about his poems. Only once does he mention his "writings"²⁹, but this does not necessarily mean prose. The only prose writing about which we know that Peretz took part in composing in this period dates from 1870. In this year several Jews of Zamość³⁰ were falsely accused of robbery. The Jewish community of the town sent an

"account" of this event to a preacher in Lemberg Bernard Löwenstein (1821-1889). He was to forward this either to Sir Moses Montefiore (1784-1885) in London or to Adolph Crémieux (1796-1880) in Paris, and to ask for help ³⁰.

We do not know why the young Peretz was invited to participate in composing this "account" ³¹, so important for the Jews of Zamość, an "account" that was to save the lives of eight people. Perhaps because of the understanding of judicial problems shown by the lawyer-to-be ³², or because of the literary gift of the future writer. It may be also that both assets were considered. We do not know in which language the "account" was written; most probably in Hebrew.

From the very little data about Peretz's first steps in writing, which are at our disposal, we could hardly agree with Yosef Altberg's enthusiastic prophecy: "A writer is emerging. . .". However, we must bear in mind that most of Peretz's writings which were known to him have not reached us.

The writing in two languages from the very beginning; some lyrical talent; a tendency to humour and irony; and perhaps, a slight touch of Heine's influence - that is all that can be discerned in what we know about Peretz's literary "sins of youth". Certainly this is not enough even to recognize "ex ungue leonem".

NOTES

1. "Briv un redes", [1st. ed.], Wilno, 1929, 201-202. In B, 321-322: "40-50 [!] years ago". This is, no doubt, a mistake. (Comp.: N, 74, note) YB, XXVIII (1946), 133.
2. Z, 72 and 89.
3. Z, 8.
4. Z, 50.
5. Z. Reisen, Lexikon fun der yiddisher literatur. . ., Vol. II, Wilno, 1930³, 981. We certainly cannot take seriously Peretz's statement that he tried to write Hebrew poems at the age of six (MS, 181-183 = "Gilyonot", Vol. XXV, 1951, 266-267).
6. Z, 8, 25, 50, 67, 72, 89, 126-127.
7. Above: Ch. 5, p. 53.
8. Z, 8, 50, 72, 89, 126-127. See also: M. Altberg, YB, XII, (1937), 303-305 (and comp. below).
9. Above: Ch. 5, p. 53.
10. O.c., 303 and 304.
11. Z, 72.
12. Z, 89. About his attitude towards Peretz's Polish poems see below.
13. Z, 25 and 89. See: J. Shatzky, Peretz-Shtudies. I, YB, XXVIII, (1946), 46; M, 37.
14. Comp. above: Ch. 7, pp. 79-80.
15. Comp.: Y. H. Zagorodski in "Ahi'asaf. Luah sifrutu we-shimushi...", Vol. IX, for the year 1901/2, Warsaw, 1901, 359.
16. Z, 126.
17. When Peretz mentioned his earliest writings in Yiddish he used the Yiddish words: "a lidl" ("a little poem"; Z, 25) and "gramen" ("verses"; Z, 89).
18. Z, 127.
19. M. Schweid ("Treyst mayn folk. . .", New York, cop. 1955, 80) mentions a Hebrew (?) poem ("shir") about flowers, written by Peretz before his marriage. This is certainly a mistake. Such a poem is not known from any other source.
20. "Dem smotritels ployniste!"
21. Z, 25.
22. See: Z, 24.
23. Above: Ch. 4, p. 22.
24. "Host tsu mir a tayne, ich hob dikh gekusht. . ." (quoted in full in Z, 89).
25. Z, 89.
26. "Shriftn. Yubileum Oysgabe", Warsaw, 1906 [reprint], [Part] II, p. 9.
27. Z, 89. This little poem was published by Peretz even before that, in his "Di Yuddishe Bibliotek", Vol. III (1895), 34.
28. N, 57 and 149-150.
29. Z, 72.
30. Z, 61-67; comp.: J. Shatzky, Der bilbul oyf Zamosc^her Yiddn in 1870. . ., YB, XXXVI (1952), 329-331 and above: Ch. 4, p. 22.

31. Z, 67.

32. Peretz, as mentioned above (Ch.7, p.90), had already studied a Polish book of laws.

PART II

"A Writer is Emerging . . ." (1870 - 1878).

9. Sources.

The life of Peretz during his first marriage (1870-1876) is not known well enough. "My Memoirs" does not lead beyond 1870. Only one of Peretz's many preserved letters dates from this period ¹. They become more numerous from 1877 and are a very important source for Peretz's biography.

Nearly all Peretz's literary works were written after 1873. Autobiographical details relevant to the years 1870-1878 that can be gathered from them are few and far between. Moreover, knowing but little from other sources that could serve as comparison, we must be most careful in using literary works as biographical material. The Unknown Manuscript provides, perhaps, more autobiographical details for this period than all the other works of Peretz.

Reminiscences on Peretz by his relatives and acquaintances ² are, on the whole, rather poor as far as this phase of Peretz's life is concerned. Only a few details are conveyed by these sources about the years 1870-1875.

Some recompense for the scarcity of biographical material may be found in the comparatively rich output of Peretz's literary works written between the years 1873-1878. This enables us to reconstruct the spiritual and artistic evolution of the writer. Many of Peretz's achievements and many of his views on problems of life and literature in the

1870's are revealed for the first time thanks to the Unknown Manuscript.

The opinions of the scholars about the sequence and length of Peretz's sojourns in various places between 1870 and 1876 are most confused and contradictory. It will serve no purpose to quote all the divergent theories because most of them are not based on a thorough examination of such little material as was available to their authors. We shall not try to claim that our conclusions are infallible. Our only aim will be to draw the most plausible conclusions after scrutinizing the sources that were at our disposal 3 .

NOTES

1. YB, XII (1937), 183-184.
2. See: E. Jeshurin, Zikhroynes vegn Peretz. A bibliografiye, YB, XXVIII (1946), 165-170.
3. Unfortunately, in spite of many efforts, there are still a few items which we have been unable to consult.

10. Political and Cultural Background ¹.

The internal political situation of Russia and Russian Poland ("Vistula Provinces") during the 1870's and particularly during the 1880's was cheerless ². After several attempts the Russian revolutionaries succeeded in assassinating the tsar Alexander II (1855-1881). Alexander III (1881-1894), deeply affected by his father's murder, opposed every liberal trend. His rule was a rule of reaction and reprisal against the intelligentsia, the national minorities and the religious dissenters. Censorship weighed even more heavily on the printed word than before. All education was placed under the strict control of the government.

Towards the "Vistula Provinces" Alexander III pursued the policy of ruthless Russification inaugurated by his father after the suppression of the Second Polish Uprising (1863) ³. However, the economic development of Russian Poland was, as a rule, not hampered. The new ideology, prevailing in Poland after the Uprising, fostered the initiative in the field of economy.

The catastrophe of 1863 put an end to Polish romanticism and to the dreams of the great Polish poets. The new ideology was sober and utilitarian. Work, economic development, education - those were the main slogans of the new generation. The "positivists", as they were called, were influenced by the French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857) ⁴, by Darwin and Buckle ⁵, by Herbert Spencer and Karl Vogt ⁶, and also by

the Russian realistic writers and critics ⁷ .

The industrialization of the country was followed by the increase of the urban proletariat, which was strongly influenced by socialist ideas.

The end of the 1880's witnessed the appearance of new trends in literature and art and a new national awakening.

Anti-semitism in Russia and Poland was, as mentioned ⁸ , encouraged by the Russian government during the 1860's and 1870's. And already in 1871 the first major pogrom took place in Odessa ⁹ . The dreadful wave of pogroms that in 1882 swept the "Pale of Settlement" of Russia and reached Poland foreshadowed the policy of Alexander III towards the Jews ¹⁰ .

In the first half of the XIXth century the Russian government fought against Jewish "fanaticism" and "isolation" and encouraged the maskilim. In the second half of the XIXth century, when the number of "enlightened" Jews had increased and more and more Jewish youth strove for higher education, the government began to fight this very striving. And as late as 1904 the Minister of the Interior V.K. von Plehve did not hesitate to defend the "numerus clausus" in the secondary and high schools. His argument was: "if we admitted Jews to our universities without restriction, they would surpass our Russian students and dominate our intellectual life" ¹¹ . The new Jewish intelligentsia was thought to be a dangerous ~~rival of non-Jewish outside~~

rival of the non-Jews outside and in the restricted area of the "Pale". For the "Pale of Settlement" was not abolished; on the contrary - it was limited even more.

The violent reaction against the pogroms and persecution of the Jews in the western world, and particularly in England, did not change the anti-semitic policy of the Russian government. The only solution proposed by the official circles was included in the cynical declaration of the Minister of the Interior N.P. Ignatyev in January 1882: "The Western frontier is open for the Jews" ¹² . The aim of the government towards the Jews was formulated by the most influential person in the realm of Alexander III, the chief procurator of the Holy Synod, K. P. Pobvedonostsey: to "force one-third of them to emigrate, another third to embrace Christianity, and the remainder to die of starvation" ¹³ . No wonder that some of the anti-Jewish laws published during the reign of Alexander III are closely reminiscent of the anti-semitic legislation of the pre-war Nazis.

The attitude towards the Jews of the Russian government and of a part of the Russian (and Polish) population is well illustrated by a short Yiddish poem written by Peretz in this very period: "I should cease to exist" ¹⁴ . If a Jew keeps up his traditions he is blamed for separating himself from his non-Jewish neighbours. If he tries to be assimilated - he is blamed as an intruder into a society that does not want him. An orthodox Jew is a fanatic; a non-orthodox - a nihilist. A Jew is not

allowed to acquire land and the "numerus clausus" bars him from the free professions. There is only one way to please everyone: the Jew should cease to exist.

The pogroms and the openly anti-semitic policy of the Russian government produced a grave crisis in the ranks of the Jewish intelligentsia¹⁵. The bankruptcy of the ideals of the Haskalah and assimilation was obvious. New ways were sought¹⁶. The solution of the Zionists was accepted at first only by very few. Out of the tremendous stream of emigration (mainly to the United States) that started as a result of the pogroms of 1881-1882 and the persecution and the anti-semitic legislation that followed, only an utterly insignificant number of Russian and Polish Jews found its way to Palestine.

Many went by "way of repentance". Their slogan was: "Back to the ghetto, back to the synagogue". Literature all at once abandoned the "Kulturkampf" of the Haskalah. The writers turned towards the values of Judaism, towards an idealization of the Jewish ghetto-village, of Hassidism and of Jewish traditional life in general. But already new currents were making their impression on Jewish life and letters.

The Socialists among the Jews tried to see the Jewish problem as a social one, and hoped that the salvation of the Jews would come together with the liberation of the oppressed masses. Many of them joined Russian revolutionary organizations.

Contrary to the Zionists, the so-called "Peoples Party" ("Folkists") and the "Yiddishists" proclaimed the diaspora to be the place

where the Jews should forever pursue their national life, clinging to their own language, which should be Yiddish and not Hebrew.

Zionism, "Neo-orthodoxy" and the "Way of Repentance", Socialism, "Folkism" and "Yiddishism" - all these currents struggled with each other, but simultaneously influenced each other and even merged at times in those days of seeking after new ideals, new solutions and new ways.

Neither the "Way of Repentance" nor Zionism were a negation of Western culture. Even those young people who interrupted their studies at the high-schools and went from Europe into the wilds of Asia to devote their lives to hard physical labour in most primitive conditions prevailing in those days in Palestine were very far from denying the real values of European civilization. As to the attitude of post-Haskalah literature towards religion, for all the strong orthodox currents represented in it, on the whole it was outspokenly secular and far from orthodoxy.

Zionism and the so-called "Way of Repentance", but also "Folkism" and "Yiddishism" were, as a matter of fact, only different aspects of the Jewish national revival. The literature, inspired by these trends, assumed a new more positive approach to the old Jewish tradition both cultural and religious. Thus it contributed towards the completion of the slow process of blending foreign ideas and forms with the rich Jewish cultural inheritance. The beginning of this process provided only vague imitations: the works of the first maskilim. But in the end the same process produced some of the most admirable works of Hebrew and Yiddish literatures, in which foreign elements are no more recognisable

as alien.

NOTES

1. Comp. above: Ch.ch. 2 and 3.
2. G. Vernadsky, A History of Russia, New Haven, 1953³, 162-178.
3. "The Cambridge History of Poland", II, Cambridge, 1951, 387-398.
4. "Cours de philosophie positive", (1830-1842), etc.
5. Comp. above: Ch.7, p.90.
6. Comp. above: Ch.7, p.91.
7. Comp. above: Ch.3, p.12.
8. Above: Ch.2, p.7.
9. S.M. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland. . . , translated. . . by I. Friedlaender, Vol.II, Philadelphia, 1918, 191-193.
10. O.c., Vol.II, 243-429. J.S. Raisin, The Haskalah Movement in Russia, Philadelphia, 1913, 268-303.
11. Raisin, o.c., 302.
12. Dubnow, o.c., II, 284-285. Comp. Peretz's allusions in "Briv oys Varshe", (A, IX, 19) and "Zikhroynes" (A, IX, 334).
13. Raisin, o.c., 270.
14. "Ikh zol gornisht zayn" (A, I, 337-338).
15. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland. . . , Vol.II, 324-333. Comp. also above: Ch.3, p.15.
16. The following is mainly based on: Y.A. Klausner, Major Trends in Modern Hebrew Literature, "Sifrut", 3 (1957), 6-7.

11. Unsettled (1870 - 1876)

A. Zamość (1870-1873).

According to the custom then prevailing a young Jewish newly married couple used to live for some time with the wife's family, kept entirely by her father. The duration of such an arrangement depended on the previously-made agreement and on the financial situation of the wife's family. This "boarding"-time was usually spent by the young husband mainly in continuing his Talmudic studies. At the same time he looked for some way to earn a living for his family after the termination of his father-in-law's "boarding".

Peretz and Sarah did not settle down with her family. Gabri'el Yehudah Lichtenfeld, Sarah's father, had been living in Warsaw since about 1862 ¹, although his family stayed behind in Opatów ("Apt") ². Moreover, Peretz was already known as tending towards "heresy" and his father-probably could not very well insist on the usual conditions. Lichtenfeld was tolerant and broadminded but Peretz knew that "any other more or less respectable citizen. . . would not have me for a son-in-law" ³.

Sarah Lichtenfeld, Peretz's first wife, was probably comparatively well educated. Asked about his daughter's "knowledge" Lichtenfeld answered ironically: "She knows that Schiller is not one of the quadrupeds" ⁴. However, Peretz's uncle Shemu'el Leyb Lewin, who told Meisel this story, nevertheless added that Sarah was "a learned one" ⁵. Yonah Yehoshua ⁶ Peretz, the writer's brother, knew that she was "well educated".

According to him Sarah corresponded with the well-known Polish novelist Józef Ignacy Kraszewski (1812-1887)⁶ . At the same time she was obviously very orthodox. As already mentioned, her father's orthodoxy deeply disappointed Peretz. Lichtenfeld's first question to Peretz was: "Are you not praying?"⁷ Sarah's first questions to her husband were very similar: Are you really so learned in Talmud? Are you continuing your studies dilligently? Peretz's negative answer to her second question hurt Sarah⁸ .

The attitude towards religious practices is mentioned by Yonah Yehoshua⁶ Peretz as the reason for misunderstandings between his brother and Sarah. According to custom, Sarah was wearing a wig after the marriage. Peretz, who already before the wedding was strongly against this orthodox custom⁹ , certainly could not be pleased. Yonah Yehoshua⁶ relates that once, in rage, Peretz threw Sarah's wig into the stove¹⁰ .

Yehi³el Wortmann from Opatów, where the Peretzs lived for some time relates that there was disagreement even between Lichtenfeld and Peretz on questions of orthodoxy and religious customs¹¹ .— After the wedding Peretz and Sarah went "back home" to Zamość, to live with his family. There they had a room to themselves¹² . The very fact that, contrary to custom, the husband's family and not the wife's "boarded" the young couple, may easily have aroused the displeasure of the Peretzs and served as a source of conflict.

In Peretz's short-story "My Uncle Shakhna² and my Aunt Yahna³"¹³ we probably hear some echoes of the attitude of the energetic Ribale Peretz

towards her daughter-in-law.

The mother says to her son:

" - Look at the lady you brought me. . .It is already noon, and she does not want to get out of bed. . .I have to serve her tea in bed. . ." ¹⁴ .

Still there were deeper roots of Peretz's dissatisfaction with his marriage than questions of orthodoxy and possibly also family squabbles. Peretz himself mentions the main reason of his sorrow in "My Memoirs"; he married a woman he did not love, a woman he did not even see before the wedding, a woman chosen by his father ¹⁵ . This was written 38 years after Peretz's first marriage was dissolved. A more direct expression of his distress and agony is to be found somewhere else. And an unusual place it is. The Unknown Manuscript contains inter alia a rather lengthy criticism of a short-story by the Hebrew writer Re'uben ¹⁶ Asher Braudes (1851-1902) "Confession and Repentance" (first published in 1875). Here Peretz asks the question that, in his opinion, is a question of life and death to many young Jews: "Should we live a bitter and cursed life with a woman who is a burden imposed on us by our parents without even asking us, after we ourselves have become entirely different?" ¹⁷

"There should be harmony, love, affection and friendship between a husband and wife. . .", says Peretz ¹⁸ ; and these, obviously, did not exist between himself and Sarah ¹⁹ .

Peretz wrote the above lines a short time before or after the divorce (1876). During the years that had passed since the wedding he had, no doubt, "become entirely different". The belief that Lichtenfeld

would solve his problems and doubts had been one of the main reasons for Peretz's consent to marry his daughter. After the first meeting with Lichtenfeld Peretz had no longer any wish to consult him ²⁰. Disappointed in everything, with no aims and no hopes ²¹ Peretz could not cherish warm feelings towards Sarah. Later, leading an independent life and struggling hard to earn a living for his family, Peretz was far less under the influence of his parents. His aversion to their authority probably also affected his relations with the wife they gave him.

This was the sad background of Peretz's domestic life during his first marriage.

On the way to the wedding Yehudah Peretz explained the prospects of the young couple. He would keep them for a year with him. The dowry was to provide Peretz with six roubles a week. As for a job: "he will certainly find a job. . ." - concluded the father with a great deal of confidence ²².

The wedding took place in the autumn of 1870 ²³. Peretz and Sarah were certainly kept by Yehudah Peretz at least until the autumn of 1871. From Peretz's letter to his father-in-law (undated but no doubt belonging to those years) ²⁴ we know that after the end of the "boarding"-time Peretz tried for some time to find a job in Zamość.

When Shemu'el 'Ashkenazi made his first acquaintance with Peretz in 1872, Peretz was still in Zamość ²⁵.

In "My Memoirs" Peretz mentions casually that he was exempted from military service by the old Polish doctor from Zamość Skrzynski ²⁶ . The conscription-age was 21 ²⁷ . Peretz was 21 years old in 1873. It is therefore most probable that in 1873 Peretz still lived in Zamość ²⁸ .

On the other hand in 1874 Peretz was living in Grabów and before that he had already lived for some time in Opatów ²⁹ . Thus we may assume that after their wedding the Peretz's stayed in Zamość until 1873.

Most probably not long before leaving his native town Peretz had written a letter to his father-in-law in Warsaw ³⁰ - his first letter that has been preserved. The letter is written in Hebrew ³¹ . It is very interesting as the only important document relevant to Peretz's life between 1870-1873.

Lichtenfeld had complained that his young son-in-law had no permanent occupation and expressed his deep concern about Peretz's future prospects. Peretz's answer was: "What could be done in Zamość that I did not do? . ." ³² .

Most probably Peretz continued after his marriage not the Talmudic studies ³³ but his secular self-education. Some of his poems were, no doubt, already written in those years. Later, after the end of the "boarding"-time, he had to start an independent life. The dowry money was spent ³⁴ , for Peretz had never learnt to save ³⁵ . His education had hardly made him fit for earning a living ^{35a} . To find a suitable occupation in Zamość was not very easy and Yehudah³⁵ Peretz's optimism proved to be

exaggerated. Peretz had done everything that "could be done in Zamość".
What were the jobs Peretz tried while living in Zamość?

In his letter to Lichtenfeld Peretz writes: "I have now completed accountancy and if I could only have a month's practice I am sure I would be fit for everything. . ." 36 .

However, in the Unknown Manuscript there is perhaps some hint of the jobs Peretz tried before studying accountancy: "It happened in the year --- and, being a book-seller, I went to Szczebrzeszyn to buy rabbi Y. Reifmann's works from him. . ." 37 . Although the above quotation is from a humorous fragment and Peretz's main aim there was to make Reifmann a laughing-stock 38 , it is still possible that it contains some autobiographical details 39 . Peretz's dealings in books at the neighbouring town of Szczebrzeszyn most probably took place during the time when he still lived in Zamość 40 .

Peretz was not a successful book-seller and he could not find any practice in accountancy in Zamość. Therefore he expressed to Lichtenfeld his hope that he "might find a position in Warsaw". In the meantime his financial situation was extremely difficult. He felt forced to insist on Lichtenfeld's paying him "my money" that was "in your hands" (the rest of the dowry?). Without those 30 roubles he could not even afford to go to Warsaw 41 .

The letter to Lichtenfeld was written probably in 1872 or 1873, after Peretz had lost every hope of finding a permanent occupation in his native town. Shortly after this he went to try his luck somewhere else.

"The epidemic of cholera that broke out in the year 1873 in the province of Lublin. . .wrought havoc with Zamość. . ." and many families deserted this town - wrote David Schiffmann ⁴² . The epidemic was perhaps the final incentive for Peretz's decision to leave Zamość. — Peretz sent one of his Polish poems, as he said, "to my native town, to my maternal uncle [wuj] " ⁴³ . This uncle was, no doubt, Yosef Altberg ⁴⁴ , who died in 1873 ⁴⁵ . It follows that Peretz must have left Zamość before the end of 1873.

However, he did not go to Warsaw, where his father-in-law lived. Lichtenfeld was probably less optimistic than Peretz as regards his son-in-law's prospects in the Polish capital. Nevertheless, the possibility is not excluded that Peretz paid a short visit to his father-in-law in Warsaw in 1873 (or 1874?).

In a Polish poem "Kto mnie pamięta?" ⁴⁶ , written in 1874 (or 1873?), Peretz mentions that he owes somebody in Warsaw a small sum of money. This debt may (or may not) have been a result of a recent short visit to the Polish capital.

Twice in "My Memoirs" Peretz mentions the places where he stayed after leaving Zamość: a) "Opatów, Sandomierz, Great-Poland, Warsaw . . ." ⁴⁷ ; b) "Opatów, Sandomierz, Warsaw, Great-Poland and back to Warsaw" ⁴⁸ . In both cases these are casual remarks and not detailed and exact enumerations. Peretz only mentions the principal places where he stayed during his "Wanderjahre". Even so, there is a slight discrepancy between the two lists: in the first he mentions only one stay in Warsaw and in the second -

two.

However, there can hardly be any doubt as to the first place to which ^{the} Peretz went. The couple moved from his to her town, from Zamość to Opatów.

NOTES

1. "The last twenty-five years of his life" (Z. Reisen, Lexikon fun der yiddisher literatur. . ., Vol.II, Wilno, 1930³, note). Lichtenfeld died on March 22nd, 1887 (l.c.). The "Preface" to his book "Yedi'ot ha-shi'urim. . ." (Warsaw, 1865) is dated: "Warsaw, in the month of 'elul [5]625", i.e. August-September 1864).
2. Comp. above: Ch.7, p.98.
3. Z, 120. See also Peretz's short-story "Mah hi' neshamah?", where many autobiographical reminiscences can be traced (K, IV, pt.1, 20).
4. M, 28.
5. L.c.
6. O.c., 30.
7. Z, 126. Above: Ch.7, p.98.
8. Z, 127.
9. Z, 121.
10. M, 30.
11. Y. Wortmann, Peretz in Apt, "Literarische Bleter", Vol.X, no.18 (May 5th, 1933), 296.
12. Z, 127 (the details are somewhat confused). M. Altberg in YB, XII (1937), 305. Comp. also Peretz's humorous short-story "Dodi Shakhna' we-dodati Yahna'", which no doubt contains many autobiographical details on Peretz's first marriage (K, IV, pt.1, 75-76).
13. Mentioned above: note 12.
14. O.c., 77.
15. Z, 120; above: Ch.7, p.96. Comp. also Peretz's Hebrew poem "Havey meshorer 'ibri" in "Sipurim be-shir we-shirim shonim", Warsaw, 1877, 6-7 (the hero's negative attitude towards the match planned by his father) and his short-story "Hesis we-nifga'" (not included in K), "Kitbey. . .", Vol.IV, Tel-Aviv; cop.1925, 119.
16. "Modeh we-'ozeh", Warsaw, 1875.
17. MS, 95, l. 9-96, l. 4.
18. O.c., 98, ll. 1-2. (this whole page is crossed out in the MS, but still readable).
19. Characteristically enough Peretz never mentions his first wife's name, either in Z, or anywhere else.

20. Above: Ch.7, p.98-99.
21. Above: Ch.7, p.99.
22. Z, 123.
23. Above: Ch.7, p.98.
24. See below.
25. Sh. 'Ashkenazi's reminiscences in "Zamość. . .", Tel-Aviv, 1953, 231.
26. Z, 18. The spelling of the doctor's name is not absolutely certain because it is known only in Peretz's Yiddish transliteration which is not even consistent: "Skszinski" (Z, 18, 19, 70, 71) and "Skrszinski" (Z, 57).
27. S. M. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland. . ., translated. . .by I. Friedlaender, Vol.II, Philadelphia, 1918, 199-200.
28. Unless he came to Zamość on purpose, which is possible.
29. See below.
30. Peretz writes the address in German: "Herrn G.I. Lichtenfeld in Warschau [!]" "Warschau" is a curious mixture of the German spelling ("Warschau") and the Polish one ("Warszawa"). On Peretz's negligent way of writing see his own statement in YB, XII, (1937), 50 (and comp.:# o.c., 4).
31. Printed in YB, XII (1937), 183-184 (facsimile: facing p. 185).
32. O.c., 183. If this letter had been written after Peretz tried to find a job outside Zamość (comp. M, X68: "about 1874"), he would certainly have mentioned this. In YB, XII, 183 Meisel dates the letter to Lichtenfeld: "approximately. . . 1873".
33. See above.
34. M. Altberg in YB, XII (1937), 305.
35. Comp.: Sh. L. Lewin's and Sh. 'Ashkenazi's statements quoted by Meisel (M, 29 and 32). See also what Peretz himself wrote to his bride and later to his wife: YB, XII (1937), 41, 113, 118 (and comp. also: 50)
- 35a. M. Altberg, l.c.
36. YB, XII (1937), 183.
37. MS, 188, ll. 4-6 and comp. also ll. 7-18 (≠ "Gilyonot", vol.XXV, 1951, 267).
38. On Reifmann and Peretz's attitude towards him: above, Ch.6, pp. 65-67.
39. J. Shatzky, An umbakanter ketab-yad fun Peretz, YB, XXXVI (1952), 259. Shatzky discusses our two articles on the MS.
40. Comp.: MS, 118, ll. 11-13 (= "Gilyonot", l.c.).
41. YB, XII (1937), 183-184.
42. "Ha-Melis", Vol.XV (1879), 342 (on Schiffmann comp. above: Ch.7, p.80). Reminiscences of this epidemic appear perhaps in Peretz's short-story "Yosi bahur-ha-yeshibah" (K, V, pt.1, 112-139).
43. YB, XII (1937), 195.
44. See above: Ch.5, p.53 and Ch.8, pp. 109-110 and also YB, XII (1937) 194.
45. YB, XXXVI (1952), 48.

46. "Who remembers me?". The poem is now lost. Its contents are related by N. Weinig in YB, XII (1937), 198, no.3. On the lost manuscript of Peretz's Polish poems see below: Ch.14.

47. Z, 21.

48. Z, 130.

B. Opatów, Zawichost, Grabów and Sandomierz (1873-1875).

The population of Opatów¹ was nearly as big as that of Zamość and the percentage of Jews among its inhabitants was even higher². In spite of that, on Peretz Opatów probably made an impression of a dull, poor, neglected and uncultured place as compared with his native town. Only a few ruins bore witness to the past glory of the town that had once been a crossroads for merchant caravans from Silesia and Prussia to Russia and the East³. More than half of the houses were wooden⁴.

The spiritual atmosphere of Jewish Opatów was, most probably, depressing. Ya'aqob Reifmann, as we already know, complained of lack of learning and scarcity of books on Opatów. He also underlined the population's inclination towards superstition⁵. Obviously in Opatów there was no room for Haskalah⁶.

Reifmann's life in Opatów was harassed by incredible poverty. Similar was the fate of the ever-hungry poet from Opatów Natan Nata' Shapira⁷. Lichtenfeld left his family and went to Warsaw.

About Peretz's life in Opatów we know only very little. We do not know whether he found here any employment and if so of what kind. We do not know for certain whether he continued to write in Opatów. He probably did⁸. We do not know if the misunderstanding between Peretz and his wife started in Opatów or already before they left Zamość. Y. Wortmann⁹ says that Peretz "lived in Opatów several years (seems to me, six years). . . until he divorced his wife", that is, between 1870 and

1876. This cannot be correct.

Wortmann quotes some anecdotes about Peretz's "heretical" behavior, which enraged the orthodoxy of Opatów¹⁰. He believes that this was also the reason for Peretz's divorce. According to Wortmann even the moderate maskil Lichtenfeld could not endure Peretz's heresies¹¹.

David Kogut says in his memoirs¹² that Peretz lived in Opatów and its vicinity twelve years. This statement is purely imaginary. Kogut's memoirs, published nearly eighty years after Peretz's sojourn in Opatów, are altogether unreliable¹³. He mainly retells Wortmann's anecdotes and adds some more, even less trustworthy.

It is worth while mentioning that already in 1912, when Peretz was still alive and a central figure in the Jewish literary world, people in Opatów did not even remember that he had ever lived there¹⁴.

It can hardly be doubted that Peretz did not stay long in Opatów. However, some influences of his sojourn there may perhaps be traced. Sh. Apter¹⁵ tells us that in Opatów Peretz had occasion to hear many stories on poor and unlearned but pious men, etc. - stories that influenced his later writings¹⁶. As an example of the superstitiousness of the Jews of Opatów Reifmann quoted their belief that every night the dead arise, come to the town, perform religious ablutions, pray in the synagogue, and so on¹⁷. This motive was developed by Peretz in his short-story "The Town of the Dead"¹⁸. Of course Peretz could have heard about the strange belief of the Jews of Opatów not only when he lived himself in this town. It could have been conveyed to him by Reifmann

in Szczebrzeszyn or in Zamość. It could have been told as a curiosity by his father-in-law. Still this is possibly the only more or less tangible influence of Opatów on Peretz ¹⁹.

According to D. Kogut ²⁰ Peretz went from Opatów to Zawichost ²¹. Shemu'el Leyb Lewin, Peretz's uncle, told Meisel that Peretz "had a brewery. . . in Zawerost" ²². "Zawerost" is the Yiddish form of Zawichost, a little town not far from Opatów, the same in which Reifmann stayed at the end of 1869 ²³.

In connection with Peretz's sojourn in Zawichost Meisel hints at a queer episode in the young writer's life. According to Jewish religious law unleavened bread, beer, etc., should not be consumed or even kept in the possession of a Jew during Passover. However, a fictitious "selling" to a non-Jew and "buying back" after Passover is allowed. The story runs that Peretz had forgotten to "sell" his beer on the eve of Passover and consequently poured away all the beer he had in the brewery.

Sh. L. Lewin denied this story as a lie invented by Peretz's admirers. Peretz was far from being as orthodox as this story would have him ²⁴.

According to Peretz's best friend, during his later Warsaw period, Ya'aqob Dinezon, all this happened not in Zawichost but in Sandomierz ²⁵.

Peretz's sister Hesya Goldstein, in her statement did not

mention the place where this happened ²⁶ .

Dr. Gershon Lewin relates ²⁷ , that it occurred when Peretz had a mill and not a brewery. According to Dr. Lewin Peretz did not forget, but refused to go through the fictitious procedure and, as no Jew wanted to buy his flour, had to throw all his stock away. Dr. Lewin does not mention where and when this happened ²⁸ .

That Peretz, together with others, leased a mill we know also from an additional source ²⁹ . Unfortunately, this source also fails to mention the date and the place. It does not link the above story with Peretz's mill.

We do not know about a brewery ³⁰ in Zawichost in the 1860's and 1870's, but we know that there existed in this little town three wind-mills ³¹ . In those days the grain from the surrounding countryside was brought to Zawichost, whence part of it was floated on rafts to Warsaw and Danzig ³² .

We may assume that Sh. L. Lewin's statement was not entirely correct. Probably after a short sojourn in Opatów, Peretz (together with partners? ³³) leased a mill (and not a brewery) in Zawichost ³⁴ . A brewery he leased later - in Sandomierz and the famous episode most probably took place in this town. According to an eye-witness ^{34a} : "Peretz hardly took a hand in the business, used only to sign, had on a cap with a lacquered peak and high boots and looked like a bailiff ³⁵ , like a young [Polish] nobleman. . ." ³⁶ .

Peretz obviously was not very successful and after a short time

had to try his luck somewhere else, again in the vicinity of Opatów³⁷ .

One of the first dates in Peretz's life which can be fixed without doubt and without speculation is the date of his sojourn in Grabów³⁸ . In 1937 N. Weinig published an article dealing with a hitherto unknown manuscript of Peretz's Polish poems, marked by Peretz himself: "Grabów 1874"³⁹ . The manuscript, which belonged to the "Yiddish Scientific Institute" ("YIVO") in Wilno (then Poland), was lost during the German occupation. Fortunately Weinig's article includes the contents of every poem and many quotations.

There are in Poland many places called Grabów. The one in which Peretz wrote (or copied) his poems in 1874 is no doubt a village on the Vistula between Lublin (in the east) and Zwoleń (in the west), not far from Zamość, Opatów and Zawichost⁴⁰ .

In one of the later chapters we shall deal with the above-mentioned Polish manuscript and with Peretz's spiritual evolution (his reading, ideas, etc.) as reflected in what is known from the lost manuscript. Here we shall only try to collate the few autobiographical details that can be picked up from Weinig's article.

Peretz's economic situation was most probably very gloomy⁴¹ . Hints of his poverty can be traced in some of his poems. Peretz owes somebody⁴² a small sum of money which he obviously cannot repay⁴³ . **in**

In a Hebrew poem "To the Birthday of X"⁴⁴ Peretz says that he would like to send the lady a present, but -

"It is already a long time
"That there is not a farthing⁴⁵ in my pocket".

And he adds:

"Cursed be my weak pen
"And sevenfold - my poverty".

He mentions his poverty twice more in the same short poem and ~~he~~ mentions it also in the Polish counterpart of "To the Birthday of X"⁴⁶.

In "Reflections of a Poor Student" Peretz states that love cannot endure without bread⁴⁷. That the economic difficulties did not improve the relations between Peretz and his wife can be taken for granted⁴⁸.

Peretz's Hebrew short-story "The Conversation of Ghosts"⁴⁹ is placed in the year 1874⁵⁰. In the Yiddish version of the same short-story⁵¹ the date is not mentioned. Instead it starts with a sentence lacking in the Hebrew version: "I starved several days in succession"⁵². Perhaps this also is one of the hints to Peretz's extremely grave economic situation in (or about) 1874.

Peretz's only refuge was probably diligence in studies praised by him at the end of the above-mentioned poem "Reflections of a Poor Student". Peretz's reading in those years of poverty was probably extensive. At the same time he also wrote many Polish and Hebrew poems.

In 1874 Peretz fell seriously ill when (on business?) in the little village Kawęczyn⁵³ - probably the Kawęczyn that is situated not

far from Szczebrzeszyn ⁵⁴. Poor and depressed, lonely and ill, Peretz "started to fear death" ⁵⁵. He wrote a Polish poem "To Death" ⁵⁶ and a German Epitaph for himself. Both ⁵⁷ have a real touch of "Galgenhumor".

In the poem Peretz says that he has no time to die because he must finish writing his many poetical works.

In the very brief Epitaph Peretz sums up his short life: He is a poet, more successful in arranging rhymes than in arranging his own life. He is a dreamer -

"Two and twenty years he has dreamt through!"

The young Peretz was very interested in his poetry and believed in his future as a poet. He sent his Polish poems to Lichtenfeld ⁵⁸ and to his maternal uncle ⁵⁹ in Zamość. No doubt this uncle was the same Yosef Altberg who, according to Peretz himself, saved his first "sins of youth."

Lichtenfeld was probably a more severe critic than Altberg ⁶⁰. The uncle "did not demand too much" but corrected and improved Peretz's poems ⁶¹.

The lost manuscript of Peretz's Polish poem, was a neat copy, made by the poet himself, bound and adorned with an inscription in gilt letters. It seems that Peretz hoped to be able to publish his poetry. Certainly his attitude towards his early works in general and towards his youthful Polish poems in particular was very different, from what he himself stated many years later in "My Memoirs" ⁶² and in his famous letter to Y. Zinberg ⁶³, respectively.

Peretz's stay in Grabów was, no doubt, a short one; most probably it lasted only a few months. It seems that already in the same year, 1874, the Peretzes moved to Sandomierz.⁶⁴ Although Peretz did not live in this town more than about a year and a half (and possibly even less), Sandomierz left a lasting impression on him⁶⁵. Sandomierz was not a big town⁶⁶ but it was full of ruins and historical memorials. Beautifully placed on a hilltop Sandomierz overlooked its charming surroundings.

The fragments of Peretz's large, hitherto unpublished, Hebrew poem "Ha-Serefah" ("The Fire")⁶⁷, are set in Sandomierz. The fragments reveal that Peretz was captivated by the beauties of Sandomierz and that he was also interested in the history of the town, which served between 1139 and 1295 as the capital of a petty Polish dukedom⁶⁸. Peretz knew about the past greatness of Sandomierz and also about the heavy fighting in and around the town in the XIIIth century when the Tartars thrice attacked it:⁶⁹

"Surrounded by orchards, cornfields and forests,
Sandomierz sits high on the top of the mountain,
In the past - seat of kings, today - city of destruction.
The Vistula flows silently between the shores,
Its waters wash the foot of the mountain
Dividing into two the fertile plain."

.
"But a fearful shadow spreads over the Vistula,
This is a shadow of a lonely tower, a mighty giant
In the past - abode of kings and nobles,
In its rooms jousted the knights.
They - drunk with wine, and their swords - with blood;
The blood of Tartars and Turks⁷⁰ that ran like a river. . ."

"Sombre the fortress, deep in sad thoughts,
For now become a gaol⁷¹ for guilty and vile. . ." ⁷².

Many years after leaving Sandomierz Peretz mentioned the terrible

ritual-murder accusations against the Jews of Sandomierz in the XVIIth and XVIIIth centuries ⁷³

Peretz earned his daily bread by running a brewery together with a certain Zylber ⁷⁴ . According to B. Glazman, who met the Zylbers in New York, this was a respectable merchant family from Sandomierz. They emigrated to the U.S.A. in the 1880's or 1890's. Glazman received from the Zylbers two Polish letters addressed to them by Peretz ⁷⁵ .

These letters ⁷⁶ were written in 1899 (the second - maybe in 1900?) ⁷⁷ . Peretz was obviously very friendly with the Zylbers, He was pleased with their prosperity, "because you are good people" ⁷⁸ . Unfortunately Peretz does not plunge into memories of the past days in Sandomierz. He calls those days "better, younger times" ⁷⁹ , but also - "the old, poor, very poor but gay days" ⁸⁰ . In Sandomierz he sometimes "lacked copecks" ⁸¹ , but he did not, on the whole, lack good humour ⁸² and good friends ⁸³ .

However here, in Sandomierz, Peretz suffered a very severe blow. His elder son died.

The Peretz's had two sons: Ya'aqob and Lucjan (Eli'ezer). In one of his letters to Lucjan, Peretz mentions that his son was then fifteen years old ⁸⁴ . This letter bears no date, but was certainly written in 1887 ⁸⁵ . Hence, both were born in Zamość ⁸⁶ . Lucjan was born in 1872 and Ya'aqob in 1871. When Ya'aqob died he was about four years old ⁸⁷ . Lucjan died in 1919 ⁸⁸ .

Reisen believes that Peretz neglected the brewery ⁸⁹ .

According to Ya'aqob Dinezon, Peretz's closest friend for many years, Peretz was too busy writing and receiving guests. The non-"selling" of the beer before Passover ruined Peretz and forced him to leave Sandomierz ⁹⁰;

If this is what really happened, we may take it for granted that Peretz did not forget to ~~be~~sell the beer (as he may have told Dinezon). He certainly (as Dr. G. Lewin relates) did not want to perform the ceremony of "selling" and "buying back" ⁹¹.

Peretz's uncle Sh. L. Lewin was right in underlining that Peretz was far from orthodox. However, this does not necessarily imply that the whole story is "a lie" ⁹². Peretz's negative attitude towards minor religious observances and towards the casuistry of the rabbis is very strongly expressed in the fragments of "The Fire" ⁹³. This poem, as already mentioned, is set in Sandomierz and the target for Peretz's acid irony is "the rabbi of the town of Tsoyimir" ⁹⁴. Moreover, "Ha-šerefah" was most probably written a short time after Peretz left Sandomierz.

It is hardly possible that the author of the invectives against the rabbi of Sandomierz would of his own accord ⁹⁵ ask this rabbi to pour away all the un-"sold" beer - thus ruining himself. We are inclined to believe that the rabbi forced Peretz to do this - and hence the invectives. Although Dinezon did not mention what Peretz wrote in Sandomierz, he was certainly right in his statement that Peretz was "occupied with his literary works" ⁹⁶.

From Peretz's letters to the Zylbers we may conclude that, even

without the Passover episode, the economic situation of the partners was anything but prosperous.

If we accept the story about the un-"sold" beer as a truth, as we are inclined to do, we can fix the approximate date of Peretz's financial ruin: a short time after April 26th, 1875 (which was the last day of the Passover in this year). Anyway, it is certain that already during the summer of 1875 he had to look for a new job.

NOTES

1. Pronounced: Opatuv (the Jews called this town: Apt). On Opatów see: J.N. Chodzyński, Historyczno-statystyczne opisy miast starożytnych w Ziemi Sandomierskiej leżących. . ., t.I, Warszawa, 1855, 173-210; "Zarysy Ziemi Opatowskiej i Sandomierskiej. . .", Warszawa, 1886, 545-549; P. Muszkatbluth, Z opisów gmin, "Izraelita", 1912, no.39, 4-6. Opatów is mentioned by Peretz in: a) Z, 21, 120, 130; b) "Yosi bahur-hayeshivah" (K, V, pt.1, 112-139); c) "Nachas fun kinder" (A, III, 262-271; the narrator is a man from Opatów; d) "Dos fortekh" (A, V, 298-309); e) "Ne'ilin in gehinom" (A, V, 333-338); f) "Shtet un shtetlekh" no.10 (A, VIII, 223-224) and no.13 (o.c., 251)

2. In 1858 out of a population of 4082 in Zamość 2239 were Jews (see above: Ch.4, p.23). In Opatów the respective numbers in 1862 were: 3920 and 2601 ("Słownik Geograficzny. . .", t.VII, 545).

3. "Zarysy. . .", 19.

4. Chodzyński, 209.

5. Above: Ch.6, p.65.

6. Comp.: "Shtet un shtetlekh", no.10 (A, VIII, 223-224) and Apter's article, quoted below (note 15).

7. Sebi ben Remalyahu in "Ha-Melis", 1903, no.49 (reprinted in "Zamość. . .", 228). On N.N. Shapira' see: F. Lachower, Toldot ha-sifrut ha-ibrit he-hadashah, Vol. IV, Tel-Aviv, 1948, 22-23. A translation of a German epigram by Shapira' is quoted in G.Y. Lichtenfeld's "Sofnat paneah", Warsaw, 1874, 16.

8. Y. Y. Peretz in "Zamoshcher shtime", 1928, no.8 (comp.: M, 59).

9. Peretz in Apt, "Literarische Bleter", Vol. X, no.18 (May 5th, 1933, 296).

10. On the orthodox of Opatów see in Peretz's: "Shtet un shtetlekh", no.10 (l.c.)

11. "Peretz in Apt", l.c.

12. D. Kogut, Peretz T "Q" [should be: T "K = "Torat Kohanim"] ("Kanader yiddishe post", September, 1951).
13. Comp.: N, 62, note 5 and above: Ch.7, p.108, note 236.
14. P. Muszkatblüth, o.c., 5 (comp.: YB, XXVIII, 1946, 212).
15. Sh. Apter, Peretz un di Yiddish-Poylishe yugent, "Yiddishe Kultur", Vol.VII, no.3/4 (March-April 1945), 94-96.
16. So also: D. Kogut, l.c.
17. "Keneset Yisra'el", Book III (1888), 174.
18. "Ir ha-metim" (K, III, pt.1, 83-92). Its traces can also be found in the drama "Baynakht oyfn altn mark" (A, VI, 181-280) and in some of Peretz's other works.
19. It should be mentioned that similar beliefs also existed in other Jewish communities in Poland.
20. L.c.
21. On Zawichost see: Chadzyński, o.c., I, 121-150; "Zarysy. . .", 70-79; "Słownik Geograficzny. . .", t.XIV, Warszawa, 1895, 486-490. Peretz mentioned Zawichost in his short-story "On mazel" (A, III, 290-295).
22. M, 29. According to Kogut (who is certainly less reliable than Peretz's uncle) Peretz had in Zawichost a soda-water factory.
23. Above: Ch.6, p.71, note 75.
24. M, l.c. Sh.L. Lewin, as a matter of fact did not explicitly name Zawichost as the locality where this episode was supposed to have taken place.
25. Y. Dinezon, "A farvalgerte derinerung", "Y. L. Peretz in likht fun der kritik", Wilno, 1940, 196-197 (comp.: N, 63).
26. "Ha-'Olam", December 14th, 1944, 131 (reprinted in "Zamość. . ." 87).
27. In his book: Peretz. A bisl zikhroynes, Warsaw, 1919, 10.
28. A different version of this story: M.Y. Freyd, Yamim we-shanim..., tr. by A. Zomir, Vol.II, Tel-Aviv, 1939, 61-62.
29. An uncle of the writer Y. Opatoshu. Comp.: N, 62.
30. And neither about a soda-water factory.
31. Chadzyński, I, 145. This volume was published in 1855.
32. "Zarysy. . .", 73. Comp.: "On mazel" (A, III, 290).
33. N, 62.
34. Mills and millers in Peretz's writings: "Dos mayzl in vasermil", (A, I, 429-430); "Dos shtrayml", (A, II, 249-260); "Tsvey brider", (A, III, 286-289); etc.
- 34a. Quoted in N, 62.
35. "Ekonom".
36. "Szlachcic".
37. This may be the only grain of truth in Wortmann's and Kogut's statements about Peretz's staying in (and around) Opatów six or even twelve years.
38. Pronounced: Grabuv.
39. N. Weinig, Poylishe lider fun Y.L. Peretz fun yor 1874, YB, XII,

inhabitants; 1739 Jews and 1162 Christians.

67. Comp. above: note 65, f).
68. Buliński, 19; "Zarysy. . .", 81 and 88.
69. Chądzyński, o.c., 17-29.
70. "Qedar" and "Yishma'el"
71. The castle of Sandomierz was converted into a gaol by the Russians in 1825 (see: Buliński, o.c., 112-119; here also a picture).
72. "He-serefah", MS, 39, 1.6-11, 17-24.
73. "Der fakt un di prese" (A, IX, 50). Comp.: S. M. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland. . ., translated. . . by I. Friedlaender, Vol. I, Philadelphia, 1916, 172-174.
74. Z. Reisen, Lexikon fun der yiddisher literatur. . ., Vol. II, Wilno, 1930³, 980-981. On a brewery in Sandomierz see: "Słownik Geograficzny. . .", t. X, 268.
75. B. Glazman, A brekl fun Peretz's yerushe, "Morgen Freiheit", April 18th, 1936.
76. YB, XII (1937), 160-165 (comp. also: 147).
77. J. Shatzky in YB, XII (1937), 160 and 163 (the second: "approximately 1899"). In these letters Peretz expressed his desire to have Dr. Wiener's book. This was: L. Wiener's, The History of Yiddish Literature. . ., published simultaneously in New York and London. (Wiener's most flattering opinion of Peretz in this book is quoted above in the "Introduction").
78. YB, XII (1937), 160.
79. L.c.
80. O.c., 163.
81. I.e., pence.
82. O.c., 160.
83. On Peretz's hospitality see Dinezon's statement below (and also: Reisen, o.c., II, 980).
84. YB, XII (1937), 142.
85. It follows from the comparison of this letter with all other letters written by Peretz to Lucjan in 1886 and 1887, at Płock. Lucjan was sent to Płock after Peretz's relative and friend Mosheh Altberg settled down there in 1885. See YB, XII (1937), 135-143; and comp. also: 101, 103, 126, 127-128 and 305-306. - The letters to Lucjan are translated from Polish (YB, XII, 1937, 4).
86. R. Peretz-Laks, ("Arum Peretz. . ."; Warsaw, 1935, 44), says that when Peretz's second marriage took place (in the beginning of 1878) Lucjan was about 4-5 years old. In this case he was born in about 1873-1874. Z. Reisen (YB, XII, 1937, 356) states that Lucjan was born in 1873, in Sandomierz [!]. According to N. Meisel (M, 68) Peretz's sons were born while he was living "in Opatów and Sandomierz". In another place (B, 281, note 2) he says that Lucjan was approximately 38 years old in 1909. - Details on Lucjan Peretz see in R. Peretz-Laks' book: passim (particularly: 44-56).
87. N, 62: "When he was still a baby".
88. R. Peretz-Laks, o.c., 51; Reisen, YB, XII, 1937, 356 and "Lexikon. . .", II, 993.

89. Reisen, Lexikon. . . , II, 980-981. It may be significant that Peretz does not mention in his works either breweries or brewers (except once in a criticism of a book; A, VII, 195-196).

90. Y. Dinezon, A farvølgerte derinerung, "Y. L. Peretz in likht fun der kritik", Wilno, 1940, 196-197; see also: Reisen, l.c.; N, 63.

91. See above. As already mentioned, Dr. Lewin speaks about a mill and not about a brewery (which is obviously a mistake). Negative attitude towards this procedure: "Shrayb a feuilleton" (A, VIII, 54).

92. See above.

93. MS, 46-56. We should also bear in mind Wortmann's and Kogut's anecdotes about Peretz's "heresies".

94. E.Q.: MS, 46, l. 20; etc.

95. As Dinezon (and after him Reisen and others) has it.

96. Dinezon, l.c.; see also: Reisen, l.c.; N, 63.

C. Warsaw (1875 - 1876).

This time Peretz went to Warsaw, where he had wanted to go as early as 1872 or 1873 ¹. He certainly left Sarah and the three year old Lucjan behind, probably in Opatów ².

Whether this was the young writer's first visit to the Polish capital is not certain. However, his previous visit (if at all) was no doubt a very short one. This time Peretz stayed in Warsaw for about a year and a half (he arrived in summer 1875, and left probably in the second half of 1876), longer than in any other place since he had left Zamość in 1873, perhaps with the exception of Sandomierz ³. Unfortunately our knowledge about Peretz's life in Warsaw in 1875-1876 is rather limited, although we can gather some details about his friends and acquaintances and about his literary work in these years.

Warsaw, with its Jewish population about 1,000,000 strong (comprising nearly one-third of all the inhabitants) ⁴ was, with Odessa, and to a certain degree Wilno, the main centre of East European Jewish culture and of both Hebrew and Yiddish literature. It was the Mecca of the Jewish youth from the provincial towns and villages of Poland athirst for Haskalah. As Peretz says:

"The Spirit of Knowledge assembled them in Warsaw. . ."

"To learn and to teach they gathered from [many] towns,
For until now without a teacher, in hiding
They studied. . . ."

- for fear of the zealots. ⁵.

Many reasons caused Peretz's going to Warsaw. No doubt he hoped to find there a new way to earn a living ⁶. He was urged to go there by his striving for knowledge ⁷ and by his literary ambitions. It is possible that he was driven to the capital also by hatred of the zealots in the provincial towns; not in his native Zamość, but probably in Opatów and in Sandomierz. During his stay in Warsaw he was spared the difficulties of his family life.

We do not know for certain where Peretz lived in the Polish capital. It is plausible that after his arrival he stayed for some time with his father-in-law ⁸. According to Reisen ⁹ he lived in Warsaw with his old friend Yishag Geliebter. This is possible, although Geliebter himself does not mention that fact. When Peretz arrived in Warsaw, Geliebter, who was studying medicine at the Warsaw University, shared a room with another medical student. It is possible that later Peretz was Geliebter's room-mate. Geliebter composed melodies to some of Peretz's poems written in Warsaw ¹⁰.

Peretz intended "to learn and to teach" in the capital. He earned his living as a private teacher of Hebrew ¹¹. At the same time he tried to publish some of his poems and perhaps believed that this could be an additional source of income. Thus he says about Ya'aqob, the hero of "The Life of a Hebrew Poet":

" he compiles books of poetry
And teaches and educates boys in wealthy houses" ¹² .

Although Peretz succeeded in seeing some of his poems printed during his stay in Warsaw, he realized very soon that there was no hope

of earning anything by writing ¹³. On the other hand, his private lessons gave him no satisfaction ¹⁴ and quite often not enough money even for his own bare existence, not to mention that of his family. Moreover, Peretz's inability to economise ¹⁵ made his economic situation even more difficult.

In the version of his poem "Nagni'el" preserved in the Unknown Manuscript ¹⁶ Peretz mentions his hard "daily work, many efforts and much trouble to earn wages to put it in a bag with holes. . ." ¹⁷.

There may be some autobiographical trends also in a description of the appalling poverty in which a poet lived (and died) - in a small fragment of what was intended to be a poem in three cantos: "A Poet in the World of Fantasy". This is the first piece in the Unknown Manuscript ^{17a}.

It is easy to believe that Peretz sometimes simply suffered from hunger during his sojourn in Warsaw. It was probably then that Efrazim Deinard saw him bursting into Lichtenfeld's room and shouting: "Father-in-law, give me a slice of bread if you don't want me to die here, before your eyes, from starvation" ¹⁸. According to Deinard, this happened in 1877. However, this is impossible, because in 1877 Lichtenfeld was no longer Peretz's father-in-law and Peretz himself was no longer staying in Warsaw. Deinard is not always reliable and the whole story may very well be just one more of the many anecdotes with which Peretz's biography is already embellished ¹⁹. Still: se non è vero, è ben trovato. A grain of truth must be in this story which fits so well into the picture of Peretz's tribulations. It is significant that both Peretz's uncle ²⁰ and his father-in-law, ²¹ speaking about Peretz's behaviour in the Warsaw

days, use the very same expression. They both call him: "an unreliable person" ²² . No doubt Peretz earned this reputation by being unable to economise and by being deeply engrossed in writing, reading, studying and meeting people. Through all this he did not make enough effort to earn a decent living for himself and his family.

In "My Memoirs" Peretz says about Lichtenfeld's influence on himself: ". . .I will no more ask [him] any questions, I will only learn from him some mathematics, [and] publish together with him a book of poems. . ." ²³ .

As a matter of fact, we know that Peretz sent to Lichtenfeld, in about 1874, his Polish poems, asking for criticism. Most probably he also sent to him his Hebrew poems. Until summer 1875 Peretz only occasionally met his father-in-law. However, he corresponded with him. During Peretz's stay in Warsaw he spent much of his time with Lichtenfeld and the old scholar's influence on his son-in-law was in this period many-sided.

As we shall see, Peretz's first published poem was printed in one of Lichtenfeld's books. Moreover, it was connected with polemics between Lichtenfeld and H. Z. Slonimski (1810-1904). These polemics were forcibly inserted into the poem "The Life of a Hebrew Poet", printed in the joint books of poems published by Peretz and Lichtenfeld, "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems" ²⁴ . Thus Lichtenfeld "introduced" his son-in-law into Hebrew literature. At the same time he influenced Peretz's attitude towards Slonimski and his supporters, just as he most probably influenced Peretz's negative attitude towards Ya'acov Reifmann ²⁵ .

Peretz's first Yiddish poem written for publication (but never

published and lost) was suggested to him by R. 'A. Braudes in 1875 ²⁶. However, Lichtenfeld's approving preface to Zalman Sobel's Yiddish book (published in 1874) ²⁷ certainly encouraged Peretz to think of publishing a Yiddish poem - a rather unusual idea for a young maskil in those days.

Already in about 1874 Lichtenfeld tried to instruct Peretz in the art of poetry. He continued to do so in 1875-1876. Lichtenfeld's editorial work is felt in some of Peretz's Hebrew poems published in their joint book. It may be that because of Lichtenfeld Peretz called the heroine of "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" Sarah. A possibility that a literary motive used later by Peretz was forwarded to him by his father-in-law is mentioned above.

Under Lichtenfeld's supervision Peretz diligently studied mathematics ²⁸: the Unknown Manuscript contains forty-seven pages of exercises in algebra, geometry and arithmetic ²⁹.

Lichtenfeld was not only a poet, although a mediocre one, and an able mathematician. He was also well-versed in law. It is quite possible that Lichtenfeld stimulated Peretz to study law too, additional to mathematics ³⁰. As we already know, Peretz was interested in law even before his marriage ³¹.

Albeit variegated, Lichtenfeld's influence on Peretz was certainly neither deep nor lasting. The great artist that will emerge at the end of the 1880's will hardly bear any signs of being once a pupil of the old maskil Gabri'el Yehudah Lichtenfeld. Peretz himself knew it; hence his subconscious minimizing of his ex-father-in-law's influence in "My Memoirs".

Besides his old friend Yishag Geliebter, Peretz met in Warsaw several other people from Zamość. His uncle, Shemu'el Leyb Lewin brought him a gift from his mother ³² and Shemu'el 'Ashkenazi - regards from his father. 'Ashkenazi was deeply impressed by the many Hebrew poems Peretz showed to him ³³. One of Peretz's friends in Warsaw was Ya'aqob Huberman. Huberman, like Geliebter a student at the Warsaw University and like him born in Zamość, was the father of the well-known musician Bronisław Huberman. Peretz may have already known him in his native town ³⁴.

N. Sokolow in his brilliant essay on Peretz ³⁵ has painted a vivid picture of the Warsaw maskilim in the 1870's. Some of them were young, others, old; some were fresh from little ghetto-villages and some - natives of the Polish capital. Some still tended towards the old, sentimental "holy-language"-Haskalah, and some were already touched by German, Austrian, Polish or Russian culture. Mostly they were self-taught; writers and poets "de facto" or only "in spe". Their favourite meeting-place was the "Krasin'skis' Park" ("Ogród Krasin'skich") in the very heart of Jewish Warsaw. ³⁶ Here the young writer could have met and listened to the élite of the little Warsaw Haskalah-world. And here, according to Sokolow, "on a summer evening" he himself first met Peretz ³⁷.

Nahum Sokolow (1860-1936) ³⁸ was then about fifteen years old. His first short meeting with the young writer was hardly of any significance from the twenty-three year old Peretz's point of view.

Out of the great number of maskilim mentioned by Sokolow, only about a few do we know for certain that Peretz met them in 1875-1876. Still less is the number of people (whether mentioned by Sokolow or not) of whose relations with Peretz in those years we have any details.

Sokolow does not mention in his essay the man whose influence on Peretz was then second perhaps only to that of Lichtenfeld - Re'uben 'Asher Braudes (1851-1902) ³⁹ . Braudes stayed in Warsaw only a comparatively short time and this is the reason why Sokolow, writing 40 years later ⁴⁰ , fails to remember him in connection with Peretz. In Warsaw, towards the end of 1875, Braudes published his short-story "Confession and Repentance" ⁴¹ .

The Unknown Manuscript contains a very long criticism of this short-story ⁴² . Here Peretz calls Braudes "our friend" ⁴³ and relates about their meeting at a printers ⁴⁴ . This meeting took place at the end of 1875 when Braudes was supervising the printing of his above-mentioned short-story. Peretz was possibly taking care of Lichtenfeld's books "Tosefet le-ha-Cerabon. . ." ⁴⁵ , where his first poem was published, and "Kohen le-lo' 'elohim" ⁴⁶ and most probably also of Lichtenfeld's and his joint book "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" ⁴⁷ .

Braudes' short-story and the three books mentioned above were all printed at the same printing house ⁴⁸ .

It is most interesting to read Peretz's quoting in about 1876 Braudes' negative opinion of the purists who used in their writings exclusively Biblical Hebrew ⁴⁹ . Not only the general idea but even its very wording is close to what Braudes himself published only in 1881. ⁵⁰ . There can be no doubt that many of the literary opinions of the young Peretz bear the impact of Braudes, although Peretz disagreed with him more than once ⁵¹ . Furthermore, we believe that Braudes' "Confession and

Repentance" influenced Peretz's short-story "The Night of Horrors" ⁵² .

In a post-scriptum to his Hebrew letter to the Yiddish writer Yishag Yo'el Linetzki (1839-1916) ⁵³ , written in Dubno and dated 27/15 [the second date is according to the Old Style] January, 1876, Braudes says: "When I was in Warsaw I encouraged Mr. Peretz (he is a marvellous young man, an able poet with a feeling heart and one of my friends) to write something for the journal 'Yisra'elik'. I gave him an idea and he has put it down in the form of a poem called "A Letter of the Polish Females. . ." ⁵⁴ . "Yisra'elik" was a short-lived Yiddish weekly, published in Lemberg by Linetzki and A. Goldfaden ⁵⁵ . As already mentioned the Yiddish poem written by Peretz for this weekly was never printed and its manuscript was lost.

Braudes was the acting editor of the monthly Hebrew journal "Ha-boqer 'or", published from 1876 by the old maskil and writer Abraham Dob Baer Gottlober (1810-1899) ⁵⁶ . It is quite possible that Peretz himself, perhaps introduced by Braudes, met Gottlober in Warsaw ⁵⁷ in 1875. ⁵⁸ Certainly due to Braudes Peretz was able to publish in "Ha-boqer 'or" some of his writings ⁵⁹ .

Braudes often disagreed with Gottlober and in June 1879 suddenly left his position as the co-editor of "Ha-boqer 'or". After that Gottlober launched a violent attack against Braudes and the latter did not let it pass without a proper retort ⁶⁰ . It is difficult to say whether there was also a conflict between Peretz and Gottlober ⁶¹ . The fact is that Peretz published in Gottlober's journal only a couple of poems and perhaps one feuilleton ⁶² - and all of them in the first two volumes of

"Ha-boqer 'or" (1876 and 1877). As Braudes states: Gottlober "had only licked his [i.e. Peretz's] honey" ⁶³. Moreover, Braudes' flattering criticism on Peretz was not published in Gottlober's journal and not even anywhere else as long as Braudes co-operated with Gottlober. This too may be of some significance ⁶⁴. The drastic changes made no doubt by the old, conservative maskil in Peretz's poem "Nagni'el", certainly did not contribute to its author's sympathy towards the chief editor of "Ha-boqer 'or" ⁶⁵.

It seems that there was rather a sudden change in Peretz's attitude towards Gottlober. He had intended to dedicate (a part of?) his criticism of Braudes' "Confession and Repentance" "To 'A.B.G." (i.e.: 'Abraham Baer Gottlober), but thought better of it and crossed the dedication out ⁶⁶. Certainly Peretz's views on problems of life and letters (as expressed for example in the Unknown Manuscript) differed widely from those of the old maskil Gottlober.

All this and Braudes' influence, and not necessarily a real and open conflict between Peretz and Gottlober may well have been responsible for Peretz's later abuse of Gottlober. In a letter to the famous Yiddish writer Sh. Rabinowitz ("Shalom 'Aleykhem") of July 4th, 1888 ⁶⁷ Peretz calls Gottlober "this gentleman who has a long, prattling tongue but hardly any brains. . ." and adds: "I was never able to discover in him a single new idea, a new expression. . .".

The successors of Braudes as co-editors of "Ha-boqer 'or" were consecutively two booksellers and publishers from Warsaw - Shapira' and Zuckermann ⁶⁸. Peretz probably met both of them in Warsaw in 1875-1876,

before they started to collaborate with Gottlober 69 .

'Eli'ezer Yishag Shapira' (born in 1835) was himself a writer and was employed by Gottlober in the years 1879-1881. His bookshop was on ~~the~~ Sto. Jerska St. 70 . 'Abraham Zuckermann's (1843-1892) residence was on Nalewki St. Both streets were very near to "Krasin'skis' Park". Zuckermann, who co-edited "Ha-boqer 'or" only a few months in 1885-1886, like Shapira' also published some literary works, original and translated. He was the Warsaw agent of the well-known writer and publisher Peres Smolenskin in whose monthly "Ha-shahar" some of Peretz's first poems were printed 71 .

The "unsettled" years (1870-1876) did not pass without leaving an impact on Peretz. The feeling of permanent failure, of being a kind of "good-for-nothing", weighed heavily on the young and ambitious writer. During those difficult years Peretz very often changed jobs and places - to no avail. Never and nowhere was he able to earn a decent living for himself and his family or make himself known as a writer. Peretz's family life too was a failure and the death of the first-born son must have made the abyss between Peretz and Sarah even deeper. Extreme poverty acted depressingly. Peretz was no more sure of his abilities and his future was dark. Writing brought little consolation. Out of his many manuscripts only a few, mainly short, items were printed in this period, and none of

them before 1875. Doubts overcame the young writer as to his vocation. Sometimes his work seemed to him to be aimless - nobody would ever read his poems ⁷². Another time he complained of lack of inspiration:

"A living pain in my heart, and a dead pen in my hand"
- says Peretz in "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" ⁷³. And in two short humorous poems, written in this period, "Inspiration from Nectar" (in Polish) ⁷⁴ and "Three Asterisks" (in Hebrew) ⁷⁵ Peretz describes himself (in the first poem) or just "a poet" (in the second one) seated at his desk and trying hard to write - in vain.

In spite of all these sad circumstances, Peretz did not succumb to pessimism. His was basically rather a gay, vivacious, temperamental nature. He was very much alive and very fond of life and people. He succeeded in overcoming fits of despair. Peretz found some consolation among his friends and acquaintances, old and new ⁷⁶, among his books and manuscripts. He read and studied much and wrote a great deal. He was always interested in the life around him. Neither the natural beauty of Sandomierz and the monuments of its glorious past ⁷⁷, nor the life and sufferings of the poor and outcast of Warsaw ⁷⁸ escaped the eyes of the artist and his "feeling heart".

When Peretz arrived in Warsaw in the summer of 1875 he was still Lichtenfeld's son-in-law. The divorce probably took place in the second half of 1876 ⁷⁹. Some slight proof for this date may perhaps be derived from the first edition of "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems". This edition is entitled, according to the first and largest poem included, "The Life

of a Hebrew Poet" and was published, just as the second one, in 1877⁸⁰.

The censor's permission to print the first edition is dated "24 April [Old Style] (5 May) 1876". The fact that Peretz did not change the name of the heroine of the main poem, Sarah, may perhaps indicate that when this edition was submitted to the censor Peretz was not yet divorced. True, this name was not changed even in the second edition, permitted by the censor on the "25 May (6 June) 1877". However, this can be easily explained: the second edition was produced simply by removing the old title page and gluing in the new one.⁸¹

The divorce put an end to "a bitter and cursed"⁸² period in Peretz's life. He was at last set free from the "net" in which he and Sarah were "writhing together"⁸³ for six cheerless years.

The divorce gave Peretz a chance to try and make a fresh start in his life⁸⁴.

NOTES

1. YB, XII (1937), 183-184 (and comp. above).
2. According to Dinezon (l.c.; comp.: N, 63) Peretz went from Sandomierz to Zamość. Dinezon probably refers to Peretz's settling in his native town after his stay in Warsaw ~~in Warsaw~~ in 1875-1876.
3. In Z, 21 Peretz only mentions his ultimate stay in Warsaw. In Z, 130 he mentions both his stays there. - Peretz spent in Warsaw the last twenty-five years of his life and naturally it is mentioned many times in his writings. Many of his short-stories are set in the Polish capital. However, only three of his writings can be mentioned without hesitation as reflecting Peretz's first sojourn in Warsaw: a) "Hayey meshorer 'ibri" (in Sipurim be-shir we-shirim shonim", Warsaw, 1877, 3-97); b) "Ha-neqamah" - Peretz's first, hitherto unpublished, short-story (MS, 21-38); c) "Nes hanukah" (A, II, 393-399). - On Warsaw in the beginning of the 1870's see: M. M-v, Putevodit'el po Varshave. . ., Warsaw, 1873. Comp. also: "Redaktor Przyjaciela Zdrowia" [i.e. Dr. Gregorowicz], Warszawa pod wzglę-

dem Topograficznym. . ., Warszawa, 1862 [contains a map]. - On the Jews in Warsaw after 1863: J. Shatzky, Geshikhte fun Yiddn in Varshe, Vol.III, New York, 1953.

4. Above: Ch.4, p.42, note 45.
5. "Hayey meshorer 'ibri", o.c., 77.
6. Comp.: his letter to Lichtenfeld (written in 1872 or 1873), YB, XII (1937), 183.
7. M. Makser, Dos lebn fun a Yiddishn dikhter, YB, XII (1937), 211.
8. In 1872 or 1873 Lichtenfeld lived in "Maliniak's house", opposite "Hotel Londyński" (YB, XII, 1937, 184). "The London Hotel" was on 21, Nalewski St. (See: M-v, o.c., 17).
9. O.c., II, 981.
10. Geliebter in R. Imri's (Reigenberg's) article printed in "Ha-'olam", December 14th, 1944, 131.
11. Sh. Ashkenazy in "Zamość. . .", 231; Reisen, l.c. See also Peretz's short-story "Nes hanukah" (A, II, 393-399), which contains some autobiographical reminiscences (to be compared also to Z, 60, 84 and 93) and "Hayey meshorer 'ibri", o.c., 74.
12. "Hayey meshorer 'ibri", l.c. (comp. also: 14-16).
13. L.c.
14. Comp.: l.c. and : "Nes hanukah" (A, II, 393-399).
15. Sh. L. Lewin's and Sh. Ashkenazi's reminiscences (M, 29 and 32). Comp. also: Sh. Ashkenazi in "Zamość. . .", 232. - Peretz admitted it himself in his letters (YB, XII, 1937, 41, 50, 113, 118, etc.).
16. MS, 56a -74. This version is partly different from the one printed in "Ha-boqer 'or", Vol.I (1876), 31-37, 99-105. - "Nagni'el" is not included in K.
17. MS, 57, ll. 1-2 (comp.: Haggai 1, 6. Many similar complaints also in "Hayey meshorer 'ibri", o.c., 13-18, 29-30, 33-40, 42-45, 73-75, 79.
- 17a. "Meshorer be-'olam ha-dimyon" (MS, 1-2).
18. E. Deinard, Zikhronot bat 'ami, Vol.II, St. Louis, 1930, 56.
19. M. Wakser, o.c., 211 and 258, note 48; N, 64-65.
20. Sh. L. Lewin, (M, 29).
21. Lichtenfeld in Deinard's book (l.c.).
22. "A hefqer-mentch".
23. Z, 127. The book referred to is: "Sipurim be-shir we-shirim shonim", Warsaw, 1877.
24. "Hayey meshorer 'ibri", in "Sipurim be-shir we-shirim shonim", Warsaw, 1877. The place referred to is on pp. 59-61.
25. Above: Ch.6, p.67.
26. See below.
27. Above: Ch.4, p.34.
28. Z, 127.
29. MS, 19-20, 148, 150-157, 162, 184, 193-194, 213-242, 245 (partly).

30. N. Sokolow, 'Ishim, Vol.II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 39 and particularly: 46-47.

31. Above: Ch.7, p.90 and Ch.8, p.112.

32. M, 29.

33. "Zamosc. . .", 231.

34. Reisen, o.c., II, 981. On Ya'aqob Huberman see: D. Schiffmann in "Ha-sefirah", 1892, no.31. His name is not mentioned either by Reisen or by Schiffmann. We obtained it from Mrs. I. Ibbeken, formerly the secretary of his famous son B. Huberman.

35. "Yishaq Leybush Peretz" in "'Ishim", Vol.II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 36-71.

36. Mentioned by Peretz e.g. in "Ateret yetomin in Varshe", and particularly in "Ha-neqamah" (MS, 21-38).

37. O.c., II, 38. It certainly happened not "in 1873 or 1874", as Sokolow states, but in 1875. Comp.: J. Shatzky in YB, XXXVI (1952), 262.

38. On Sokolow see e.g.: M. Waxman, A History of Jewish Literature, Vol. IV, New York, 1947², 359-372. On the relations between the two writers see: "Y. L. Peretz un Nahum Sokolow", in N. Meisel, Yishaq Leybush Peretz un zayn dor shraybers, New York, 1951, 215-228.

39. On Braudes see e.g.: Waxman, o.c., Vol.III, New York, 1945², 301-308; Y.A. Klausner, Ha-nobelah ba-sifrut ha-'ibrit. . .", Tel-Aviv, 1947, 166-177; and particularly: J. Klausner, Hist'oriyah shel ha-sifrut ha-'ibrit he-hadashah, Vol.V, Jerusalem, 1949, 397-461. - Peretz mentions Braudes' novel "Ha-dat we-ha-hayim" in "Der brilyant" (A,III, 193) and in "Be-'olam ha-'otiyot ha-mahkimot" no. 17 (K, VII, 320). He probably alludes to Braudes also in "Al 'odot ha-shulhan 'arukh" (K, VII, 29; comp. Braudes' article "Ha-safah bi-khebodah u-be-'asmah" in "Gan perahim" Vol.I, Wilno, 1881, 18-19 and MS, 5, ll. 9-15). - Peretz's post-scriptum to a letter to Braudes (written in 1901) see: B, 220. After Braudes' death Peretz published a short but warm appreciation in "R'osh-hodesh".6 (October 1902; A, VIII, 410). - On Braudes in MS see below.

40. In 1915("Ishim", II, 71).

41. "Modeh we-'ozeb. . .", Warsaw, 1875 (42 pp.). The censor's permission was given on the 14th September 1875. Comp.: J. Klausner, o.c., Vol. V, 408.

42. Version A: MS, 3-11; Version B: MS, 163-165, 251-252 (= variant of: MS, 163, l. 20-165, l. 13), 166-179, 189-192; 75-98 (this is, in our opinion the correct order of the scattered chapters and fragments).

43. MS, 175, the crossed lines 1-2.

44. MS, 189, l. 2 ff. (comp. also: 5, ll. 9 ff.)

45. Warsaw, 1875 (35 pp.)

46. Warsaw, 1876 (248 pp.)

47. See below.

48. Of Natan Schriftgiesser (2242, Nalewki St.).

49. MS, 5, ll. 9-15; comp. also: "Manginot ha-zeman" (published in 1887), K, IX, [pt.2], 40 (referring not to non-Biblical Hebrew, but to Yiddish).

50. "Ha-safah bi-khebodah u-be-'asmah", "Gan perahim", Vol.I, Wilno, 1881, 18-19.

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51. All this follows mainly from Peretz's criticism in MS.
52. "Leyl zewa'ah" (K, IV, pt.1, 144-163).
53. On Linetski see e.g.: L. Wiener, The History of Yiddish Literature . . ., London, 1899, 82, 161-165, 371-372.
54. Quoted in Y. Rimnik in "Bibliologisher zambukh", 1930, 518. Comp.: YB, XII (1937), 252-253 and 259, note 73; N, 114-115. On Braudes' attitude to Peretz see also: Sh. L. Citron, Dray literarishe doyres. . ., Vol.I, Wilno, 1922, 131.
55. Wiener, o.c., 357.
56. On Gottlober and his journal see e.g.: Waxman, o.c., Vol.III, 255-258; Y.A. Klausner, o.c., 153-156; and particularly J. Klausner, o.c., Vol.V, 331-396.
57. Sokolow, o.c., Vol.II, 37.
58. Comp.: J. Klausner, o.c., Vol.V, 349 and 408.
59. Wakser in YB, XII (1937), 252-253; N, 115. According to Peretz's brother, Yonah Yehoshua' Peretz, Braudes stayed at Peretz's house for months while on his way from Wilno to Lemberg (probably in the 1880's). See: Y.Y. Peretz, Y. L. Peretz als kelal-tuer in Zamosc. . .", "Forverts", April 6th, 1930.
60. J. Klausner, o.c., Vol.V, 408-411.
61. So: Wakser, o.c., 254.
62. Details below: Ch.16.
63. Wakser, l.c.
64. L.c.
65. Comp: above, note 16 and particularly: Y.A. Klausner, Al Ketab-yad hadash shel Yishaq Leybush Peretz, "[The first] World Congress of Jewish Studies. Summer 1947", Vol.I, Jerusalem, 1952, 330-331.
66. MS, 75, a crossed line before l. 1. Peretz mentions in his "Memoirs" a parody of Schiller's "Das Lied von der Glocke" called "Kugel" which he attributes to Ettlinger (Z, 72; on Ettlinger see above: Ch.4, p.32). However, "Dos lied funm kugel" (Odessa, 1863) is not by Ettlinger but by Gottlober (comp. e.g.: L. Wiener, The History of Yiddish Literature. . ., London, 1899, 370).
67. Y. L. Peretz, Briv un Redes, ed. by N. Meisel, [1st ed.], Wilno, 1929, 16.
68. J. Klausner, o.c., Vol.V, 388-389.
69. Sokolow, o.c., Vol.II, 37.
70. W. Zeitlin, Bibliotheca Hebraica Post-Mendelssohniana, Leipzig, 1891-95², 338-339; J. Klausner, o.c., Vol.V, 388; Sokolow, l.c. - Peretz mentions "Mr. Shapira", obviously a publisher and most probably identical with 'E. Y. Shapira', in MS, 188, ll. 13-16 (= "Gilyonot", Vol.XXV, 1951, 267).
71. Zeitlin, o.c., 429-430; J. Klausner, o.c., V, 388-389; Sokolow, o.c., II, 37. - On other possible acquaintances of Peretz in Warsaw in 1875-1876 see: YB, XII (1937), 55, 88 (and 145, note 26), 99 (and 145, note 32); Reisen, o.c., II, 981; Sokolow, o.c., II, 36-38; etc.
72. "Nagni'el", "Ha-boqer'or", Vol.I (1876), 31 (comp.: MS, 56a, ll. 3-11).

73. "Hayey meshorer 'ibri", "Sipurim be-shir we-shirim shonim", Warsaw, 1877, 11 (comp. also: 79).
74. "Natchnienie z nektaru". Published by N. Weinig in YB, XII (1937), 201.
75. "Sheloshah kokhabim" (MS, 149). Published in our above-mentioned article, "World Congress. . .", I, 331-332.
76. He states at the end of 1877: "I have many friends in Warsaw, from all of them I received. . . several letters. . ." (YB, XII, 1937, 55).
77. See his poem "The Fire" (in MS; comp. above).
78. See Peretz's first, still unpublished, short-story "Ha-negamah", ("The Revenge"; MS, 21-38).
79. And not in 1875 as Meisel (M, 359) and A.A. Roback (R, 113). Comp.: Reisen, o.c., II, 983; Sokolow, o.c., Vol. II, 39-40, 46-47; N, 114, 117.
80. "Hayey meshorer 'ibri", Warsaw, 1877. Comp.: M. Wakser, Dos lebn fun a yiddishn dikhter, YB, XII (1937), 208-210. Reproduction of the title-page and its reverse: facing p. 209X.
81. Wakser, o.c., 210.
82. MS, 96, ll. 1-2.
83. Z, 124.
84. A few details about Peretz's first wife after the divorce: R. Peretz-Laks, Arum Peretz. . ., Warsaw, 1935, 49.

12. Back in Zamość. Second Marriage (1876 - beginning of 1878).

Soon after obtaining the divorce Peretz left Warsaw. He returned to his native Zamość - to his family, relatives and friends. Sarah and the four (or three) year old Lucjan perhaps continued for some time to live in Opatów. However, at least from 1882 until 1885 or 1886 Lucjan Peretz lived in Zamość with his father and his stepmother ¹ .

Peretz arrived back in Zamość after years of hardship, trial and constant errors and failures ² . The divorce itself, although it relieved him from oppressive ties, was no doubt painful. This certainly was not the home-coming of his dreams.

In the first letter to his bride, Helena Ringelheim, dated September 6, 1877, Peretz described his feelings before he met her: "My heart was withered, my life a torturing and dreadful dream, my forehead - always covered with a shroud of clouds. . . ."

"I withered in the bloom of my life, I was as though dead. . . ." ³
A few months later, in another letter to his bride, Peretz wrote about his past:

". . . the spirit of the dark past, dark without a single ray of hope. . . the heart was a grave full of the ashes of dead withered feelings. . . on the ashes there sat a black raven of doubts and sucked out the last drop of blood from the congealed heart. . . A dark and gloomy night!" ⁴ .

In spite of the artificial and florid style used by Peretz there is no reason to doubt that he revealed here something of what was going on in his soul in the years before he met Helena. As to the style, we must remember that Peretz was twenty-five years old, a poet, and very much in love.

According to Z. Reisen⁵ Peretz, after his return to Zamość, tried to establish a Hebrew school but was prevented by the resistance of the zealots⁶. Reisen also relates⁷ that for a certain time Peretz was a partner in a mill together with his uncle Yosef Altberg⁸ and someone called Gedalyah Szper⁹. However, according to J. Shatzky¹⁰, Yosef Altberg died in 1873 at the age of 72. The third partner was probably his son, a close friend of Peretz and later his employee - Mosheh Altberg¹¹. M. Altberg was 8 - 10 years Peretz's junior¹².

No details are known about these two further ventures of Peretz, obviously again unsuccessful.

As mentioned above, Peretz was already interested in law when he was still a boy, and he was perhaps encouraged by Lichtenfeld to study this subject systematically while in Warsaw. However, it was Mosheh Altberg who influenced Peretz to take up law as a career¹³. In 1876 the Russian legislative system was introduced into Poland¹⁴ and Peretz had to study the Russian Code of Law. His long-standing interest in the subject and his Talmudic education¹⁵ were certainly a big asset. Yet the dynamic and restless young man had no patience to study diligently. His young friend M. Altberg had to supervise Peretz and to see to it "that he should sit and work and not waste his time"¹⁶. In a very short time

Peretz felt himself fit for examination ¹⁷ . This took place in Zamość probably in the beginning of 1877 ¹⁸ . Yonah Yehoshua^c Peretz, the writer's youngest brother, who is our main source for these details, remembered that Peretz was not very successful. Nevertheless, the chairman of the circuit court ¹⁹ , where Peretz was examined, ruled to give him the "patent" ²⁰ . Perhaps the chairman was more impressed by Peretz's abilities than by his knowledge ²¹ .

From this time onward for more than ten years "Leon Peretz" practised as a "Barrister at the Circuit Court of Peace in Zamość" ²² . His activity was not limited to Zamość only but embraced also its surroundings - "the second district of the Province of Lublin" ²³ .

As soon as Peretz opened an office Mosheh Altberg took over its management: "I used to translate the papers from Polish into Russian and in general I used to represent him and to dispose of all the technicalities for which Peretz had no. . . .patience" - says Altberg in his reminiscences.

Altberg kept an eye on the dates of the cases because Peretz had never any patience "and did not excel in punctuality" ²⁴ . Nevertheless Peretz was very interested in his work about which he even tried to write detailed reports to his bride ²⁵ . It seems that Helena Ringelheim did not encourage Peretz to continue and tell her "the pettiest details" about his practice ²⁶ , although she asked for some general information ²⁷ .

That a case of an unpaid loan, or of stolen wood-boards could not arouse Helena's curiosity is only natural. However, Peretz had also

some more interesting stories to tell. A woman sent a telegram to a man: "You are in Krasnostav ²⁸ and your wife lives an immoral life in Zamość. For what are you a husband? X." ²⁹ . Peretz succeeded in extricating the authoress of this message from the hands of justice. Yet even this did not persuade Helena that the letters of her fiancé should contain mainly matters juridical. In two further letters Peretz stressed that he "suspended the continuation [of reports] about my law practice until your special decision concerning that" ³⁰ . This continuation never followed, but Peretz's letters prove that he was fond of his new occupation. The statements of his brother Yonah Yehoshua ³¹, his uncle Shemu'el Leyb Lewin ³² , Shemu'el 'Ashkenazi ³³ , Y. H. Zagorodski ³⁴ and others ³⁵ prove that he was a good lawyer.

Peretz's serious attitude towards his work and his feeling of moral responsibility found their expression in his letters to Helena. In one of the letters he writes: "I am pleased that as yet I have got [for the forthcoming session] only civil cases, because in a criminal case, I am shaken by uncertainty. . .in a criminal case, when on the defence depends the fate, the good name and the freedom of a man, I feel all the responsibility that weighs on me and I quiver like a little leaf during a tempest, whether the case will not be lost through my fault. -" ³⁶ . Moreover, even in civil cases, Peretz kept up a high standard of morality. After he won one of his first cases he had no heart to collect the money from the creditor. In view of his extreme poverty, the young lawyer withdrew ashamed ³⁷ . Not to attend to one of his cases Peretz regarded as

"unworthy deceit" 38 .

Peretz worked hard: "twice a month sessions of the Circuit of Judges of Peace takes place and the rest of the time is taken up by the meetings of the [courts of] first instance" 39 . He had to travel a lot and in his letters to Helena he mentions some of the places where he had to appear in courts, etc. 40 . Peretz's letter to his bride are full of complaints of his working very hard, being very busy and very tired 41 . Sometimes he was too busy to visit his bride (who lived in Łęczna) 42 or even to answer in time or to write a long letter: "I cannot write much, the session of the court will start soon" - this is the last sentence of a letter comprising four lines only 43 . "I stop writing because even the Court of Peace lets me have no peace" - puns Peretz in another letter 44 . Sometimes, as when he was compelled to serve as "translator from Polish, German and Yiddish into the official [i.e. Russian] language" he had hardly time to eat 45 . No wonder that he occasionally felt ill from overwork 46 .

The results of Peretz's interest in his new vocation and of his hard work was success. For the first time Peretz had succeeded in his job: "one earns because one works" as he puts it 47 . When Peretz realized that he was successful, his liking for his profession increased.

As already mentioned, Mosheh Altberg was the first to be employed in Peretz's office 48 . Later Peretz employed Simhah Schiffmann 49 (the son of his former teacher David Schiffmann 50), perhaps also Barukh Epstein 51 (the son of rabbi Mosheh Epstein and Ribale' Peretz's sister

Le'ah ⁵²) and others. According to Reisen ⁵³ there were at a time up to twelve people working in Peretz's office.

His clients were many and varied: Jews and gentiles, peasants ⁵⁴ , and merchants, petty Polish country-noblemen ⁵⁵ , rich landowners ⁵⁶ , etc. In the beginning of the 1880's Peretz was even entrusted with the cases of "Ordynacja Zamojskich", the big group of about sixty ⁵⁷ estates around Zamość owned by the family of the founder of this town ⁵⁸ .

In a letter to his bride, written a short time before the wedding, Peretz said that he had "not a very small practice" ⁵⁹ . And more than five years later he wrote to his wife: "I have clients without a limit. . . , Well, I earn not too badly" ⁶⁰ .

However, Peretz was interested in his practice not only from the financial point of view. His practice gave him an excellent opportunity of meeting different people, observing their behaviour, peeping into their, souls, when in joy and in distress ⁶¹ . And Peretz was all his life mainly interested in human beings. In one of his letters to his friend Ya - aqob Dinezon Peretz says: "The 'beautiful' Nature pleases me, gives me no [literary] materials. Materials are given to me by man. . ." ⁶² . And in a letter "To the Lady at the Sea" (Mrs. Shapiro from Warsaw ⁶³) he states that he was always "interested . . . in the man, the soul" more than in Nature or in anything else ⁶⁴ .

Both letters quoted above were written in 1911 a few years before Peretz's death. However, the human soul, with its mysteries, already fascinated the great writer when he was a beginner, as can be seen from

the "Haqdamah" ("Preface") published in "Sipurim be-shir we-shirim shonim"⁶⁵, which contains his literary credo⁶⁶.

The unlimited possibilities provided by Peretz's practice for studying human souls, were an additional - and very important - reason why the young lawyer was so absorbed by his work and saw in it his real vocation. The more so, because he could also display his natural gift as an orator and fulfill his inner urge to defend people, to be their spokesman⁶⁷.

Peretz's letters to his bride already bore witness to the influence of his occupation on him. Not only did he try to write to Helena about his cases and inserted two short-stories based on episodes from his practice⁶⁸, nay, even his style was sometimes peppered with utterances typical of lawyers. Writing about the problem of the emancipation of women he quoted several times the Russian Code of Law⁶⁸. A little misunderstanding between Helena and himself provided Peretz with an opportunity to put himself in the dock and to describe his "case" in mock-juridical jargon⁷⁰.

His law practice probably was an asset when he later worked in the Jewish Community of Warsaw. Moreover, it left some traces also in Peretz's literary works. When still a practising lawyer, most probably in the 1880's⁷¹, he wrote a very witty macaronic Yiddish-Russian poem with an Aramaic title: "The Kingdom of the Earth is like the Kingdom of the Heavens"⁷². The Heavenly Tribunal is compared here to a Russian Court. Courts and lawyers are mentioned also in several of Peretz's later writings⁷³.

What is much more important: Peretz's "quick grasping, logical brain" ⁷⁴ was stimulated by his long law practice. The strong logical-rationalistic undercurrent, which is felt even in Peretz's most imaginative and fantastic writings, was the result.

No doubt Peretz's financial situation improved after he passed his examinations as a lawyer, For the first time he earned his living and could be confident about the future. However, in the first year and a half (or even more) of his practice his earnings were not very large ⁷⁵. Although Peretz in his letters to his bride underlined so many times how busy he was, he mentioned his financial situation only once and in very general terms ⁷⁶. And this in spite of Helena's interest in "the basis of my economic existence" ⁷⁷. Instead, he alludes several times to his prodigality ⁷⁸. ~~His inability to economise did the rest.~~ As a result, if we have to believe his relative Rosa Peretz-Laks, when the young and successful lawyer married, his wife had to spend 500 roubles of her dowry on paying Peretz's debts ⁷⁹. Whether these were old debts contracted in Warsaw ⁸⁰, or maybe old and new and the maintenance he owed his divorced wife on top of them - we cannot say for sure.

Yet even if Peretz's financial situation did not improve very much at once, his self-confidence returned, his mood changed and his position in Zamość society was obviously on the ascendant ⁸¹. He was appreciated by Jews and non-Jews alike ⁸². He was invited to balls and dancing-parties ⁸³, attended theatrical performances and concerts ⁸⁴. Peretz was probably fond of playing cards ⁸⁵ and chess ⁸⁶. In his small

room Peretz was often visited by "many, even too many guests" ⁸⁷ . As Dinezon says: "He went back to his native town of Zamość and re-introduced his old hospitality" of the days when he lived in Sandomierz ⁸⁸ .

Did Peretz enjoy this kind of life? Was he satisfied?

Peretz was very much a man of moods, of ups and downs. It is therefore not surprising that while in one of his letters to his bride he complained that he had not yet been invited to a ball that was due to take place in the evening ⁸⁹ , in another he expressed his deep dissatisfaction with all the so-called "social life": "I am so busy that only now can I answer your letter, received a few days ago. And yet I have time enough to yawn, to be bored and more than that - to long for you. Good Lord, how long are the evenings, endless - the sleepless nights! How many card-yawning games, dancing-boring-parties and entangled law cases. And when, after all this, you wish to rest, to join in imagination the beloved creature, soon the door-bell announces that importunate guests are doing you honour by their endless visit. In the small room rings empty and forced laughter, black smoke of cigarettes accumulates and the time drags on like infernal tortures. . ." ⁹⁰ .

And again. Once Peretz admits that: "my spirit often loves to wallow on the ground and avoids the azure of the skies to enjoy pleasures 'a la gemein'. - " ⁹¹ . Yet another time he complains that he is bored and says that "my only pleasure is reading". However, he is forced to add: "but it is very difficult to get here [i.e. in Zamość] a good book" ⁹² .

In his letters to his bride (written between September 6, 1877

and the first half of February 1878) ⁹³ Peretz did not mention what he was reading in these months except for one name: "I read now Zabłocki; he must have been good some time ago, now he cannot arouse any interest. I also cannot digest his old-fashioned style" ⁹⁴ .

Franciszek Zabłocki (1750-1821) ⁹⁵ was a Polish author of typical XVIIIth century satirical comedies ("Fircyk wżalotach", "Sarmatyzm", etc.) based mainly on French, sometimes third-rate, prototypes. As far as we can see there are no traces of his influence on Peretz.

Occasionally Peretz mentioned in his letters to his bride a few more names of writers and poets (whose works he had probably read not a very long time before writing the letters), but this is not enough to draw any conclusions. Peretz's literary works, and especially the Unknown Manuscript, are better witnesses to his wide range of reading in Hebrew, Polish, Russian and German literature during the years 1870-1878.

In the late 1870's (and in the 1880's ⁹⁶) Peretz was interested inter alia in sociology and related subjects - disciplines very much in vogue in Poland after 1863, in the era of "positivism" ⁹⁷ . In his letters to Helena, Peretz dealt with the problem "Of the Work of Women" ⁹⁸ . He had already tackled this problem before then in a conversation with his bride in Łęczna, where she lived ⁹⁹ . Peretz believed that a woman should be educated in a way that would enable her to be a good wife and a good mother. She should be able to become an understanding friend and partner of her husband when her advice and spiritual support were needed. However, she should also be able, if necessary, to earn her living. Housekeeping and education of her children are woman's principal vocations;

economics and pedagogics would make her fit for it and at the same time would give her a profession, when in distress. Peretz abhorred the superficial education of girls which made them dolls, able only to display their beauty, to attend balls, to dance, to chatter in French, to play a few waltzes, to indulge in a little drawing and - in a lot of dirty gossip.

Peretz adhered to the views of Fanny Lewald (1811-1889)¹⁰⁰, a German writer (of Jewish parentage) and one of the first fighters for the rights of women in Germany. She published: "Osterbriefe für die Frauen" (1863) and "Für und wider die Frauen" (1870)¹⁰¹. From an anonymous little (Russian?) brochure Peretz learned the views of John Stuart Mill¹⁰² ("The Subjection of Women", 1869). He quotes Luise Otto (1819-1895), a German fighter for the emancipation of women¹⁰³, and a Russian author "Mr. N. Solovyev"¹⁰⁴.

The problem of women was to Peretz not a purely theoretical question. There was hardly a question with which Peretz dealt that did not stir his feelings. He had particularly at heart the bitter lot of the Jewish woman in the "Pale of Settlement". Here he saw "the most monstrous form of subjugation of women"¹⁰⁵. A Jewish woman had at the same time not only to care for the house and the children, but also to earn a living for the whole family. Her husband devoted his life to studying Talmud day and night. And she was not allowed before the wedding even to see the man for whom she would be obliged to slave her whole life.

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In a Russian letter to Helena Peretz inserted a Yiddish translation of the famous diatribe on the fate of the Jewish woman from

Y. L. Gordon's Hebrew poem "The Dot on the 'i'" 107 .

A deep understanding for the injustice done to the Jewish woman and for her sufferings is one of the very important motives in Peretz's writings.

Nearly all Peretz's letters to his bride are written in Polish; only four are written in Russian, and none in Hebrew or in Yiddish. He could not write to her in Hebrew because "Helena did not know this language" 108 . However, it is not without significance that he never tried to write to her in Yiddish.

In this period of his life Peretz was influenced to a certain degree by the non-Jewish society with which he had many contacts, mainly (but not only 109) in connection with his work. Moreover, as we know 110 , already between 1873-1875 Peretz was dressed like a young Polish nobleman. In those years he had produced more than two score of poems in Polish. In a letter to Y. Zinberg, written at the end of 1911, Peretz explains: "this was an international moment" 111 . From the Unknown Manuscript we can see that in the 1870's Peretz believed that with the emancipation of the Jews there would be no need for Jewish writers to use any other than the language of the country where they lived 112 . His attitude towards Yiddish ("Jargon") was negative 113 .

Peretz was under the spell of three different cultures: Jewish, Polish and Russian. Nevertheless he had no problems as to which of the three worlds he belonged to, problems that had torn the soul of Gershon (who changed his name into Polish: "Grzegorz", and into Russian: "Grigoriy Philippovich"), the hero of one of his first published short-stories

"Even so he sinned - he is a Jew" ¹¹⁴.

From Peretz's letters to Helena we know that he "preferred the open coarsness of the Russians to the elegant slyness of those honourable gentlemen, the Poles". . . ¹¹⁵ . With some irony he says of himself in connection with performances for the benefit of the Russian Red Cross Organization, that he was forced to buy tickets because: "I am. . . a patriot and eat Russian bread" ¹¹⁶. Those were the days of the Russian-Turkish war (1877-1878) and the Poles too intended to give a performance in aid of the Russian Red Cross. Peretz is acid when he mentions these Polish attempts to gain the favour of the Russians: "The slaves endeavour to win the affection of the almighty lord. . . Perhaps this private enterprise [i.e. the Polish nation] will be submerged in the sea of Slavedom!" ¹¹⁷.

Still, Peretz's Polish was better than his Russian, and Polish literature the more familiar of the two. As already mentioned, culturally Zamość was much more under Polish than under Russian influence ¹¹⁸ .

It is interesting to note that, like his hero Gershom-Grzegorz-Grigoriy Philippovich (whom he - in 1886! - regarded as a "sinner"), Peretz himself used three names. Although he signed his name in Hebrew, Yishaq Leybush ¹¹⁹, in Polish (even in his letters to his bride and wife, and to his son) Peretz called himself Leon ¹²⁰, and in Russian, Leon, Leon Yudovich (i.e. son of Yehudah) ¹²¹ but also Lev ¹²² and Lev Yudovich ¹²³.

An inclination to a kind of external "conformity" with the

surrounding population (in clothes, manners, language, names, etc.) - an inclination still existing among the Jews of the diaspora - did not at all indicate lack of Jewish national feelings. All this was in accordance with the demands of the Russian Government and the expectations of the Russian and Polish intelligentsia, at least in the first half of the XIXth century and to a certain degree even until the pogroms of 1881-1882 and the reactionary period that followed ¹²⁴. Moreover, this was also in accord with the tendencies of the Haskalah, formulated best by the greatest Hebrew poet of this period Yehudah Leyb Gordon: "You should be a man when outdoors, and a Jew in your tent" ¹²⁵. Gordon advocated inter alia changing Jewish names into Russian ¹²⁶.

Thus it is not surprising that even among Peretz's Polish poems there are two in which national feeling runs high ¹²⁷. He was well aware that the neighbours would always make all Jews responsible for an offence committed by a Jew ¹²⁸. Peretz was proud of a Jewish singer who came from Warsaw to Zamość for a concert and he hoped that she would sing also Jewish songs ¹²⁹. In the beginning of the 1880's Peretz organized obstruction to a visiting artist who dared to make fun of Jews in a rather anti-semitic manner ¹³⁰.

Peretz's national consciousness had nothing to do with religion. He warned his bride ironically that she would get as a husband a "goy" (i.e. non-Jew), "who does not wear a hat while at home" ¹³¹. One of his letters to her is full of exquisite irony about her brother-in-law Ya'aqob Silberman's "reconversion" to religion ¹³². It ends with these

significant words: "But let's at least leave the piety in peace. . . Although it is again in vogue, it became a shield for the rascals, a blanket for the lazy sleepy-heads, mother of pleasant intrigues, a source of inspiration to the catholic Reviews ¹³³ ; however it has a very unpleasant smell, because it still stinks with blood from the Middle Ages. - " ¹³⁴ .

In the beginning of the 1880's Peretz writes jokingly to his wife - that the existence of the Goddess of Love "was proved exactly as the existence of God himself" ! ¹³⁵ .

It follows that the rumours about Peretz's "heretical" views and his opposition to religious formalities and to the rule of the zealots ¹³⁶ were not at all baseless. To E. Singer ¹³⁷ , for instance, Peretz was known as a man "who already utterly rejected the Jewish religion". Peretz's enmity to religious casuistry and its protagonists is clearly reflected in the fragments of his poem "The Fire" (Ha-serefah), preserved in the Unknown Manuscript ¹³⁸ . Peretz's views were well-known to the orthodoxy, and hence the conflicts with the zealots in Opatów, Sandomierz and later also in Zamość.

However, we may presume that in spite of his views, at least before his marriage Peretz did not openly transgress the precepts of the Jewish religion after returning to Zamość ¹³⁹ . We know that Peretz was popular even among religious Jews because of his good-heartedness and generosity, and they sometimes entrusted him with their cases ¹⁴⁰ . Perhaps he was careful not to hurt their feelings too much because he

did not want right at the beginning of his career as a lawyer to lose part of his clientele. This was also important when he tried to take part in the social and cultural life of Zamość; when he attempted to found a school or when he lectured. According to Sh. Ashkenazi ¹⁴¹ Peretz lectured in Zamość already in 1877, in a fluent Hebrew. This probably was not an isolated case. We know about his lectures in the 1880's, and we hear that even hasidim attended them ¹⁴². He certainly would not have wanted to offend against their religious susceptibilities ¹⁴³.

Speaking about Peretz's activities, we should mention that until four or five years after his marriage (which took place in the beginning of 1878) he was a member of the voluntary fire-brigade of Zamość ¹⁴⁴. N. Meisel discovered a photograph of Peretz in the uniform of the fire-brigade taken "more than 50 years ago" ¹⁴⁵. As this was written in 1929, ¹⁴⁶ and Meisel visited Zamość in 1928 ¹⁴⁷ it follows that Peretz was a member of the fire-brigade already in about 1878-1879 ¹⁴⁸. Perhaps he joined the brigade soon after the great fire of 1877 that devastated practically the whole of Szczebrzeszyn, as Peretz says in the Unknown Manuscript ¹⁴⁹. He might have been influenced by this disaster in the nearby town, so familiar to him from his youth. In those days it was most unusual for a Jew in a little Polish town to join a fire-brigade ¹⁵⁰.

In Peretz's letters to his bride there are very few details

about his relatives. He writes at some length only about the arrest of one of his brothers - Hayim Yosef Peretz. Hayim Yosef settled down after his marriage in Galicia which then belonged to Austria. He was arrested after crossing the Russian border without obtaining appropriate documents. Peretz was worried mainly about his beloved brother's health ¹⁵¹. Hayim Yosef was chained and sent under custody for trial. This affected their mother Ribale Peretz's health ¹⁵². The little episode had a happy end: Hayim Yosef was released and it seems that his precious health was not affected. The mother recovered ¹⁵³.

N. Meisel ¹⁵⁴ already stressed the fact that in the letters to his bride Peretz never mentioned that he was a writer and that some of his works were already published. Neither did he mention that he was engaged in literary work during their betrothal ¹⁵⁵. Meisel thought that in this period Peretz simply did not care very much about his writings. No doubt Peretz was at that time absorbed in his work as a lawyer and had no time to spare for thoughts about his literary works. On the other hand it is also possible that he tried to appear as a practical man, a reliable candidate for a pater familias ¹⁵⁶. Writing poetry was still regarded in the circles of Jewish provincial bourgeoisie as an occupation fit only for a good-for-nothing ("batlan"). We must also bear in mind that Peretz's thirty letters to his bride cover only a short period

of about six months (September 6, 1877¹⁵⁷ - first half of February 1878). It is remarkable that these ^{very} letters include several literary items.

Nehamah¹⁵⁸ - Rahel¹⁵⁹ Ringelheim (c. 1859¹⁶⁰ - November 22, 1937¹⁶¹) preferred to be called by her Polish name: Helena. Her father, David Ringelheim (who died a year after Helena's marriage), came from Galicia. He was a timber-merchant and floated timber to Danzig. This occupation was not alien to Peretz's family: as we know Peretz's father himself also tried to earn his living by floating timber to Danzig. Helena's mother, Sarah, née Henigsfeld of Łęczna, kept a wine-shop.

In his letters Peretz mentions many of Helena's relatives: her two years elder sister Zofia, the wife of Ya'acob (Yenkł) Silberman, and her husband¹⁶²; her two brothers, the elder Herman¹⁶³ and the youngest - Leopold (Lipe)¹⁶⁴, and others.

David Ringelheim was far from being backward, and his children were well educated. Helena, who was born in Łęczna, attended a non-Jewish private boarding-school. A scribe taught her Yiddish¹⁶⁵.

Peretz's best friend since the end of the 1880's, the Yiddish writer Ya'acob Dinezon (1856-1919), told Rosa Peretz-Laks the following story about her famous relative's second marriage.

Once Peretz visited the fair of Łęczna¹⁶⁶, a little town not far to the east of Lublin¹⁶⁷. He dropped into a wine-shop for a drink. There he fell in love with the daughter of the wine-merchant. He asked

her immediately for her hand. She hesitated, but in a few days time [!] they were married and went to live in Zamość¹⁶⁸.

Peretz's own story, as told in a letter to a man called Najman differs on several points¹⁶⁹. Najman was one of Peretz's friends acquired during his stay in Warsaw, and the letter is an invitation to Peretz's wedding. Here Peretz told his friend "short and easy the story of my love".

"There is in Zamość a certain young man, let's call him 'A'. He lost his post and was left high and dry, with an empty pocket and without prospects for the future. . .

"I did this 'A' a favour, gave him bed and board during 5 weeks, and he promised to repay me.

"Once he came to me full of joy.

- I came, he said, to repay you lavishly, I will give you. . . a wife. . .

I laughed.

- Do not laugh, he told me, but come with me to Łęczna, you will see a girl with whom you will fall in love and whom you will after a short time marry. . .

I laughed, but out of curiosity¹⁷⁰ I went, I saw - however not a girl but an angel - I fell in love and here I am - getting married."

Peretz's story, although it has perhaps no less flavour of a romantic anecdote than the one told by Dinezon to Rosa Peretz-Laks, is no doubt basically true.

The real name of 'A', the "match-maker", was Yosef Rubinstein

He was then employed by Helena's father in his timber-stores. Probably after Rubinstein's persuasion Peretz joined two of his cousins who went to the fair of Łęczna. Rubinstein accompanied them. Peretz went to see the girl and her family ¹⁷². There were two big yearly fairs at Łęczna - on the Feast of Corpus Christi ¹⁷³ (in the summer) and on St. Giles' Day ¹⁷⁴ (September 1). The second one lasted ten days ¹⁷⁵. Peretz went to Łęczna for the autumn fair. In a Hebrew letter to his (future) "brother-in-law" Ya'aqob Silberman ¹⁷⁶, written on September 6 ¹⁷⁷, the same day in which he wrote his first letter to Helena, Peretz informs him that he arrived safely back in Zamość. He hopes to come again to Łęczna at the approaching Feast of Tabernacles ("sukot") i.e. between September 21st and 28th, 1877. Helena Peretz stated that while on his first visit, Peretz stayed in Łęczna three days and was eager to arrange the formal engagement immediately ¹⁷⁸. We may presume that Peretz arrived in Łęczna on Friday, August 31st, 1877 ¹⁷⁹. He probably first met Helena's family on Friday evening or on Saturday and went back to Zamość on the 3rd or 4th. When, on the 6th, he wrote his first letter to "dearest Helena" she was already his bride ¹⁸⁰. This rather hasty engagement astonished one of Peretz's acquaintances and the young fiancé tried in vain to explain to him "the electric relations of hearts" and "the quick meeting of souls" ¹⁸¹. No doubt this was "love at first sight". Hayim Yosef, Peretz's brother, had written a letter of congratulations to Helena after the engagement in which he said: "From the first sight she acquired unlimited rule over Leon's [i.e. Peretz's] experienced heart" ¹⁸².

Witnesses are Peretz's letters to his bride, all full of love, longing, impatience.

After the feast of hanukah (i.e. after December 8, 1877) Peretz was able to inform Helena: "The furniture acquired" - and he enumerates in detail their possessions ¹⁸³. However, the date of the wedding was not yet fixed ¹⁸⁴. Peretz was very impatient and often complained about the postponements: "I do not know why nobody speaks anymore about our wedding" ¹⁸⁵. He was happy only when he knew that the wedding-time was near ¹⁸⁶. Although he was too busy and could not go to Łęczna on the Feast of Tabernacles ("sukot") as he intended to do ¹⁸⁷ (and this was not the only time when he could not see Helena ¹⁸⁸), he certainly visited the Ringelheims from time to time ¹⁸⁹.

Probably at the end of 1877 Helena went to Warsaw ¹⁹⁰. She lived with her elder sister Zofia the wife of Ya'aqob Silberman ¹⁹¹. Helena spent several weeks in Warsaw ¹⁹². She was busy preparing her trousseau ¹⁹³, attending theatres ¹⁹⁴, etc. On January 18, 1878 she probably still was in Warsaw but her trousseau was nearly ready and the wedding day was approaching ¹⁹⁵.

As to Peretz, after some difficulties he succeeded in fulfilling the wish of all the bride's family ¹⁹⁶ and found a "big, nice, marvellous" flat ¹⁹⁷. By that time Helena was obviously back in Łęczna.

While Helena was in Warsaw, her brother Herman visited Peretz in Zamość at the bride's request ¹⁹⁸.

Ultimately the date of the wedding was fixed: February 14th,

1878. Peretz was a little disappointed: too late and clashing with a Session of the Court, ¹⁹⁹ and he urged everybody - Helena and her parents, Herman and his wife - to speed up the wedding "for I am sick of love" ²⁰⁰. The wedding was originally to take place in Tarzymiechy ²⁰¹, near Zamość - an estate belonging to Peretz's rich relative Yehoshua^c Margulies (Margaliot) ²⁰². Margulies suddenly fell very ill ²⁰³. Although he recovered for a short time ²⁰⁴, Margulies died on "beginning of the month ["ro'sh-hodesh"] 'Adar" ²⁰⁵ i.e. February 4 or 3, 1878 ²⁰⁶ ten or eleven days before the date fixed for the wedding ²⁰⁷. Therefore the wedding could not take place in Tarzymiechy.

When Peretz first heard about Margulies' illness, he suggested arranging the wedding in Łęczna, the bride's domicile, and wanted to come there with his parents only ²⁰⁸. And in the letter to Najman, quoted above, Peretz invited his friend to the wedding "which shall take place in the town of Łęczna on February 14th, this year 1878" ²⁰⁹.

According to Reisen ²¹⁰ the Jewish date of Peretz's wedding was Shebat 14th [5] 638, i.e. January 18, 1878. This is obviously a mistake. As already mentioned, on this very day Peretz wrote to Helena: "the wedding-day is approaching" ²¹¹.

Strangely enough Reisen, who is on the whole very well informed, says also ²¹² that Peretz's and Helena's wedding took place not in Łęczna but in the little town of Krasnystaw ²¹³ which is situated half way between Łęczna and Zamość, between the bride's and bridegroom's domiciles ²¹⁴. We do not know any details about the wedding itself.

Yet it would not have been against custom if both parties had met halfway (in Krasnystaw), perhaps performed here the official part of the ceremony, and proceeded to Łęczna where the wedding party would have been arranged 215.

When they were married Peretz was about 26 years old and Helena - nearly 20 216 .

A new chapter began in Peretz's life. For the first time he had the feeling of security. His financial situation was assured; he was successful in his new profession in which he found a source of satisfaction; his prospects were bright; the attitude of Zamość society towards him was that of love and respect. Above all this: he married the woman he loved so dearly. The relations between Helena and her step-son Lucjan were good.

NOTES

1. B, 79-128, passim. (comp. also: 8) and M. Altberg's reminiscences in YB, XII (1937), 305. Peretz's first known letter to Lucjan in Płock (where he attended a secondary school) is dated: 15 [Old Style] /27 August 1886 (B, 120-121).

2. On one of the last pages of the MS (25) Peretz twice scribbled in Polish the two words "Koszta Podróży" ("Costs of Journey"). Does this scribbling reflect Peretz's difficulties before his return to Zamość?

3. YB, XII (1937), 5.

4. O.c., 78.

5. Z. Reizen, Lexikon fun der yiddisher literatur. . ., Vol.II, Wilno, 1930³, 984.

6. Peretz's other attempts in the field of pedagogics belong to the 1880's.

7. L.c.
8. On Y. Altberg see above: Ch.5, p. 53.
9. Pronounce: Shper. Probably also a relative of Peretz.
10. J. Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, YB, XXXVI (1952), 48. (Comp.: Reisen, o.c., Vol.IV, Wilno, 1929², 871 on Yonah Szper of Zamość, who was Peretz's relative).
11. On M. Altberg see above: Ch.5, p.53. The Altbergs, father and son, are sometimes confused by the biographers of Peretz (see e.g.: N, 42, 64, 75.
12. YB, XII (1937), 303 and 304 (M. Altberg's reminiscences). He was probably rather 8 than 10 years younger. In 1876-77 he "was already a grown-up young man" (o.c., 305).
13. O.c., 303 and 305.
14. "Pol ska" (Vol.XIII of "Wielka Ilustrowana Encyklopedia Powst-
szeczna"), Kraków, n.d., 180. Comp.: M. Altberg, o.c., 305 and Reisen, o.c., II, 984.
15. E. Singer, Y. L. Peretz der advokat, "Der Farband", no.57 (May, 1929), 13-14 (it was stated so in Peretz's name); R, 117.
16. M. Altberg, l.c.
17. Reisen, l.c.
18. In an undated letter to his bride (YB, XII, 1937, 34-36) Peretz relates one of his cases that started 6 or 7 months previously. This was, as he says, "soon after my examination" (o.c., 34). The letter was most probably written in October (or September) 1877 (Peretz met his future bride not before August 31st of the same year; see below). Thus we can fix the date of his examination as approximately between January and April 1877.
19. "S'yezd".
20. Yonah Yehoshua Peretz's statement in M, 30. See also: Sh. Ashkenazi's memoirs in "Zamość. . .", Tel-Aviv, 1953, 231; Reisen, l.c.
21. Comp.: R, 116-117.
22. "Obrońca Zjazdu Sądu Pokoju w Zamościu" is the printed heading on Peretz's notepaper in Polish (e.g.: YB, XII, 1937, facsimile facing p.8) from September 1877 on. No earlier letters of Peretz the lawyer survived.
23. The Russian headings on Peretz's notepaper were: "Poverenniy pri s'yezde mirovykh sudey 2-go Okruga Lublinskoy Gubernii" (o.c.,6). On Peretz the lawyer see particularly: Singer, o.c.; Y. Mark, Peretz - der younger advokat, "Pedagogischer buletin fun Arbeter-Ring un Shalom-Aleykhem-Folks-Institute", No. 35 (March 1945).
24. YB, XII, (1937), 305 and 303.
25. O.c., 8-11.
26. Comp.: o.c., 15, 18, 19, 31, 50.
27. O.c., 41, 50 (see also: 90).
28. This is the Russian form. In Polish: Krasnystaw.
29. O.c., 10.
30. O.c., 19. Comp. also: 31 and 50.

31. M, 30.
32. O.c., 29.
33. "Zamość. . .", 231.
34. " Ahi'asaf, Luah sifruti we-shimushi. . .", Vol. IX, for the year 1901/2, Warsaw, 1901, 357.
35. Singer, o.c.; M.Y. Freyd, Yamim we-shanim. . ., tr. by 'A. Zamir, Vol.II, Tel-Aviv, 1939, 62-64 (based on information obtained from Ya'aqob Dinezon).
36. YB, XII (1937), 57.
37. O.c., 34-36.
38. O.c., 62. Comp. also: 93.
39. O.c., 62.
40. O.c., 34 ("Nowe miasto Zamościa"); 41 (Grabowiec, Stary Zamość, Komarów; the last place is mentioned also by Singer, o.c.); 72 (Grabowiec). See also: 90, 92. For the beginning of the 1880's see his letters to his wife (o.c., 112, 113, 119, 120, 121, 122, 124, 127, 129. Comp. also: Reisen, o.c., II, 987; Zagorodski, l.c.; Sh. L. Citron, Dray literarishe doyres. . ., Vol.I, Wilno, 1922, 139.
41. YB, XII (1937), 19, 41, 45, 46, 51, 57, 59, 62, 71, 72, 82-83, 87, 90, 93, 95. For the 1880's see Peretz's letters to his wife and to his son (o.c., 100-143, passim).
42. O.c., 31, 51, 62.
43. O.c., 45.
44. O.c., 51. Comp. also: 57, 80, 87, 90, 93.
45. O.c., 82-83. Comp. also: 57.
46. O.c., 46.
47. O.c., 75. Comp. also: 82, etc.
48. See above and also: o.c., 41 and 72.
49. O.c., 119 and particularly 120 (and 146, note to no. 44).
50. See above Ch. 7, p. 80. Peretz did not employ David Schiffmann himself as erroneously states J. Shatzky in "Haskalah in Zamość", YB, XXXVI (1952), 44.
51. YB, XII (1937), 121 (and 146, note to no. 44).
52. On Barukh Epstein's parents see above: Ch.5, p.53.
53. Reisen, o.c., II, 984.
54. YB, XII (1937), 113 and 121. See also: Zagorodski, l.c.
55. YB, XII (1937), 59-60.
56. O.c., 106 (and 145, note to no. 37).
57. O.c., 146, note to no. 44: 66; 355+ 56 (!)
58. Comp. above: Ch.4, p. 19. On the "Ordynacja" see: M.M. Pieszko, Przewodnik po Zamościu i okolicy, Zamość, 1934, 14. Peretz as the lawyer of the "Ordynacja of the Zamojskis": YB, XII (1937), 121 (and 146, note to no. 44); Y.Y. Peretz in M, 31; 'Ashkenazi, l.c. Some members of the Zamojski family are mentioned in Peretz's works: a) Z, 50, 58; b) "Brivoye Varshe" (A, IX, 9).
59. YB, XII (1937), 95.
60. O.c., 118 (but comp.: 129).
61. Comp.: N. Sokolow, 'Ishim, Vol.II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 47.

62. B, 303.
63. O.c., 12.
64. O.c., 307. Comp. also: Z, 112.
65. Warsaw, 1877, 1-2.
66. See below: Ch.17.
67. N, 402.
68. YB, XII (1937), 34-36 and 59-60.
69. O.c., 25, note 1.
70. O.c., 64-67.
71. O.c., 260.
72. "Malkhuta' de-'ar'a' ki-malkhuta' de-ragia'" (A, I, 181-182).
73. a) "Halugot ha-hokhmot" (K, IX, [pt. 2], 11); b) "Ma'n de-yahib hayey yahib mezoney" (K, II, pt. 1, 103); c) "Di peshmisene emes", (A, I, 334); d) "Dos zibete bench-likhtl" (A, II, 112-115); e) "Der din-torah" (A, II, 298-300); f) "Kinder-spiel far der tserkve" (A, II, 316-319); g) "Di Lurias" (A, VII, 201). Comp. also the legalistic style of his letter to the Guardians of the Jewish Community of Warsaw (published in a translation from Polish in B, 335-336).
74. Z, 7.
75. Once he even lost money through being forced to neglect his office to serve as a translator in the Court (YB, XII, 1937, 82-83).
76. O.c., 75 (quoted above).
77. O.c., 50.
78. O.c., 41, 50 and later, in the letters to his wife: 113, all 8; see also Singer, o.c. Comp. above: Ch. 116, p. 150 and p. 160, note 15.
79. R. Peretz-Laks, Erinerungen vegn Peretz'n, zayn zuhn un zayn eynikel, "Forverts, April 28, 1929 (?); we used a microfilm of a newspaper cutting, which source was not indicated]. Comp.: R. Peretz-Laks, Arum Peretz'n. . ., Warsaw, 1935, 45.
80. So: N, ~~119~~ 64-65.
81. N, 119.
82. M, 31 (Yonah Yehoshua' Peretz's statement), 34; R. Peretz-Laks, Arum Peretz'n. . ., 45; Singer, o.c.
83. YB, XII (1937), 41, 87, 88; Singer, o.c.
84. O.c., 74, 88 (here Peretz also asked Helena to write to him about the performances she saw in Warsaw; this is the first sign of Peretz's interest in the theatre).
85. O.c., 41, 59, 85, 87, 90, 92, 97.
86. According to Yonah Yehoshua' Peretz (M, 30), he excelled in chess. Yeha'yah Margolit states the opposite (YB, XII, 1937, 309).
87. YB, XII (1937), 7. See also: 34, 57, 87-88.
88. "Y. L. Peretz in likht fun der kritik", Wilno, 1940, 196-197 (comp.: N, 63). For hints at the life Peretz shared with the other members of the Jewish "upper middle class" of Zamosc' before and after his second marriage see: "Zamoshcher Pozondik" (A, I, 326: cards, balls, etc.). On Peretz's fondness of cards and chess in this period see also: Y. Y. Peretz, Peretz vert oys advokat. . .", "Forverts", April 20th, 1930.
89. YB, XII (1937), 41.

90. O.c., 87-88.
91. O.c., 97.
92. O.c., 73. Peretz complained of this difficulty also in his letter to Shalom-Aleykhem in 1888. See: "Briv un redes", ed. N. Meisel, [1st ed.], Wilno, 1929, 16 and particularly: 18. Obviously Peretz was more fortunate with regard to books in his native town while still a young boy, before his first marriage.
93. Most of them are undated.
94. YB, XII (1937), 73.
95. See e.g.: J. Krzyżanowski, Historia literatury polskiej od średniowiecza do XIXw., Warszawa, 1953, 508-511.
96. Y. Margolit's reminiscences (YB, XII, 1937, 309); Peretz's letter to Shalom-Aleykhem, "Briv un redes. . .", [1st ed.], 17-18; N. Sokolow, 'Ishim, Vol.II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 48.
97. On "positivism" in Poland see above: Ch. 10, pp. 118-119.
98. YB, XII (1937), 18-30.
99. O.c., 18.
100. L.c.
101. See, e.g.: "The Encyclopedia Britannica", Vol.XIII, 1929¹⁴, 983.
102. YB, XII (1937), 18, 21, 24, 25.
103. O.c., 25 (and 144, note to no. 6). On Luise Otto-Peters see, e.g.: "Der Grosse Brockhaus", Vol. VIII, 1955¹⁶, 661. In 1866 she published a book about the right of women to earn their living: "Das Recht der Frauen auf Erwerb".
104. O.c., 21-22.
105. O.c., 22.
106. "Because of insufficient knowledge of Russian" (o.c., 22).
107. O.c., 22-24. Comp. above: Ch. 3, pp. 12-13.
108. According to Peretz himself: B, 135; comp. also: YB, XII (1937), 85.
109. Comp. e.g.: Singer, o.c.; Yonah Yehoshua's Peretz's statement in M, 31 (referring to the years after the writer's marriage).
110. Above: Ch. 11B, p. 137.
111. B, 321.
112. MS, 4, ll. 1-9.
113. O.c., 6, ll. 8-14. Not a single letter written by him in those years in Yiddish is preserved.
114. "'Af-al-pi she-hata' Yisra'el hu'", "He-'Asif", Vol. III (1886), 620-627 (not included in K).
115. YB, XII (1937), 74.
116. O.c., 88.
117. The last sentence ("Może to [-ta] prywata utonieć w morzu Słowiańszczyzny") alludes probably to a line in the poem of the great Polish poet Juliusz Słowacki (1809-1849) "Beniowski" (1841), pieśń V, w. 519 ("Dzieła" pod red. J. Krzyżanowskiego, III, Wrocław, 1949, 204): ". . . w Słowiańszczyźnie bez echa toniecie. . .", and perhaps also Spushkin's "Klevetnikam Rossii" (1831), written after the First Polish Uprising, ("Sochineniya v trekh tomakh", t. I, Moscow, 1955, 306-307). - Comp. about

this letter: J. Shatzky, YB, XXVIII (1946), 179.

118. Above: Ch. 4, passim.
119. E.g.: YB, XII (1937), 6, 88, 90, 93, 95, etc.
120. E.G.: o.c., 5, 101, 136, etc.
121. E.g.: o.c., 15, 19, etc.
122. E.g.: o.c., 21, etc.
123. O.c., 72, 83.
124. Comp. above: Ch. 10, pp. 119-122.
125. In his poem "Hagisah, 'ami" (1863). See e.g.: "Kol shirey Yehudah Leyb Gordon. . .", Vol. I, Wilno, 1898, 43-45.
126. In his short-story "We-lo' be-yad hazagah" (Kitbey. . .", Vol. II, Tel-Aviv, 1929, 46-48). Comp.: Y.A. Klausner, Ha-nobelah ba-sifrut ha-'ibrit. . .", Tel-Aviv, 1947, 149.
127. "Elul" (YB, XII, 1937, 202) and a fragment beginning with the words "Bez ziemi ojczystej. . ." (MS, 254). On both see below.
128. YB, XII (1937), 45.
129. O.c., 74.
130. O.c., 110-111. Another episode (or anecdote) proving Peretz as national-minded is told by Singer (o.c.).
131. YB, XII (1937), 51.
132. O.c., 85-86.
133. "Katolickich Przeglądów". This is an obvious allusion to a reactionary Polish journal "Przegląd Katolicki" (mentioned in "Briv oys Varshe", A, IX, 13).
134. YB, XII (1937), 86.
135. O.c., 104. Comp. also about his attitude in those days towards religion, rabbis, and hasidim: o.c., 107-108, 109, 113, 114, 121, 122, 130, 132. As mentioned, the rather "blasphemous" poem "The Kingdom of the Earth is like the Kingdom of the Heavens" was also written probably in the 1880's.
136. Shemu'el Leyb Lewin (M, 29); Y. Wortmann, Peretz in 'Apt, "Literarische Bleter", Vol. X, no. 18 (May 5, 1933), 296; D. Kofut, Peretz T"Q, "Kanader Yiddishe Post", September, 1951; Dr. G. Lewin, Peretz. A bisl zikhroyneš, Warsaw, 1919, 10; comp. also above: Ch.ch. 7 and 11, passim.
137. Singer, o.c.
138. Comp. above: Ch. 11B, p. 143.
139. Comp.: YB, XII (1937), 90: The beginning of Saturday forces him to stop writing his letter to Helena (see also A:51).
140. Singer, o.c.; Sh. 'Ashkenazi, "Zamość. . .", Tel-Aviv, 1953, 232.
141. B, 357.
142. O.c., 356-357 and "Zamość. . .", 232.
143. Y.Y. Peretz states that in those days his brother still used to attend public prayers at least during holidays. See: Y.Y. Peretz, Y. L. Peretz als kelal-tuer in Zamość. . ., "Forverts", April 6th, 1930.
144. YB, XII (1937), 116 (and 146, note to no. 41). This letter was written in 1883.

145. M, 34. Comp. also B, 9 and 102 (reproduction of the photograph).
146. M, 26, note.
147. M, 39.
148. And indeed according to Y. Y. Peretz (the writer's brother) Peretz "organized" the fire-brigade in Zamość in 1878. See: Y. Y. Peretz, Y. L. Peretz als kelal-tuer in Zamość. . ., "Forverts", April 6th, 1930.
149. MS, 187, ll. 3-11 (= "Gilyonot", Vol. XXV, 1951, 267). Besides this Peretz mentions fires and firemen in the following works: a) "Be-
yaharayut shel 'esh" (K, III, pt. 1, 60-63); b) "Ha-nisraf" (K, III, pt. 1, 63-66); c) "R. Yosel" (A, I, 163); d) "S'brent" (A, IV, 31); e) "Di gol-
dene keyt" (A, VI, 150-152); f) "Iber Sreyfes" (A, VIII, 151-158); g) "Shtet un Shtetlakh" (A, VIII, 199, 206, 211, 248-249); h) "Ro'sh-
hodesh" (A, VIII, 372); i) Z, 20-21; etc. - The fragments of the poem "The Fire" ("Ha -Serefah"), preserved in MS, do not contain explicit mention of a fire, which evidently was intended to be its principal episode.
150. Comp.: "Iber Sreyfes" (A, VIII, 156).
151. YB, XII, (1937), 17-18. Comp. also: 6 (and 144 note to no. 3; should be 2 or 4). In his letters Peretz calls Hayim Yosef just: Jozef (Polish for: Yosef). See: 50, 54, 73, 83.
152. O.c., 30.
153. O.c., 31, 50.
154. B, 9 and M, 71.
155. Singer (o.c.) states that he did not know that Peretz was a writer before the Peretz moved to Warsaw.
156. Comp.: YB, XII (1937), 40-41.
157. The date "September 1, 1877" at the end of one of the Russian letters (YB, XII, 1937, 19) is no doubt according to the Old Style (i.e. September 13, 1877). Comp. also: 32.
158. Peretz mentions his bride's Hebrew first name in a Hebrew letter to his (future) "brother-in-law" "Ya'acob Silberman". See: YB, XII, 1937, 6 (and 144, note to no. 2).
159. Z. Reizen, Lexikon fun der yiddisher literatur. . ., Vol. II, Wilno, 1930³, 984.
160. Comp.: YB, XII (1937), 3, note 2.
161. B, 8.
162. YB, XII (1937), 6 (and 144, note to no. 2); 32, 85, 88, 90, etc.
163. O.c., 78 (and 144, note to no. 2), 91-92, 95, etc.
164. Mentioned only in the letters written in the beginning of the 1880's: o.c., 101 (and 145, note to no. 33), 104, 106, etc.
165. Most of the details about the Ringelheim family are based on the information provided by Z. R[eisen] (YB, XII, 1937, 3) and in the notes to Peretz's letters published by him: 144-146) and by Peretz himself (in his letters).
166. Pronounced approximately: Wenchna.
167. On Łęczna see: "Słownik Geograficzny. . .", t. V, Warszawa, 1884, 648. Out of 3409 inhabitants of Łęczna, 1194 were Jews. - Łęczna

and its fair are mentioned by Peretz twice in his works: a) "Fun qeber" (A, II, 302); b) "Der les" (A, VIII, 20).

168. R. Peretz-Laks, Erinerungen vegn Peretz'n, zayn zuhn und zayn eynikel (see above: note 79). R. Peretz-Laks, Arum Peretzn, Warsaw, 1935, 44-45. And see: M.Y. Freyd, Yami Mwe-shanim. . ., tr. by 'A. Zamir, Vol. II, Tel-Aviv, 1939, 63 (also based on Dinezon's information). According to Freyd Peretz went to Łęczna in connection with his work as a lawyer; however Freyd is not always reliable.

169. YB, XII (1937), 99 (and 145, note to no. 32).

170. Underlined by Peretz himself.

171. O.c., 145, note to no. 32. He is mentioned three times in Peretz's letters to his bride: o.c., 15, 31 ("moj Szadchen" i.e. "my match-maker") and 57.

172. O.c., 145, note to no. 32.

173. "Boze Cialo".

174. "Ś. Idziego" (= St. Aegidius = St. Giles; see e.g.: "Wielka Ilustrowana Encyklopedia Powszechna, t. VI, Krakow, n.d., 255).

175. "Słownik Geograficzny. . .", l.c.; comp: YB, XII (1937), 145, note to no. 32.

176. YB, XII (1937), 6.

177. 'Elul, 28, [5]637 = September, 6, 1877.

178. Z. Reisen, YB, XII (1937), 355.

179. Peretz could not come on the first day of the fair because September 1, 1877 was Saturday.

180. YB, XII (1937), 5.

181. O.c., 7-8.

182. O.c., 144, note to no. 3 (should be: 2).

183. O.c., 40-41 (comp. also: 78).

184. O.c., 40.

185. O.c., 73. Comp. also: 40, 88, 90, 93, 95.

186. Letter dated January 18, 1878 (o.c., 85). Comp. also: 91-92.

187. Above. And see: o.c., 31 (comp. also: 51).

188. O.c., 46, 62.

189. O.c., 77.

190. See letter no. 23 (o.c., 82). The first of Peretz's letters to Warsaw is no. 28 (o.c., 91-92), which begins: "Well, you are in Warsaw!" and mentions a letter sent to Łęczna which "you certainly already received". Peretz was moralizing to Helena about a fur coat. In letter no. 23 he alludes to this moralizing. Hence this letter, written before "sylwester" (i.e. before December 31), is later than no. 28, and Helena was in Warsaw already before this date.

191. YB, XII (1937), 90 (and 144, note to no. 28). Comp. also: 79 (the Silbermans lived probably at 20, Dzika St.).

192. O.c., 88: "You will stay in Warsaw another three weeks".

193. O.c., 91, 85 (and 144, note to no. 28).

194. O.c., 88.

195. O.c., 85.

196. O.c., 95 (in Hebrew, to Helena's brother Hermann).
197. L.c., (in Polish) to Helena). On the difficulties see: o.c., 40, 81 (his own flat was very bad and he does not expect to get a flat before St. John's day, i.e. before June 24, 1878).
198. O.c., 90, 91-92. Later Peretz mentions that "your brothers" visited me (o.c., 97).
199. O.c., 93.
200. O.c., 95 (Peretz quotes the Song of Solomon II, 5).
201. Pronounce: Tazhymyekhy. (Peretz writes: Tarzemiechy). On Tarzemiechy see: "Słownik Geograficzny. . .", t. XII, Warszawa, 1892, 219-220.
202. On Y. Margulies see above: Ch. 5, p. 53. His name was Yehoshua^h and not Yesha^hyah (as Z. Reisen writes erroneously: YB, XII, 1937, 144, note to no. 3 and 145, note to no. 29).
203. O.c., 93.
204. O.c., 95.
205. D. Schiffmann, Masa' Zamość, "Ha-Melis", Vol. XIV (1878), 415.
206. The last day of the preceding month (Shebat 30) and the first day of 'Adar are regarded as 1st and 2nd days of "ro'sh-hodesh 'Adar".
207. And not "several weeks before" Peretz's wedding (as in YB, XII, 1937, 145, note to no. 29).
208. O.c., 93.
209. O.c., 99. Hence that not only his parents were invited to Peretz's wedding.
210. O.c., 3.
211. O.c., 85. The Jewish date of Peretz's wedding (February 14, 1878) was 'Adar 11, 5638. This was Wednesday; the day mentioned by Reisen was Thursday. According to Jewish custom: "A virgin should be married on a Wednesday and a widow on a Thursday. . .", Mishnah, Ketubot I, 1 (see: "The Mishnah", tr. by H. Danby, Oxford, 1933, 245).
212. YB, XII (1937), 145, note to no. 29.
213. On Krasnystaw see: "Słownik Geograficzny. . .", t. IV, Warszawa, 1883, 641-644.
214. Just as Gorajec was half way between Opatów and Zamość (comp. above: Ch. 7, p. 98).
215. In a Hebrew PsStebó a Polish letter to his bride Peretz asks her parents and her brother to "arrange the wedding-party ('Ha-mishte^h') in Łęczna" (YB, XII, 1937, 93).
216. YB, XII (1937), 3. Helena's photograph after the marriage: B, 80.

13. A Prolific and Multi-lingual Writer.

In the years between his first and second marriage Peretz wrote assiduously ¹ .

Like the hero of his Hebrew poem "Hayey meshorer 'ibri", Peretz "compiled books of poetry" ² .

He certainly "rhymed a lot", as he says in his German "Epitaph" ³, writing in the same time also in prose. According to a Polish poem "To Death" ⁴ he intended to finish his:

"poems,
Stories ⁵ , satires and odes,
Numerous epigrams."

In the beginning of the version of the Hebrew poem "Nagni'el", which is preserved in The Unknown Manuscript, Peretz mentions:

"the abundance of poems
and essays ⁶ I have written" ⁷ .

We may add that it is not altogether impossible that some of the writings from "my old bag" ⁸ , which Peretz mentions in 1888 in his letters to Shalom-Aleykhem ⁹ , were written in the years 1870-1878 (?).

Unfortunately only a part of Peretz's "abundance" has survived and merely in a single case do we know the name of Peretz's lost work, written, doubtless, in these years: a Yiddish poem called "A Letter of the Polish Females" ¹⁰ .

The eight years with which we are dealing were the most "multi-lingual" period in the whole of Peretz's literary activity. As we can see from his writings mentioned above, Peretz wrote in those years in Hebrew, Polish, Yiddish and even German. A few of his letters from 1877 were written in Russian.

This strange phenomenon can be explained to a certain degree by the many and various cultural influences to which the Jewish population of the Russian part of Poland was exposed. This is especially true of the Jews of Zamość, a town not far distant from the border of Austrian Galicia.

On the other hand we should bear in mind that the young writer had not yet crystallized his views on Haskalah, assimilation and nationalism.

From the Jewish national point of view there was the possibility of using either Hebrew (not understood by the uneducated and women) or Yiddish or both languages as literary media. The assimilators recognised either Polish or Russian as the proper literary language to be used by Jews living in the Russian dominated parts of Poland. The maskilim wanted to use the Hebrew language for belles-lettres, for specific Jewish topics and as a medium for "enlightening" the Jewish masses. As very many Jews in Poland could not read either Russian or Polish even those Jews inclined towards assimilation realized the necessity of using - at least temporarily - Hebrew and even Yiddish.

NOTES

1. Comp.: Z. Reizen, Lexikon fun der yiddisher literatur. . . , Vol.II, Wilno, 1930³, 984 (Peretz wrote a great deal in Yiddish and in Hebrew).
2. "The Life of a Hebrew Poet", "Sipurim be-shir we-shirim shonim", Warsaw, 1877, 74.
3. YB, XII (1937), 200.
4. O.c., 199.
5. "Gawedy".
6. "'Agirot" [!] is no doubt a mistake for "'igrot" (in Hebrew letters a simple metathesis). The word "'igeret" (pl.: "'igrot") means literally "a letter", but was used in the Haskalah-literature for poems and essays.
7. MS, 56a, ll. 1-2. Not included in the version printed in "Ha-boger 'or", Vol.I, (1876), 31.
8. "Briv un redes", [1st ed.], Wilno, 1929, 24.
9. O.c., ll-45, passim.
10. I take no account here of the manuscript containing Peretz's Polish poems (see below).

14. Polish Poems and Letters.

Dr. Yisra'el Zinberg asked Peretz to provide him with biographical details for the Russian "Jewish Encyclopedia"¹ of which he was one of the editors. Peretz answered in a short letter dated December 3rd, 1911². About his literary beginnings he writes: "I started to write in Polish (published nothing, burnt) - this was an international moment - abandoned, it was alien; started in Hebrew, felt - not alive, switched over to Yiddish. This happened about 35-40³ years ago. The first was a Hebrew poem in 'Ha-shahar' ('Li 'omrim'). . . .".

This outline of Peretz's literary and "linguistic" evolution is by no means correct. We already know that Peretz's first poems were, most probably, written in Yiddish; the Hebrew ones followed very soon⁴. For some reason Peretz does not mention the odd poems he wrote so many years earlier in Yiddish and in Hebrew. However, he does not fail to mention ^{his Polish writings,} a little collection of which he diligently copied and probably hoped to be able to print.

The last sentence quoted from Peretz's letter to Zinberg refers to "the first" printed work by Peretz. As we shall see this was indeed "a Hebrew poem", albeit not the one pointed out by Peretz.

This is what really happened about 35-40 years before Peretz wrote his letter to Zinberg, that is, between about 1872-1877.

Peretz explained his writing in Polish as "an international moment". However, this cannot be understood as even a short-lived

inclination towards complete assimilation. The very poems written by Peretz under the influence of "an international moment" explicitly deny such interpretation. First of all, the manuscript of Peretz's Polish poems contained also two poems in Hebrew. Moreover, there was among the poems written in Polish one with a Hebrew title, "Elul", full of national sentiment ⁵ .

The young poet's attitude towards nationalism and assimilation has already been explained ⁶ . The poem "Elul" is in accord with the writer's views expressed in the Unknown Manuscript ⁷ . Peretz believed in the emancipation of the Jews which would come through the victory of the feeling of real brotherhood of all human beings. This emancipation and this brotherhood would lead to a greater conformity and make the use of Hebrew and Middish superfluous. Therefore we may assume that it is not at all impossible that Peretz thought in those days that his vocation was to be, if not a Polish poet - a poet in Polish, a Jewish-Polish poet, writing in Polish on general and Jewish topics ⁸ . In the 1870's there already existed a Jewish-Polish literature and several Jews of Zamość (among them, Peretz's relatives) contributed to the Jewish-Polish papers ⁹ .

There may also have been some additional reasons for the choice of Polish for Peretz's first collection of poems. More than half of these poems had love as their main subject. As late as 1888 Peretz complained in his Yiddish poem "Monish" of the painful limitations of Yiddish love-language ¹⁰ . Although he was well aware that his Polish was far from

being perfect ¹¹ , it was probably easier for him to "rhyme" about love in this language than in Yiddish or in Hebrew.

We may also presume that Peretz's ambition was to be read by the secularly educated Jewish bourgeoisie ¹² . The Jewish intelligentsia in Poland in the 1870's very often shunned reading in Hebrew, not to mention Yiddish. In 1883 a Jew from Peretz's native town complained in a letter printed in a Yiddish paper that none of the "aristocrats" of Zamość, "the new generation of enlightened according to today's fashion", wanted to read Yiddish. The language of entirely or partly assimilated Jewish intellectuals was Polish. ¹³

It is true that Peretz "published nothing" from his Polish writings. Until 1937 there was no reason to doubt that he really "burnt" his Polish manuscripts. In this year, however, N. Weinig published in a volume of "YIVO Bleter" devoted to Peretz ¹⁴ an article on "Polish Poems by Y. L. Peretz from the year 1874" ¹⁵ . It deals with Peretz's manuscript preserved in the family of Peretz's relatives and friends the Altbergs and donated later to the "Yiddish Scientific Institute" (YIVO) in Wilno. This manuscript, as already mentioned ¹⁶ , was lost during the Second World War and never recovered ¹⁷ . Thus Weinig's article, his description of the manuscript and its contents, the quotations he brings ¹⁸ and a facsimile of one page printed by him, are our only source of information about Peretz's little collection of Polish poems ¹⁹ .

The manuscript was a copy made by the poet himself. Its binding had inscribed on it in gilt lettering: "Poems 1874. Grabów. I. L. P.". The title page ran: "Wiersze różnej treści przez L. P. Grabów. 1874", that is, "Poems of Diverse Contents by L[eon] P[eretz]. . .". There were - according to Weinig - 24 leaves in octavo, without pagination ²⁰. Although, as has already been suggested, Peretz probably prepared this copy of his poems for printing ²¹ he nevertheless still tried to improve at least one of the items included ²². When Weinig worked on the manuscript it was complete ^{but} for for three lines of text missing at the bottom of the left-hand column of pages 23-26 ²³.

Peretz sent his Polish poems both to his father-in-law G. Y. Lichtenfeld and to his uncle Yosef Altberg. Y. Altberg died in 1873 ²⁴. Hence, at least part of the "Poems of Diverse Contents" was written not later than this year. In 1874 in Grabów Peretz wrote part of these poems and collected and copied all of them.

Weinig is no doubt right in thinking that none of the poems included in the collection was written before Peretz's first marriage ²⁵. We cannot be far from the truth if we suppose that most (if not all) of them were written in 1873-1874, after the Peretz's left Zamość ²⁶.

As his motto (written on the title page ²⁷ and repeated in the dedicatory poem ²⁸) Peretz chose the Polish proverb: "Not at once was Cracow built". He knew how imperfect his poems were and he wanted them to be regarded as what they really were: first steps of a beginner ²⁹. Lichtenfeld tried to correct Peretz's Polish style but the young poet was not over-enthusiastic about his old father-in-law's suggestions ³⁰.

Weinig pointed out many grammatical, orthographical and other mistakes ³¹ . Yet a great many of them were doubtless due not to Peretz's ignorance but to his carelessness and haste. No less numerous and often of the same kind were Peretz's mistakes in his Polish letters to Helena Ringelheim written in 1877-1878, when he was already a practising lawyer ³² . Peretz realized this himself ³³ . True, the manuscript of the Polish "Poems of Diverse Contents" was a copy, but Peretz admitted that he had even less patience for copying than for writing, and he knew that the number of mistakes in a copy made by him was even greater than in the original writing ³⁴ .

Nevertheless Weinig is right in emphasizing that Peretz was in 1874 still a young man with a predominantly Jewish religious education and without deep knowledge of the Polish language ³⁵ . The quotations in Weinig's article do not - in our opinion - justify his praise of the "strong dynamic" and "freshness" of Peretz's Polish style in his poems ³⁶ .

Comparative richness of literary forms (but not of rhyming) ³⁷ is perhaps to a certain degree a heritage from Peretz's prototypes. At the same time it is also characteristic of Peretz's perpetual seeking for new ways of expression.

The little collection of "Poems of Diverse Contents" comprised 42, mostly short, items ³⁸ . Two of them were in Hebrew ³⁹ and one in German but in Hebrew characters.

In his letter to Zinberg Peretz mentioned only two authors writing in a foreign (non-Jewish) language that influenced him in his youth: "a certain time. . . I was under the influence of Heine and Börne -

my first Yiddish poems" ⁴⁰ . Both were Jews and both wrote in German ⁴¹ .

Certainly Heine's (if not Börne's) influence was an important one, but Heine and Börne were not the only foreign authors who made their mark on the writings of young Peretz. Heine's influence was not limited to Peretz's "first Yiddish poems". He influenced also his Hebrew book of poems "Ha-Cugab" (1894) ⁴² . Moreover, much earlier than both his Yiddish and Hebrew poems, Peretz's Polish poems already showed traces of intoxication with the poetry of Heine. In one poem Peretz even mentions the name of this great master of irony ⁴³ . Heine's touch is felt in more than one of them.

In view of Peretz's statement in his letter to Zinberg it is rather surprising that out of 39 Polish poems in the collection 11 are marked "from Goethe", one - "an idea from Goethe", and one - "à la Goethe" ⁴⁴ .

Probably some of the other poems are also not entirely original but it is not easy to trace their origin. ~~We~~ could not discover in Peretz's Polish poems explicit traces of influences of Polish positivist writers although it is possible to think of some general tendencies of Polish positivism being reflected in a few poems with a social background. ~~We~~ doubt whether the three Polish prosaists Zygmunt Kaczkowski (1825-1896) ⁴⁵ , Józef Korzeniowski ⁴⁶ (both pointed out by Weinig ⁴⁷) and T.T. Jeź (1824-1915) ⁴⁸ (suggested by J. Shatzky ⁴⁹) had any influence on "Poems of Diverse Contents". ~~We~~ also failed to find any basis for Shatzky's other suggestion - that the "Poems" were influenced by the Polish popular

"chap-book" poetry ("poezja jarmarczna"), i.e. poems printed in cheap, small books and sold at fairs ⁵⁰ .

It may well be that Peretz was influenced by second- or third-rate German and Polish poets, widely read in those days but now almost entirely forgotten. We may mention here, for example, that in a letter to his bride ⁵¹ Peretz quotes from poetry of the once very famous (and infamous) German writer, who was at the same time also a diplomat and probably a Russian spy, August von Kotzebue (1761-1819) ⁵² . Such influences are extremely difficult to establish.

The dedicatory poem at the head of the "Poems of Diverse Contents" was called "To the Exercise-Book" ⁵³ (20 lines). The poet sends his works to his uncle who will correct and improve them. He hopes for a better future for himself and for his poems. However: "When will this come, O Lord?".

The poems that followed had indeed "diverse contents". Most of them were serious or ironical love poems. There were a few personal poems, some fables, two or three poems with a certain social background and a poem expressing Peretz's national feelings.

"Miss Berta (A little story) (I) ⁵⁴ (26 lines): A girl realises that her many suitors are not after her but after the money she has inherited. Berta spends all her money on building a hospital and lives unmarried but happily ever after. "Love" (II) (8 lines): God created

friendship to sweeten human life. The devil added a drop of lust and "the holy love" was born. "Who remembers me?" (III) (14 lines): the poet's left ear is burning. He asks an old oak tree: "Who remembers me?". The answer is: somebody in Warsaw to whom he owes money.

"Gentlemen Donkeys" (IV) (two quatrains), "A Concert" (V) (6 lines), "The Horse's Pride" (VI) (8 lines), "The Sparrow-Hawk a Moralizer"⁵⁵ (VII) (8 lines) and "The Rose" (XV) (in quatrains) were short fables. They reflected Peretz's early interest in the behaviour of animals and plants⁵⁶, an interest which persisted in his later writings among which there are not a few fables⁵⁷.

"A Bailiff (a little country picture)"⁵⁸ (VIII) (14 lines). "From a picture" added Peretz at the end of the poem. This was perhaps a description of a picture: an idyllic scene from country life with a very slight touch of social criticism (as far as can be judged from the few lines of contents in Weinig's article⁵⁹).

A realistic scene with a social background was "Husband and Father (from life)" (X) (20 lines): a child is dying. His mother is in despair; the father- drunk. Hearing about his child's death he asks for more wine. - Peretz called this poem "A makama". According to Peretz's peculiar definition a makama describes "epic topics that tell about terrible events"⁶⁰. This is rather strange and very far from being exact⁶¹.

Something of Peretz's cynical "don't care attitude" after his first marriage and his first meeting with G. Y. Lichtenfeld, something of

the painful disappointment that left him with nothing to expect and nothing to strive for ⁶², was perhaps echoed in "A Melody from the Piarists" ⁶³ (IX) (26 lines): it was said that the French ⁶⁴ invented a terrible weapon that was almost able to destroy the sun and the moon. The whole world was frightened but not the poet. He did not care because he was a stoic. To him Europe (torn by German-French rivalry) was a kind of bedlam ⁶⁵.

Irony is the keynote of the little collection of Peretz's poems, irony born of his many disappointments and his hard life. Even when ill and afraid of death, Peretz spoke somewhat ironically about himself and his works in a Polish poem "To Death" (XI) (24 lines) and in a short "Epitaph" in German (but in Hebrew characters), added to this poem ⁶⁶. In "To Death" (called by Peretz: "a little joke" ⁶⁷) the poet beats off the intruding "Angel of Death". He has no time to die because he must finish his many literary works.

The "Epitaph" (8 lines) has an acrostic: "Leon Per[e]tz" ⁶⁸. Why did Peretz write the "Epitaph" in German? Certainly this was a result of reading Goethe, Heine and others. The young poet probably wanted to show his "skill" in this language. In one of his Russian letters to his bride, Peretz boasted (perhaps not without some irony): "How well do I write German?!" ⁶⁹.

Peretz was successful in getting rid of the "Angel of Death". However, this did not mean that he was always able to carry on with his literary plans. He admits in another ironical poem, "Inspiration from Nectar" ⁷⁰ (XII) (10 lines) that sometimes he is not able to squeeze a

single idea from his "empty heart, empty head". Ironical also was the poem "With Birthday Greetings. To M."⁷¹ X!"⁷² (XVIII) (24 lines) of which only the Hebrew counterpart is preserved⁷³. Here Peretz mocks his own poverty.

Thus irony permeated the few poems in which Peretz struck a personal note. Peretz's self-irony may have had something of Heine but his artistic means were rather primitive and his style was sometimes an unpleasant mixture of pathos and vulgarity ("To Death").

As mentioned, love is the central motive in most of the poems, original as well as translated. The following were (as far as we can judge), original love poems:

"The Retired Lyre-Player"⁷⁴ (XIII) (16 lines): The old minstrel bemoans love's decline.

"Departure"⁷⁵ (XIV) (18 lines): The poet departs and asks his beloved to tell him that she loves him. This poem was interesting from the technical point of view. It was "a mixture of different strophes" and some of its lines had internal rhymes⁷⁶. Weinig⁷⁷ quotes in extenso the following distich (XVI):

"That you love her - that's what you say to her.
It is untrue! You are in love with her".

"Disquiet"⁷⁸ (XXII) (3 eight-line strophes) was, according to Weinig⁷⁹, a sentimental love poem. However, Weinig did not give any details about its contents, or about the contents of "The Gait of the Beloved"⁸⁰ (XXXIII) (4 quatrains), defined by him as "a love poem"⁸¹, and of "The Proof"⁸² (XXXIX) (5 quatrains) - according to him: "a humorous love poem"⁸³.

"The Student" ⁸⁴ (XXXVI) (19 quatrains): A student is so deep in love that, in spite of his beloved being simple and uneducated, he will abandon his studies for her sake.

"Reflections of a Poor Student" (XXXVIII) (12 quatrains): Love cannot endure without bread - thinks a poor student. He renounces his romantic dreams and reaches for the book. The poem ended with the praise of diligence. It has already been suggested that there may have been some autobiographical hints in the "Reflections" ⁸⁵.

"The Surfeit" ⁸⁶ (XXXV) (4 octaves), perhaps also a love poem, was marked by Weinig "an elegy" without adding any hint as to its contents ⁸⁷.

The hero of "The Hardened Sinner" (XXIII) (32 lines) was a man whose sin was love for a woman who could not belong to him. At her slightest hint he was ready to give up his soul, his Fatherland and God. Her name was Eleonore. It is rather improbable that Peretz himself chose this name. The motive of a forbidden love, the extremes to which the lover is ready to go and the beloved's name ⁸⁸, all this - in my opinion - shows that "The Hardened Sinner" was, most probably, not an original (or at least not entirely original) poem.

Most of Peretz's derivative poems, based on Goethe, were also love poems.

Peretz's first marriage and his life with Sarah Lichtenfeld brought the young dreamer and poet nothing but disillusionment. We cannot doubt that he was longing for love and this longing found its expression in writing and translating love poetry. However, out of the

depth of his disillusionment and sorrow, he could not speak about love, just as about anything else connected with himself, without a grain of irony. The ironical approach to love was particularly typical of Heine. However, it is certainly no accident that many of Goethe's love poems, which Peretz chose to translate or to paraphrase, had also a touch of irony.

Peretz's translations were treated by Weinig very briefly. He usually brought: the name of Peretz's Polish translation; Peretz's remark: "From Goethe"; the number of strophes and lines; a short definition (e.g.: "love motive"). This makes the finding of the originals rather difficult. Thus, out of 13 items based, according to Peretz's own statements, on Goethe, we have succeeded in identifying no more than seven. We could not identify for certain the following six poems:

"To the Rose (From Goethe)" (XX). Weinig adds in brackets: "Love motive, as also the nos. . . . 25, 28, 31, . . . 40" ⁸⁹ .

"The Shepherd (from G.)" (XXIX). Weinig: "4 three-line strophes. A humorous love poem" ⁹⁰ .

"The Thankfulness" ⁹¹ (from G.)" (XXXI): A sextain ⁹² .

"An Epigram à la Goethe" (XXXVII). Weinig: "12 lines. A love poem. For the happiness of love [the poet] parted from the Muses. However, when both the beloved and the Muses left the poet, Bacchus was his consolation" ⁹³ .

"Rozłączenie (z G.)" (XXVIII) (Weinig: "16 lines") and "Rozstanie się

(z G.)" (XL) (Weinig: 4 quatrains")⁹⁴ are a problem in itself. The names of both poems mean "Parting"; both were "from G [oethe]"; both were love poems⁹⁵; both consisted of 16 lines. Goethe wrote three different love poems called "Parting"; two of them consist of 16 lines⁹⁶. The third is a sonnet⁹⁷. Obviously Peretz translated the two first but it is impossible to say which was which.

Fortunately there can be, in my opinion, no doubt about the sources of the rest of Peretz's poems based on Goethe:

"The Blind Old Woman"⁹⁸ (an idea from G.)" (XXI). Weinig explains in brackets: "A game of the Blind Cow", i.e., "Blind Man's Buff"⁹⁹. Its source was Goethe's charming little humorous love poem "Blinde Kuh"¹⁰⁰.

"Salvation"¹⁰¹ (from G.)" (XXV). Weinig: "24 lines". A translation of Goethe's ironical love poem "Rettung", consisting of 6 quatrains¹⁰².

"The Find"¹⁰³ (from G.)" (XXVI). Weinig: "A didactic poem". This was, no doubt, a translation of Goethe's "Gefunden"¹⁰⁴, although to define it as a didactic poem was perhaps not very ingenious.

"The Self-deceiving"¹⁰⁵ (from G.)" (XXVII). Weinig: "12 lines. A humorous love poem". This was a translation of Goethe's "Selbstbetrug", consisting of 3 quatrains¹⁰⁶.

"The Nearness of the Beloved"¹⁰⁷ (from G.)" (XXX). Weinig: "4 quatrains. A love poem". This was a translation of "Nähe des Geliebten"¹⁰⁸.

"The Consolation of Tears (from G.)" (XXXII). Weinig: "8 quatrains. An elegy"¹⁰⁹. The original was "Trost in Tränen"¹¹⁰, a beautiful elegiac love poem.

"Before the Court (from G.)" (XXXIV). Weinig: "4 quatrains. A social motive about an unmarried mother" ¹¹¹. This is the only one of Peretz's translations from which Weinig quotes - one quatrain ¹¹² - thus making the tracing of its original easy. It was Goethe's "Vor Gericht" ¹¹³. However, it would be hazardous to draw any conclusions about ^{Peretz's} way of translating Goethe from this one meagre sample. In the only (second out of four) quatrain quoted by Weinig, Peretz tends towards more regular rhyming than Goethe. Goethe rhymes only the 2nd and the 4th lines; Peretz rhymes also the 1st with the 3rd (abab). Peretz's wording is simple and proper although he deviates a little from the original text.

Peretz returned to the problem of unmarried mothers in Hebrew Fragments of a Dramatic Work (without a name) in the Unknown Manuscript ¹¹⁴. Something of Goethe's sympathy with the unfortunate woman and his attitude towards the official representatives of the community (notably "Herr Pfarrer") resounds also perhaps in Peretz's later short-story "The Shtrayml" (1893) ¹¹⁵.

It is interesting that, on the whole, Goethe's influence on Peretz is remarkably small. To the details dealt with above, we can only add that from Goethe's "Mignon" ¹¹⁶ Peretz borrowed the famous question: "Kennst du das Land. . .", etc. He used it, slightly changed, at the beginning of his Yiddish elegy "Back in the Old Home": "Knowest thou the place, where the dreams blossom. . ." ¹¹⁷. He also paraphrased it several times in one of his feuilletons ¹¹⁸.

The most interesting of Peretz's Polish poems is "Elul" ¹¹⁹

(XVII) (26 lines): Jews have gathered in a ramshackle, dirty synagogue. They weep and lament noisily. It is hot and stuffy; difficult to breathe. Suddenly all become silent and the old rabbi blows the horn. Is it a war-call? Perhaps the petty Jews think about their Palestine? No, not yet. This is only the sign of the month 'elul. The worm still crawls. However, this worm is in reality an enchanted giant. Touched by the magic wand of Freedom, he will become again a mighty man, repelling (but not afraid of) war. He will arise and embrace his brother that once, by means of black magic, turned him into a worm. He will forgive and call: "Long live Mankind". But now it is still too early. . . the worm is still a worm. And the sound of the horn announces only the approaching fast.

"Elul" is the only poem in the whole collection with any reference to Peretz's nation and its tragic fate in the diaspora ¹²⁰. Its ideology has already been expounded above. Peretz did not think of Jewish revival in terms of returning to Palestine ¹²¹ but rather in terms of freedom, emancipation and brotherhood with the gentiles. Peretz did not for most of his life believe in the ideals of Zionism, although he felt deeply the curse of dispersion and more than once - as he wrote in 1909 in a letter - "my heart drew me to Palestine" ¹²². Anyway, in 1873-1874 there were very few "Lovers of Zion", as the earliest Zionists were called ¹²³ and Peretz was not one of them. In the light of the above, we cannot agree with S. Niger ¹²⁴ who saw in "Elul" an expression of a conflict between Peretz the cosmopolitan "maskil" and Peretz the Jewish

romantic.

The comparison of the Jewish Nation in the diaspora to a giant enchanted into a worm shows, as Weinig rightly observed ¹²⁵, the influence of Heine's "Princess Sabbath" ¹²⁶. Heine compares the diaspora Jew to a Prince turned by a witch's spell into a dog.

It is interesting to compare Peretz's poem to another, much less known, work, published later and probably also influenced by "Princess Sabbath". XIXth century Polish literature showed - especially in the second half of this century - a vivid interest in the Jewish question. Literary works based on Jewish life were written by several of the foremost Polish writers of this period: J. Kraszewski (the one with whom Sarah Lichtenfeld corresponded ¹²⁷), J. Korzeniowski, M. Konopnicka (1842-1910) ¹²⁸, Aleksander Świechtowski (1849-1938) ¹²⁹, and many others. The keenest interest in and sympathy with the Jews was revealed in her writings by Eliza Orzeszkowa (1842-1910) ¹³⁰.

This literature on Jews was eagerly read by Jews.

One of the less-known Polish writers of the second half of the XIXth century was Wiktor Gomulicki (1851-1919). He published a Polish poem with a Hebrew title, "El Mole Rachmim. . ." ¹³¹. This title ¹³² is the beginning of a prayer in memoriam of a deceased person: "God ^{who} is full of Mercy. . .". Gomulicki described a Jewish wedding: "It was an ugly place and the people were ordinary". But the prayer suddenly transformed everything:

"And these people, complaining aloud before the Lord,

"Proud with a great past, brave with a great pain,
Grew in my eyes in a strange way and - were ennobled".

Of course, Gomulicki did not emphasize the Haskalah-ideology, so detrimental in "Elul". Gomulicki's poem is artistically by far the superior of the two. Nevertheless, there are several important common features. In both poems (written in Polish, but provided with Hebrew titles), simple, poor, downtrodden Jews (Peretz calls them "petty Jews") gather in a dull, poor environment for a religious activity. A chanted prayer (Gomulicki) or the sound of the ritual horn (Peretz) suggests (if only for a moment, as in "Elul") the possibility of their sudden metamorphosis (no matter if real or only in the eyes of the poet) into different, stronger and nobler beings (Peretz thinks for a moment that the rabbi's horn calls them to war for "their Palestine").

Weinig tried to show that in "Poems of Diverse Contents" we can discern "nearly all the elements of Peretz's later writings" ¹³³. As far as we can judge, this is exaggerated. However, as S. Nizer says, it is no doubt partly true ¹³⁴. The most important motives in Peretz's collection of Polish poems that re-appear in his later writings are ¹³⁵ :

1. The tendency towards the epigrammatic.
2. The choice of fables based on life of animals and plants for expressing certain ideas.
3. The influence of Heine. It was very important during many years to come, although regretted in the 1900's ¹³⁶.

4. A strong satirical trend.
5. Certain, as yet very slight and superficial, interest in social problems (perhaps under the influence of Polish "positivism").
6. Love and women (beloved or suffering, as in "Before the Court") was one of the main topics of Peretz's Polish poems; love and sympathy with the fate of women was to be one of the main topics of many of Peretz's later writings.
7. The problem of Jewish fate in the diaspora ("Elul").

For an understanding of Peretz's literary evolution the "Poems of Diverse Contents" are, no doubt, very important. As an artistic achievement - as far as we can judge - they hardly count. In Polish Peretz was no more than a mediocre poetaster. Polish - as he admitted in his letter to Zinberg - was alien to him. Poetry written in a language felt as alien by a beginner has no great chance of success. Peretz's Polish poems were not.

The Polish poems gathered by Peretz in the little collection in 1874 are not the only ones written by him. A fragment of a poem in Polish is preserved in the Unknown Manuscript ¹³⁷. Besides, Peretz included a few short Polish poems in his letters. Peretz did not like writing letters. He admitted this himself more than once ¹³⁸. In a letter to his bride Peretz quoted the saying that "writing letters is the most difficult thing to do" ¹³⁹. And in a letter to Shalom Aleykhem

he wrote (in 1913): "By nature I hate letter-writing" 140 . The number of Peretz's letters written before his second marriage which survive is 33. They are written in Polish, Russian and Hebrew 141 .

Peretz wrote in Hebrew to the father of his first wife, G. Y. Lichtenfeld 142 and to the male members of his second wife's family 143. In Polish are written all his letters to Helena Ringelheim, except for four in Russian, 144 (the only ones written in this language before Peretz's second marriage). The invitation letter sent to a friend in Warsaw called Najman is also written in Polish 145 and so are several PP. SS. to his letters to Helena addressed to the female members of her family 146 .

Peretz's letters have already been dealt with as a source of his biography. We mentioned that they revealed great deal of haste and carelessness; Peretz was obviously both very busy and very impatient. It is impossible here to go into all the details connected with the problem of the chronology of the letters. This involves the fixing of their order and (at least approximate) dating of the great majority of Peretz's letters from this period which bear no dates. There are a few dated. One has only a Jewish date 147 . And when a letter bears a Christian date it has still to be decided whether this date is according to the "New" or the "Old Style" 148 . All this demands a great deal of meticulous labour, and the results (in view of the very limited time, space, impossibility of obtaining local daily papers from the years 1877-1878, etc.) are not always entirely satisfactory.

Knowing Peretz's attitude to letter-writing we could hardly expect him to excel in the art of epistolography. Even his love for Helena could not help him to overcome the difficulties he had in expressing himself in a clear and orderly way. This was probably due in a considerable degree to his inadequate knowledge of Polish (and Russian) ¹⁴⁹. In spite of all this there are several passages in Peretz's letters of this period where certain literary ambition can be discerned ¹⁵⁰. We have mentioned his relations about some of his law cases and his rather lengthy discourse on the problem "Of the Work of Women" ¹⁵¹. Poetical are Peretz's descriptions of his mood before he met his bride ¹⁵² and truly anecdotal - the story of his first meeting with her, as related in the letter to Najman ¹⁵³.

The poems inserted in some of Peretz's letters to his bride ¹⁵⁴ do not reveal a great poetical talent. As far as we can judge they cannot be compared even with the best of the "Poems of Diverse Contents". They simply belong to the kind of "rhyming" ¹⁵⁵ made by every young man when in love. One of these poems ¹⁵⁶ is perhaps of some interest because its beginning imitates Polish folksongs ¹⁵⁷. In this poem Peretz is a defendant. His beloved's "Anger" is the prosecutor and her "Love" - the defence.

The short conversation between Peretz and one of his clients, a petty Polish country gentleman ¹⁵⁸ is rather an anecdote than a short-story. However, the dialogue is vivacious and not without humour. This is significant. Peretz, perhaps the greatest master of short and sa-

gacious dialogue both in Modern Hebrew and in Yiddish literatures, made one of his first debuts - in Polish. His law practice, no doubt, contributed to the mastery Peretz achieved in dialogue 159 .

From the literary point of view the only really important passage in Peretz's letters of this period is what he called "A Sad Episode from My Life as a Barrister" (in a letter to Helena written in September [?] 1877) 160 .

Soon after Peretz passed his examination as a lawyer he bought a promissory note. He won the case but, knowing that the debtor was very poor divided the debt into small monthly payments. When six or seven months passed and nothing was paid in, Peretz became angry and, accompanied by a bailiff, decided "to avenge".

"We went in. -

Our eyes beheld a most sad view. The hovel was empty, hideous, the walls, carved by the hands of time, wept with the tears of dampness; there was no furniture at all but a single antedeluvian little sofa, and on this little sofa, covered with rugs, lay the only living being in the hovel, an ill girl with pale yellow skin and her eyes closed -

This yellow skin and the frequent bursts of tortured coughing revealed the sad illness, incurable consumption:-

The girl, hearing our footsteps, lifted her head with difficulty, opened half-extinguished eyes and looked at us with horror. . .

With such eyes - I thought - a lamb looks at an approaching wolf. . .".

The short conversation of the girl with the bailiff and the

appearance of her mother, even more frightened than the girl, who behaved with pathetic dignity, are described vividly. Even the hardened bailiff could not conceal a tear. He went out and called Peretz to follow him. They both left the hut deeply moved.

"What do I owe you?", I asked the bailiff confusedly.

"A glass of beer and a snack".

"The demand of the noble bailiff was fulfilled and, as for me, since then I never buy a promissory note for love or money. - "

The "Sad Episode" is a veritable short-story, and a good one too. The contrast between Peretz's "anger" and his intention "to avenge" and the subject of these feelings, the poor dying girl in the dreadful empty, damp hut, is both dramatic and tragic. The atmosphere of the hut, created by a few lines only, is moving and deeply sad. The changes of moods of the two intruders and the girl and her mother are psychologically true. We have no reason to doubt that the "Sad Episode" was really taken from life. Still, only an artist with a warm, feeling heart, especially appreciative of the sufferings of women, could describe this ordinary, every-day occurrence in the way Peretz did. The "Sad Episode" is worthy to join the many of Peretz's later short-stories in which he described with so much sympathy the life of the poor and the suffering ¹⁶¹. It reminds one particularly of Peretz's "Pictures from a Journey", written in 1890-1891 ¹⁶² .

"A Sad Episode" is not the first short-story written by Peretz. His first was a Hebrew one called "The Revenge". It forms a part of

the Unknown Manuscript ¹⁶³.

Peretz did not become a Polish writer. But Polish was the language he used very often at home and in town. His letters to his wife ¹⁶⁴ and to his son Lucjan ¹⁶⁵ were always written in this language. So also were Peretz's letters to a few of his acquaintances ¹⁶⁶ (to some of them he wrote in Russian ¹⁶⁷) and to the Guardians of the Jewish Community of Warsaw ¹⁶⁸ .

According to S. Niger ¹⁶⁹ Peretz continued to write Polish prose from time to time. However, Niger mentions only a single literary work produced by Peretz in Polish after 1877-78. In 1890 Peretz himself translated into Polish his short-story "The Death of the Player" ¹⁷⁰ for the Polish-Jewish weekly "Izraelita" issued in Warsaw ¹⁷¹ .

The poem "Elul" and the short-story "A Sad Episode" are the only two works of certain literary value written by Peretz neither in Hebrew nor in Yiddish (at least as far as we know). In spite of this, speaking about Peretz's first literary steps, it is necessary to dwell on everything he wrote, irrespective of the language he used and of the literary value of the works he produced.

NOTES

1. "Yevreyskaya Enciklopediya", Vol.I-XVI, St. Petersburg, [1908-1913].

2. B, 321-322.
3. Comp. above: Ch. 8, p. 109 and p. 113, note 1.
4. Above: Ch. 8, p. 110.
5. YB, XII (1937), 202 (and see below).
6. Above: Ch. 12.
7. MS, 4, ll. 1-9 (mentioned above: Ch. 12.).
8. Against the opinion of N. Weinig, Poylishe lider fun Y. L. Peretz fun yor 1874, YB, XII (1937), (197 (comp.: N, 134 and 149)).
9. J. Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamość, YB, XXXVI (1952), 35, 46, 48 (not Yosef Altberg, who died in 1873, but Yosef Altenberg, who died in 1901, contributed to the Jewish-Polish journals: comp.: "Zamość. . .", Tel-Aviv, 1953, 227).
10. A, I, 20-21 (comp.: M, 50).
11. Weinig, o.c., 196. Comp. also Peretz's own confession about his difficulties in expressing his thoughts (in Polish) in a letter to his bride (written in 1877): YB, XII (1937), 57.
12. N, 73-74. See also Peretz's letter to Shalom-Aleykhem of 1888 in "Briv un redes", [1st ed.] , Wilno, 1929, 12.
13. Shatzky, o.c., 36-37 (comp. above: Ch. 4); M, 47. From his letters to Helena written at the end of the 1870's and in the beginning of the 1880's and to Shalom-Aleykhem (written at the end of the 1880's) we can conclude that Peretz himself read mainly Polish (comp.: M, 47 and 80).
14. Vol. XII, no. 1/3 (August-October 1937), 384 pp. (reprinted as "Peretz-bukh. . .", Wilno, 1940). This volume is very important. It was already and will be still quoted many times.
15. O.c., 191-204.
16. Above: Ch. 11B, p. 138.
17. According to the information supplied in a letter to us of December 7th, 1956 by Mr. E. Lifschutz from YIVO in New York.
18. Six poems are quoted in extenso and one is reproduced in facsimile.
19. Weinig himself was killed by the Nazi's in Wilno (N, 68).
20. Weinig, o.c., 191.
21. See also: S. Nizer in A, I, p. XLV.
22. Weinig, o.c., 204.
23. O.c., 203.
24. Shatzky, o.c., 48 (and see above: note 9).
25. Weinig, o.c., 195.
26. Peretz sent his dedicatory poem, as he said: "to my native town, to my maternal uncle [wuj]" (Weinig, l.c.).
27. Weinig, o.c., 191.
28. O.c., 195.
29. Comp.: p.c., 194.
30. O.c., 196.
31. L.c.
32. Comp. also above: Ch. 11A, p. 132, note 30.

33. YB, XII, (1937), 67.
34. O.c., 50.
35. Weinig, o.c., 196.
36. O.c., 196-197.
37. O.c., 197; M. Schweid, Treyst mayn folk. Dos lebn fun Y. L. Peretz, New York, cop. 1955, 116.
38. Peretz himself counted 40 but he did not include in this number the dedicatory poem and the German "Epitaph" (Weinig, o.c., 194-195 and 200).
39. They will be dealt with later (Ch. 16).
40. B, 322. On influences on Peretz see particularly: N. Meisel, "Di farsheydnste aynflusn oyf Peretz" in his book "Yiṣḥaq Leybush Peretz un zayn dor shrayber", New York, 1951, 63-88.
41. Ludwig Börne (1786-1837) is mentioned by Peretz (always together with Heine) in: 1) "Yonim seluyot" (K, VII, 204); 2) "Sefer ha-berit" (A, VII, 116); 3) "Bildung" (A, VIII, 16); 4) "Vegn, vos firn op fun yiddishkayt" (A, IX, 161). - Heine is mentioned many times in Peretz's works and in his letters. On his influence on Peretz see below: Ch. 19E, nos. 5-6.
42. Reprinted in K, IX, [pt. 2], 63-81.
43. Quoted by Weinig, o.c., 196.
44. O.c., 203-204.
45. Never mentioned by Peretz.
46. Comp. above: Ch. 7, p. 90 and p. 103, note 99.
47. O.c., 194.
48. Mentioned by Peretz in a letter to his wife in the early 1880's (B, 116).
49. YB, XXVIII (1946), 172.
50. Comp.: l.c. Popular Polish poetry influenced a Polish humorous poem included by Peretz in a letter to his bride (YB, XII, 1937, 65). See below.
51. YB, XII (1937), 62.
52. On Kotzebue see e.g.: J. G. Robertson, A History of German Literature, Edinburgh and London, 1953, 385-386.
53. "Do poszytu" (quoted in extenso by Weinig, o.c., 195).
54. The numbers are Peretz's (adapted by Weinig). Curiously enough, there are nos. 18, "18-19-20" and 20, but no. 24 is missing (Weinig, o.c., 203). Under the peculiar nos. "18-19-20" Weinig mentions the two Hebrew poems included in the collection, first of which is a version of Peretz's Polish poem "With Birthday Greetings..." (XVIII).
55. "Jastrzab moralista".
56. Z, 113 (and comp. above: Ch. 7, p. 90).
57. S. Niger (N, 69, note 2) compares "The Sparrow-Hawk a Moralizer" to "The Pious Cat" ("Di frume kats"; A, II, 295-297) written in prose and published in 1893. The Hebrew version is called: "Ha'tul sadiq" (K, VII, 142-144).
58. "Rządca (obrazek wiejski)"

59. Weinig, o.c., 198-199 (see also: 193).
60. Weinig, o.c., 199.
61. See e.g. C. Brockelmann, Makama, "The Encyclopedia of Islam", Vol. III, 1936, 161-164.
62. Z, 130 and comp. above: Ch. 7, p. 99.
63. "Nota z Pijarów". Weinig, o.c., 199; see also: 192, 193 and 196, (two lines quoted in which Heine is mentioned).
64. This was the time of the "revanche" dreams in France after the defeat of 1870.
65. Weinig (o.c., 199, note) explains that the Order of Piarists in Poland nursed mentally ill patients.
66. Both quoted in extenso by Weinig (o.c., 199-200; see also: 192, ~~195~~, 195-196) 14C Comp. Ch. 11B; Ch. 11B, pp. 139-140 and Ch. 13, p. 140.
67. "Krotochwilka".
68. Written rather in the Yiddish way: "L' 'n P'rs" where ' = e; ? = o.
69. YB, XII (1937), 15.
70. Quoted in extenso by Weinig (o.c., 201). The meaning of the words "Woduli stuknąłem", which puzzled Weinig, is simple: "I took a deep sip of vodka".
71. Miss or Mrs.
72. Weinig, o.c., 203 (and see also: 193).
73. See below: Ch. 16.
74. "Lirnik wysłużony".
75. "Przy odjeździe".
76. Weinig, o.c., 201.
77. Weinig, o.c., 201-202.
78. "Niespokój".
79. Weinig, o.c., 203.
80. "Chód kochanki".
81. Weinig, o.c., 204.
82. "Próba".
83. Weinig, l.c.
84. "Studiujący". Weinig, l.c. (and see also: 197).
85. Comp. above: Ch. 11B, p. 139.
86. "Przesyt".
87. Weinig, l.c.
88. Goethe wrote a short poem to "Eleonore". See e.g. "Goethes werke. Auswahl in zehn Teilen. . ." hrsg... von K. Alt..., Berlin, etc., I.T, n.d., 517.
89. Weinig, o.c., 203.
90. O.c., 204.
91. "Odwdzięczenie się".
92. Weinig, o.c., 197 and 204.
93. O.c., 204.
94. L.c.
95. Comp. above: Weinig's remark to no. XX.
96. a) "Der Abschied" (Goethe, o.c., I, 22); "Lass mein Aug' den

- Abschied sagen. . ." ; b) "Abschied" (o.c., I, 31): "Zu lieblich ist's,
ein Wort zu brechen. . .".
97. "Abschied" (o.c., I, 188).
 98. "Ślepa Babka".
 99. Weinig, o.c., 203.
 100. Goethe, o.c., I, 10.
 101. "Ratunek". See: Weinig, o.c., 203.
 102. Goethe, o.c., I, 12-13.
 103. "Znalazek". See: Weinig, l.c.
 104. Goethe, o.c., 13-14.
 105. "Oszukanie się". On the torn bottom part of page 26 of Peretz's manuscript there were left a few words of a second version of the last strophe of this translation (Weinig, o.c., 204; and comp. above).
 106. Goethe, o.c., I, 15.
 107. "Blizkość kochanka". See: Weinig, o.c., 204.
 108. Goethe, o.c., I, 29.
 109. Weinig, l.c.
 110. v o.c., 42-43. v Goethe,
 111. Weinig, o.c., 204.
 112. O.c., 196.
 113. Goethe, o.c., I, 90-91.
 114. MS, 144-145.
 115. "Dos Shtrayml" (A, II, 258-260). "Shtrayml" is a peculiar fur cap worn by the hasidic rabbis and their followers.
 116. Goethe, o.c., I, 77.
 117. "Tsurik in der v'heym" (A, I, 303). Comp.: F. Lachower, Ri' shonim we-aharonim, Vol. I, Tel-Aviv, 1934, 117.
 118. "Oy, dalut, dalut!" (A, VII, 174-175).
 119. Quoted in extenso by Weinig, o.c., 202-203 (see also: 192, 193). "Elul" is the name of the last month of the Jewish Year, (August-September).
 120. As mentioned (above: Ch. 12, p. 177 and p. 191, note 127) a fragment of Peretz's second Polish poem dealing with the Jewish fate is preserved in MS.
 121. In spite of the hint of the eternal Jewish hope alluded to in this poem.
 122. B, 280.
 123. Comp. above: Ch. 4, p. 37.
 124. N, 71-72.
 125. Weinig, o.c., 192.
 126. "Prinzessin Sabbath" in Heine's "Hebräische Melodien". See e.g.: "Heinrich Heines sämtliche Werke. In zwölf Bänden", III.B., Berlin, n.d., 119-123.
 127. Comp. above: Ch. 11A, p. 125.
 128. Peretz wrote "Songs after Maria Konopnicka" (A, I, 131-132). He also published a criticism of her "Jewish" story "Mendel Gdański" (A, VII, 192-199; see also: A, IX, 253 and 273 [mistakenly mentioned "])

"Orzeszkowa" instead of Kopopnicka]).

129. Mentioned many times by Peretz (in A, IX, 271 he mentions the heroine of Świętochowski's well-known "Jewish" story "Chawa Rubin"; see A, IX, 303-306, etc.)

130. Mentioned by Peretz in A, VII, 195 and (erroneously) in A, IX, 273 (see above: note 128). We may add the name of Klemens Szaniawski ("Junosza"; 1848-1898) whose translations of Yiddish novels by "Mendele the Bookseller" Peretz read. (See: "Briv un redes", [1st ed.], Wilno, 1929, 16, 19, note 20 and 31). Peretz mentioned "Junosza" in "Be-olam ha-otiyot ha-mahkimot" no. 24 (K, VII, 365).

131. See e.g.: "Poezja", Warszawa, n.d., 75-80. On Gomulicki and his poem see e.g.: B. Chlebowski, La Littérature Polonaise au XIXe siècle, Paris, 1933, 378-379; and particularly P. Chmielowski, Współcześni Poeci Polscy, Petersburg, 1895, 188-215. Gomulicki's poem was first printed in "Kurjer Warszawski", 1879, no. 148 (I owe this information to the son of the poet, Mr. Juliusz Gomulicki, through the courtesy of "Biblioteka Narodowa" in Warsaw.)

132. Correct: "El male' rahamim. . .".

133. Weinig, o.c., 192.

134. N, 69.

135. In this summing up we follow mainly Weinig (o.c., 192-193) and Nizer (N, 69-70).

136. See: N. Meisel, Yisḥaq Leybush Peretz un zayn dor shrayber, New York, 1951, 68-72.

137. It will be dealt with below (Ch. 19A).

138. Quotations: N. Meisel, Yisḥaq Leybush Peretz un zayn dor shrayber, New York, 1951, 393.

139. YB, XII (1937), 54.

140. B, 347. See also: 270, 345 and 292 (not quoted by Meisel, l.c.), and Z, 46.

141. The originals (and translations into Yiddish) are published in YB, XII (1937), 183-184 and 5-100. The Yiddish translations alone are reprinted in B, 17-79. Here there are 41 items but only because several PP.SS. were numbered separately. The PP.SS. to one of the letters were omitted in B.; comp.: YB, XII (1937), 63-64 (only the original) and B, 55.

142. This letter was written probably in 1872 or 1873 (comp. above: Ch. 11A, pp. 128-129); all the others - between September 6, 1877 and a few days before February 14, 1878.

143. YB, XII (1937), 6 (the only letter written in Hebrew: to Ya'aqob Silberman, the husband of Helena's elder sister Zofia) and 90, 93, 95 (PP.SS. to letters to Helena).

144. The Russian letters: o.c., 7-30. On a Yiddish translation included in one of them see below.

145. O.c., 99-100.

146. O.c., 32 (to Hushah, the wife of her elder brother Herman).

147. O.c., 6 (comp. above: Ch. 12 p. 193, note 177).

148. Comp. e.g. above: Ch. 12, p. 192, note 157.
149. YB, XII (1937), 57 (and comp. above).
150. Comp.: N, 68, note 1 and 118, note 1.
151. Both in his Russian letters to Helena (above: Ch. 12)
152. Quoted above: Ch. 12.
153. Quoted above: Ch. 12. A short anecdote is included in a letter to Helena (YB, XII, 1937, 83).
154. O.c., 47, 65-66, 73.
155. Peretz himself calls it "bad verse-making" ("wierszoklectwo"; o.c., 57).
156. O.c., 65-66.
157. "Krakowiaczek" i.e. a dance-song of the peasants from the surroundings of Cracow. Peretz's later interest in Jewish folksong is well known.
158. O.c., 59-60.
159. Already while a young boy, Peretz as a reader was mainly interested in dialogues (Z, 112 and comp. above: Ch. 7, pp. 89-90).
160. YB, XII (1937), 34-36.
161. The many deletions and additions between the lines to which the first publisher of Peretz's letters to his bride drew attention in connection with this one letter only, (YB, XII, 1937, 144, note to no. 8) perhaps prove that in this case Peretz intended to write a literary work.
162. "Bilder fun a provints-rayze" (A, II, 117-209). The Hebrew version: "Siyurey masa" (K, III, pt. 1, 7-80).
163. "Ha-negamah" (MS, 21-38; see below).
164. B, 79-119, 351.
165. B, 120-128.
166. B, 159-160, 214-217, 244 and YB, XXVIII (1946), 198-199 (not included in B.).
167. B, 163-168, 213-214, 236, 350. Not included in B: YB, XXVIII (1946), 189-197 and XXXVI (1952), 251-253; N. Meisel, Yishaq Leybush Peretz un zayn dor shrayber, New York, 1951, 324. - As mentioned (Ch. 4, p. 48, note 177) Peretz never wrote literary works in Russian.
168. B, 335-336. - Peretz did not himself write his English letter to "The Jewish Publication Society of America" (B, 346-347).
169. N, 68, note 1; 72, note 1; and 191.
170. "Petirat ha-menagen" (K, IV, pt.1, 136-140). The Yiddish version: "A Mezmer toyt" (A, II, 95-98) was published in 1891.
171. J. Shatzky (in YB, XXXVI, 1952, 334) says: "As is well known Peretz himself translated into Polish a part of his short-stories". According to the same scholar the anonymous Polish pamphlet "On the Desirable Reforms in the Warsaw Jewish Community" ("O požadanych reformach w warszawskiej Gminie Starozakonnych" (Warsaw, 1906, 16 pp.) was also written by Peretz (see: YB, XXVIII, 1946, 184).

15. Peretz's Attitude Towards Yiddish and his Yiddish Writings in 1870 - 1878.

A certain parallel can be drawn between the attitude of the educated clergyman of the Middle Ages towards the national languages of Western Europe and the attitude of the Jewish maskil until the last quarter of the XIXth century towards Yiddish. The "new" national languages were spoken by everybody in medieval Europe and yet they were despised by the learned and called "sermones" not "linguae". The Jewish maskil had no more reverence for the language spoken by the majority of his people; until the end of the XIXth century (and sometimes even later) Yiddish was called - often even by Yiddish writers themselves, - "Jargon".

The educated clergyman in the Middle Ages (and later the Humanist) used for all serious purposes the old, venerated, beautiful and "classical" language - Latin. The educated Jew, as far as he did not use a foreign language, had the same attitude towards Hebrew. Both Latin and Hebrew were common languages for all educated men belonging to Latin Christianity or to Judaism respectively. Both were languages of literature and learning, of old tradition and also of religion and prayer. In both languages literary creation continued, although they were hardly spoken by anybody in everyday life.

In the living languages there existed a very limited popular literature for the uneducated and for women. Sometimes, when in

facetious mood, an educated man wrote something in the "vulgar dialect" ("sermo vulgaris") or in Jargon ("Zhargon"), intended only for his nearest circle, not for "publication" or printing.

However, here the parallel ends. The differences are obvious. The Jews were always much more deeply rooted in the Hebrew tradition than any European nation (the Italians not excluded) in the Latin one, which was - let us remember - basically pagan. The illiteracy among Jews was, even in the Middle Ages, rare, and nearly every male Jew knew Hebrew and spent most of his life, from very early childhood, in studying Hebrew religious books. Their sufferings in the diaspora made the Holy Tongue even dearer to the People of the Book. It was never neglected, never ceased to be used even in private letters and, albeit only partly and rarely, in conversation. Hence the possibility of the complete revival of the Hebrew language in our own days.

Latin was known only to the clergy and to a few educated laics. Illiteracy in medieval Europe (and right into the XIXth century) was common even as regards the national languages. The Latin tradition, as a matter of fact was very tenuous. Thus, while with the spreading of books and education in Western Europe from the XVth century, the national languages and literatures began to blossom and Latin literature to decline (in spite of the Humanistic revival), Yiddish was continuously neglected. It was still used, as since the XIII-XIVth centuries, only for instructing, educating and sometimes also entertaining the ignorant, particularly women.

The maskilim, in their efforts to "enlighten" the Jewish masses, from time to time used the "Jargon" as a means ¹ . The language was undeveloped ² and most of the works written in Yiddish were rather primitive and boorish. The maskilim did not believe in the future of Yiddish. It had to serve only temporarily, as long as the uneducated Jews did not acquire the language of the country in which they lived. The idea was to undermine the very existence of Yiddish - through Yiddish. Peretz mentions in his article "The New Victory" ³ , that when A. Zederbaum ⁴ started to publish his Yiddish journal "Qol mebaser" ("Voice of the Messenger" (1863-1871) he intended: "To defeat Yiddish by Yiddish". Sh. Citron quotes another editor of a Yiddish journal, Yisra'el Lewi of St. Petersburg, who, during the years in which he was in charge of "Yiddishes Folksblat" ("Jewish Popular Journal"; 1887-1890) often expressed his hope and desire that his journal would have no readers! - His wish was fulfilled ⁵ .

Zederbaum, Lewi and many other Yiddish writers expected and hoped that all the Jews of Russia would forget their Jargon and switch over to Russian. Similar hopes were cherished by very many Jewish maskilim and by all assimilationists in the whole of Europe. Peretz himself underlined in a letter to the later famous Yiddish writer "Shalom-Aleykhem" (Shalom Rabinowitz; 1859-1916) of July 4th, 1888 ⁶ , that in Poland particularly there was not even one in a thousand among the Jews with the slightest touch of secular education who was not ashamed to speak Yiddish ⁷ and was not bitterly opposed to Jewish national revival.

We may be sure that the situation was even worse in the 1870's. Following the pogroms of 1881-1882 and the hostile policy of the Russian government towards the Jewish intelligentsia, part of it changed its attitude to "Jargon". Yiddish began to be regarded by many as a (or - especially from the 1900's - the) national language of the Jews in the diaspora. The limitations of Biblical Hebrew and the wish to be understood by the increasing Jewish proletariat and by the uneducated masses urged some Hebrew writers to abandon this language for Yiddish even before the catastrophe of 1881-1882 ⁸ .

However, on the whole, in the 1870's publishing literary works in Yiddish was viewed with contempt and could not add much credit to a young maskil.

In spite of a kind of "tradition" of writing in Yiddish that existed in his native Zamość (Ettlinger, Zederbaum, and others) ⁹ , Peretz's attitude towards this language in the 1870's did not differ from that of the average maskil in those days ¹⁰ .

Yiddish was the first language Peretz learned; it was the language spoken at home, the language in which the Jews of Zamość conversed, the language in which he was taught by his many rabbis and in this language he, most probably, composed his first childish poems. These poems, however, according to the prevailing views of the maskilim, were not regarded as literature.

In his well-known letter to Y. Zinberg Peretz stated emphatically: "I never. . . . became a maskil" ¹¹ . And in "My Memoirs" he

minimized the influence of Haskalah on his spiritual evolution¹² and attempted to show that Haskalah-motives in his early poetry were nothing but sheer imitation¹³. All this, written in the last years of Peretz's life, cannot be taken at its face value. In fact, we can hardly doubt that in the 1870's Peretz was deeply influenced by the ideals of the Haskalah and by its tendency, if not towards assimilation, at least towards "conformity" with the surrounding population. Peretz's attitude towards Yiddish was also in accordance with the ideals and tendencies of Haskalah.

Peretz read mainly Polish books¹⁴ and Polish papers¹⁵ even at the end of the 1880's. His knowledge of Yiddish literature must have been even then very slight, probably not only because of the non-existence[!] of Yiddish books in Zamość, which he claimed as an excuse¹⁶. In one of his letters to Shalom-Aleykhem (dated July 4, 1888) Peretz says that he read his works only in Polish translations¹⁷. However, as he himself admits in another letter to Shalom-Aleykhem (dated July 22nd, [1888]),¹⁸ Peretz mixes up Sh. Rabinowitz (whose pseudonym was "Shalom-Aleykhem") with the most famous Yiddish (and Hebrew) writer of those days Sh. Y. Abramowitz (who wrote under the pen-name "Mendele Mokher Sefarim" i.e. "Mendele the Book-Seller"; 1836?-1917). It was Abramowitz, and not Rabinowitz's two novels that were translated into Polish by the non-Jewish Polish writer Klemens Szaniawski ("Junosza"; 1848-1898)¹⁹.

As we have already seen, in 1873-1874 Peretz probably intended to be a Polish poet, at least by the language he had chosen. He used to

dress like a Pole, to speak Polish and to write most of his letters in this language.

An examination of Peretz's letters from the point of view of the languages he used is most interesting. As a rule Peretz used to write in the 1870's Hebrew to men and Polish to women. Only four letters to his bride were written in Russian and only one letter to a man (Najman) was written in Polish²⁰.

Not a single letter was written in those years by Peretz in Yiddish. Moreover, all his letters to Shalom-⁶Aleykhem from the years 1888-1889 were written in Hebrew and not in Yiddish²¹. Let us remember that Shalom-⁶Aleykhem was a Yiddish writer and Peretz's letters were mainly concerned with his contributions to a Yiddish journal published by Shalom-⁶Aleykhem. And these are not the only letters written by Peretz in connection with Yiddish literature to Yiddish writers but not in Yiddish.

In the second and much more complete edition of Peretz's letters (and speeches) published by N. Meisel²² in 1944, the first letter written by Peretz in Yiddish is no. 84²³. However, as Meisel rightly assumes²⁴, it is most probably not a letter at all but a fragment of Peretz's "Refutation" ("Ma⁶aneh") of A. Kaminka's^{article} against "Jargon", mentioned by Peretz himself in a letter to Shalom-⁶Aleykhem in 1889²⁵. Thus, we must look for Peretz's first Yiddish letters in the years after 1889. These are four letters to Y.Y. Propus written as late as about 1898-1900²⁶. Peretz's next letters in Yiddish are from 1903²⁷; only in

this year he started to write to his best friend, the Yiddish writer Y. Dinezon, in Yiddish. And only since the years 1906-1907 were almost all Peretz's letters written in this language ²⁸ .

The strange avoidance of using Yiddish in letters by Peretz until practically the last years of his life was certainly due to the long established custom, at the bottom of which, however, was deeply rooted subconscious contempt for "Jargon".

In 1874 Peretz probably planned to publish his Polish poems. In 1875 his first Hebrew poems were printed. However, not before 1888 did he start publishing in Yiddish ²⁹ . Perhaps this was partly because of the inadequacy of "Jargon" and because of Peretz's doubts about the possibility of writing in Yiddish that would be understood by everybody, in view of the diversity of pronunciation in this language. As Peretz says in the Unknown Manuscript:

". . . Why should we use foreign expressions, based not on a language but on Jargon that is turned as clay to the seal ³⁰ . . . and what is understood by a man from Wilno is loathsome unto a man from Warsaw and vice versa?" ³¹ .

Moreover, Peretz intended his writings to appeal to a cultured reader ³² and perhaps did not think much of the rather low standard of the few Yiddish journals appearing in the 1870's. Yet, most probably, the main reason for Peretz's not publishing in Yiddish until 1888 and not taking seriously his writing in this language until about 1886-1887 ³³ , was the attitude towards Yiddish of his milieu. There is, when all is

said and done, some grain of truth in P. Diner's angry "marxist" evaluation of young Peretz as part and parcel of the Jewish bourgeoisie for which he produced his first Hebrew works ³⁴ . Even Diner did not deny that Peretz was not indifferent to the fate of the poor and down-trodden Jewish masses (as we have already seen, for example, from his "A Sad Episode") but Peretz did not write for them. He despised their language just as practically every maskil, every Jewish intellectual in those days did. Like them, Peretz also saw in "Jargon" (as well as in Hebrew!) only a temporary means for educating the Jewish masses until everybody understood the language of the country in which he lived ³⁵ . True, in the 1880's Peretz defended the Yiddish language and criticized people who despised it ³⁶ . However, only after publishing his Yiddish poem "Monish" (1888) did he start sometimes more seriously to think of the possibility that "the Jargon" should not only be "a temporary, transitory means" but a real literary language, as he says in a letter to Shalom-Aleykhem dated May 17th, 1889 ³⁷ .

And yet, as late as 1891, in the programmatic article "Education" ("Bildung"), introducing the first volume of "Di Yiddishe Bibliotek", which he edited, Peretz did not hesitate to write: "We want to educate the Nation, and write in Jargon because we have about three million souls that understand only Jargon. However, we do not think that Jargon is holy, we quite frankly sympathize with those who want to supersede Jargon by a living language of the country" ³⁸ . This important article was reprinted at the head of Peretz's "Works. Jubilee Edition",

published in 1901. Characteristically enough, it was omitted altogether from the 1908 edition of Peretz's works: his attitude towards Yiddish (as well as towards other problems) had changed in the meantime ³⁹ .

In his second letter Shalom-^lAleykhem, dated July 4th, 1888, Peretz gave a brief account of his literary activity. He mentioned only his Hebrew works, all but one already printed, and added: "In Jargon I have not printed as yet and until now burnt what I wrote" ⁴⁰ . We know already that, although Peretz made a very similar statement about his Polish writings ("published nothing, burnt"), a neatly-made copy of his Polish poems obviously survived the "auto-da-fé". It is therefore not altogether surprising that exactly a fortnight after the above statement to Shalom^lAleykhem, on 18th July, 1888, Peretz notified him that: "When I opened my old bag I found some more sketches ["temunot", i.e. "pictures"] from the life of our nation in Poland, written in prose . . .". He sent them for Shalom^lAleykhem's Yiddish journal "Di Yiddishe Folksbibliotek" ("The Jewish Popular Library") ⁴¹ .

As a matter of fact quite a number of Peretz's Yiddish works written before the middle of 1888 survive, although no doubt many were lost ⁴² . According to Z. Reizen ⁴³ the assimilated sons of Yosef Altberg destroyed, after their father's death, all Peretz's Yiddish writings collected by him. For this statement we have no proof. It is true that Yosef Altberg preserved not only Peretz's Hebrew writings but also some of his Yiddish ones ⁴⁴ . However, he died in 1873 and most

of Peretz's Yiddish works were written later. On the other hand, Mosheh Altberg, the son of Yosef Altberg, was not at all assimilated, and his wife Paulina preserved the manuscripts of two of Peretz's important Yiddish poems written in the 1880's ⁴⁵.

S. Niger in his extensive Yiddish book on Peretz ⁴⁶ enumerates no fewer than fourteen poems in Yiddish written by Peretz before 1888 that are preserved ⁴⁷, and to his list a few more items may still be added ⁴⁸. It is also possible that some of Peretz's lost Yiddish works were published by him under a different name and in a different form. It is not always easy to decide which of Peretz's Yiddish works belong to the years 1870-1878.

Most probably only in the late 1880's did Peretz start to take his Yiddish works seriously. What was written by him in this language earlier was probably occasional; most of the works written in the 1870's were - at least to a certain degree - facetious. There are only a very few of Peretz's Yiddish poems composed in a serious vein, which were written in the 1870's. On the other hand we have no witnesses to Peretz's writing "light" poetry in Yiddish in the years immediately following the terrible pogroms of 1881-1882. The pogroms were a landmark in the spiritual evolution of the Jews living under the rule of the tsars. And they deeply influenced Peretz.

S. Niger has pointed out the difference in Peretz's views before and after the pogroms ⁴⁹. We shall, on the whole, follow his exposition, modifying here and there slightly (and silently).

In the 1870's Peretz's views were, generally speaking, those of a maskil. He believed in the future of the Jews in the diaspora. He saw the solution of the Jewish question in emancipation and "conformity" with the surrounding population. The chief aim of literature was, to him, to spread knowledge and to promote the integration of the Jews into the "native" population. Sympathy with the poor and a certain "internationalism" were characteristic trends of this period. The keynote of all Peretz wrote in the 1870's was optimism, a hope for a better future.

After the pogroms, and particularly in the years immediately following the events of 1881-1882, the keynote of Peretz's works was pessimism and disappointment. This is, we may venture, valid also in relation to the whole literature of Jews in Russia, in Hebrew and Yiddish, as well as in Russian and Polish. The "international moment" ⁵⁰ was over and national feeling was much stronger. The attitude towards traditional Judaism and towards its religious leaders was much more positive ⁵¹.

In spite of this, the influence of the ideas of Haskalah (and of Polish "Positivism" ⁵² persisted also in the 1880's and even later ⁵³. The importance of educating the Jewish masses, interest in the improvement of the conditions of the poor, and so on - these were slogans not entirely abandoned by Peretz after the catastrophe. Some of them echoed in his writings to the end.

On the other hand, we must remember that the pogroms of 1881-1882 did not come out of the blue. Nizer does not pay any attention to

this important fact. The first pogrom in Russia took place at the beginning of the 1870's. This was the pogrom in Odessa in 1871. And it did not fail to impress the Jewish maskilim ⁵⁴. The increasing activity of the revolutionaries in the middle of the 1870's and their turning to terrorism provoked a reactionary policy of the Russian Government. From 1879 the terrorists made several attempts to assassinate the tsar ⁵⁵. All this, and the participation of Jews in revolutionary activity, contributed to the growth of anti-semitism in Government circles and among the Russian population towards the end of the 1870's ⁵⁶.

These developments could not escape Peretz's attention and, as we shall see, he expressed his feelings aroused by the wave of anti-semitism already in the 1870's ⁵⁷.

Thus the criteria put down by Niger (and extended by us) to distinguish between the works written by Peretz in the 1870's and those written by him in the 1880's must be applied with the greatest care.

Niger's list of Peretz's Yiddish writings before 1888 contains, as mentioned, fourteen items ⁵⁸.

1. "Zamoshcher pozhondik" ("The Order in Zamość"). Written in the 1870's (see below).
2. "Ikh zol gornisht zayn" ("I should cease to exist") ⁵⁹. From the poet's brother, Yonah Yehoshua Peretz's statement ⁶⁰ we may conclude that it was written after 1878. According to Niger this poem belongs to the 1880's ⁶¹. We may agree with both statements without any hesitation. The poem itself provides a "terminus a quo". Peretz

hints here⁶² at a law according to which no more than 5% of military doctors in Russia were to be Jews. This law was issued on April 10th, 1882⁶³.

3. "Di neshome yeseyre" ("The Additional Soul")⁶⁴. Y. Y. Peretz stated in his memoirs on his brother⁶⁵ that this poem was written after 1878; approximately in 1881-1882, as it follows from what he said to N. Meisel⁶⁶. There does not seem to be any reason to question these statements.
4. "Dos vig-lid" ("The Lullaby")⁶⁷. According to Y.Y. Peretz⁶⁸, written after 1878. Niger⁶⁹ rightly states that it belongs to the 1880's and reflects Peretz's feelings after the pogroms, to which he makes transparent allusions.
5. "Son'im" ("The Enemies")⁷⁰. According to Niger this short poem (20 lines) was written after the pogroms.⁷¹
6. "Yisra'elik" ("The Little Israel")⁷². Niger ascribes this poem (28 lines) also to the years after 1881-1882⁷³.
7. "Mal'kuta' de-er'a' ki-mal'khuta' de-ragia'" ("The Kingdom of the Earth is like the Kingdom of the Heavens")⁷⁴. Y.Y. Peretz says that this poem belongs to the Yiddish poems composed by his brother after 1878⁷⁵. Z. Reisen says that this was also the opinion of Peretz's friend in Zamosc Dr. Yisbaq Geliebter⁷⁶. According to Reisen "The Kingdom..." was written at the latest in the beginning of the 1880's. Surely it is rather improbable that this humorous poem was written in the years immediately following the terrible pogroms. Its contents suggest

that it was written when Peretz had been for some time a practising lawyer in the Russian courts (he passed his examinations, as we know, most probably in the beginning of 1877). Peretz's dwelling on Russian anti-semitism in rather a light vein probably indicates that "The Kingdom. . ." was either written before the pogroms (in 1877-1880) or in the late 1880's, several years after the pogroms. Peretz mentions in his poem a certain "Katkov" as one of the leaders of the anti-semites ⁷⁷. This was, no doubt, Mikhail Nikiforovich Katkov ⁷⁸ (1818-1887), a well-known reactionary Russian journalist. Peretz places Katkov "in paradise". Could this indicate that "The Kingdom. . ." was written after Katkov's death in 1887? Be that as it may, this poem was not written before 1878. ^{78a}

8. ["Vos mitchet ir. . ."] A fragment without a name, beginning with the words: "Why do you torment. . .". Written probably in the 1870's (see below).
9. "Dos shnyderl" ("The Little Tailor"). Written perhaps in the 1870's (see below).
10. ["Qoso shel yud"]. A Yiddish translation of the beginning of Y.L. Gordon's poem "The Dot on the 'i'". Written in 1877 (see below).
11. "Di geshmisene'emes" ("The Flogged Truth") ⁷⁹. Peretz read this poem to Paulina, the wife of Mosheh Altberg, when she stayed several months in Zamosc from June 1887 ⁸⁰. The poet presented her with the manuscript of "The Flogged Truth" ⁸¹. Nizer attempts to prove that this poem was written in the 1870's ⁸². However, his arguments -

strong as they may appear - show only that "The Flogged Truth" contains both elements of Peretz's Haskalah-period (the "social-revolutionary trend, the strong antipathy to "Belief", etc.) and of his post-Haskalah period (e.g. the very critical attitude towards "Wisdom"). And it seems that there is a proof that "The Flogged Truth" does not belong to the 1870's.

Some of Peretz's manuscripts written, no doubt, in the 1870's have survived and several facsimiles of them have been published ⁸³. Even a superficial comparison will show that the manuscript of "Digeshmisene'emes" ⁸⁴ could not have been written between 1872-1873 and 1877 but at least several years after the last date. Of course, it is possible that basically the poem belongs to the 1870's but in the form it is preserved it was certainly written in the 1880's, perhaps even not very long before the manuscript was presented by its author to Paulina Altberg. The contradictory elements in the poem could possibly be explained by the fact that in the 1880's Peretz changed the work written earlier. The later version of this poem, called "Solomon's Throne" ⁸⁵ (printed in 1892), differs in many details from "The Flogged Truth".

12. "Monish". The oldest version of this poem ⁸⁶ was read by Peretz to Paulina Altberg in the same summer of 1887 in which he read to her "The Flogged Truth" (above: no. 11), "[Three] Seamstresses" (below: no. 14) "and other smaller poems" ⁸⁷. Niger is rather vague about

about the dating of the first version of Peretz's famous poem. In one place he says that it originated perhaps in the 1870's⁸⁸. A little further he is of the opinion that "Monish" (i.e. its first version) with its individualistic-psychological motive of love (perhaps rather: approach to the motive of love?) could, with the exception of a few passages, have been written rather in the 1880's than in the 1870's⁸⁹. The main reason why, still a little further, Niger decides that the oldest version of "Monish" was written in the 1870's and not in the 1880's, is Peretz's attacks on the ḥasidim and his not very respectful treatment of the "mitnagdic" rabbi⁹⁰. Niger mentions that in a Hebrew poem published in 1886 Peretz had already spoken in favour of orthodox Jews⁹¹. However, he has to admit that in another Hebrew poem, published also in 1886⁹², Peretz still made fun of Jewish orthodox leaders, both ḥasidic and mitnagdic⁹³.

As a matter of fact Peretz, although he makes rather a rude joke on account of a rabbi⁹⁴, praises in the oldest version of "Monish" the mitnagdic orthodox Jewry of the past, when "there were no ḥasidim as yet"⁹⁵.

As to Peretz's sharp invective against the ḥasidim⁹⁶, it is not necessarily a proof that the first version of "Monish" was written in the 1870's. The only serious known clash between Peretz and the ḥasidim occurred not in the 1870's but in 1882 in connection with his attempts to run a school in Zamość^{''}. After a long and sometimes quite violent struggle the ḥasidim succeeded in putting an end to

Peretz's enterprise ⁹⁷.

In Peretz's letter to his wife, dated "July 26 [Old Style] - August 6, 1882", Peretz mentioned "the school". In the same letter he said that his tongue had given hell to the hasidim. He also informed Helena that her illness was maliciously ascribed by the hasidim to the curse of a hasidic rabbi ⁹⁸. Peretz's attitude to the hasidim was, no doubt, very far from friendly ⁹⁹.

Thus, the anti-hasidic passages of the first "Monish" could very well have been written in the 1880's ¹⁰⁰. It is worth while mentioning that not only does it lack any typical Haskalah tendencies but it contains even some derogatory remarks about the "Germans" (the usual, popular name for the maskilim ¹⁰¹) that speak Polish, German and French but despise Yiddish ¹⁰². We have already quoted similar views expressed by Peretz in a letter of Shalom-Aleykhem in 1888 ¹⁰³. And we find the same views also in one of Peretz's Hebrew poems of 1886 ¹⁰⁴.

In our opinion the oldest version of "Monish" was written in the 1880's, probably between 1882 and 1887, nearer to the last date, and not in the years immediately following the pogroms. Certain orthographic and stylistic details seem to suggest that both, "The Flogged Truth" and the first version of "Monish" were written at more or less the same time ¹⁰⁵.

13. "Fun Yehezqe'l" ("From Ezekiel") ¹⁰⁶, or: "Der novi'Yehezqe'l" ("The Prophet Ezekiel") ¹⁰⁷. This is a paraphrase of several passages from the book of Ezekiel ¹⁰⁸. Most of it ¹⁰⁹ is prophecies against the

false prophets and shepherds who mislead and exploit their flock, and against the strong among the flock itself who push aside and maltreat the weak ones.

In Peretz's paraphrase there are some very transparent allusions to contemporary conditions. The false prophets are styled after the "rabbiim" of the ḥasidim: "they fortell the future for fees called "pidyonot" ¹¹⁰ and smoke a pipe ("tsibuk") ¹¹¹ . Sh. 'Ashkenazi ¹¹² , Peretz's friend from Zamość, remembered that Peretz translated the thirteenth chapter of Ezekiel when he was already a busy lawyer ¹¹³ .

Peretz's poetical paraphrases "From Ezekiel" were not meant either for the uneducated or for women. They show a more serious approach to literary work in Yiddish. They were probably written in the 1880's after Peretz's clashes with the ḥasidim (1882) and perhaps even in the late 1880's ¹¹⁴ .

14. "Dray neytorins" ("Three Seamstresses") ¹¹⁵ , or: "Neytorins" ("Seamstresses") ¹¹⁶ . As already mentioned (above: no. 12) this was one of the poems Peretz read to the wife of his relative and friend Mosheh Altberg, Paulina, in summer 1878. Paulina Altberg's evidence ¹¹⁷ is the only one we have about "Three Seamstresses".

The poem, greatly influenced by Thomas Hood's famous "Song of the Shirt" (1843) ¹¹⁸ has ~~the~~ outspoken social implications. Therefore Nizer ascribes it, if not without hesitation, to the 1870's ¹¹⁹ . This, however, is hardly convincing. It is enough to mention that very similar motives on the sad life of poor seamstresses appear in several

of Peretz's later works, particularly in the poem "Sewing Somebody Else's Wedding Gown"¹²⁰ and in the short-story "Purim Actors"¹²¹ (i.e., actors performing during the Feast of Purim).

We have already suggested that the two other poems known to have been read by Peretz to Mrs. Altberg in Zamość (nos. 11 and 12) were written not long before her visit to Peretz's native town in summer 1887. We probably will not be wrong if we assume that Peretz did not "dig up" for his visiting friend some of his old poetry. We believe that all he read to Paulina Altberg was written not very long before June 1887.

Peretz certainly visited the Altbergs in Płock¹²², where they had lived since 1885. In this year he attended their wedding which took place in Płock. His only surviving son, Lucjan, was a pupil of a secondary school there and the Altbergs took care of him. Peretz had many friends in this town¹²³. We can hardly doubt that he visited Płock to see his son, his relatives and friends between 1885 and summer of 1887¹²⁴. During his visits he could have read to his friends - Paulina Altberg included - his older poems.

The style and the artistic standard of "Three Seamstresses", too, indicates the 1880's rather than the 1870's. Of course, Peretz probably improved his poem (and changed its name from "Seamstresses" to "Three Seamstresses"?) before publishing it in 1895. The fact remains that, at least in the form it was preserved, the little poem was not

written in the 1870's.

Out of fourteen Yiddish poems mentioned by Niger in his list we know the date of composition of only one (no. 10) and probably only four were written between the years 1870-1878 (nos. 1, 8, 9 and 10). Although Niger's list of Peretz's preserved Yiddish works written before 1888 is not altogether complete, there are only a very few items that can be added and only one belonging to the period with ^{which} we are concerned.

The first Yiddish work written by Peretz after his first few childish attempts ¹²⁵ was - as far as we know - a poem called "A Letter of the Polish Females" ¹²⁶. Peretz wrote this poem at the suggestion of R. A. Braudes, who gave him the idea, for the Yiddish weekly "Yisra'elik", published by Y. Y. Linetzki and Abraham Goldfaden. We have already quoted from Braudes' letter to Linetzki, dated January 27th, 1876. From this letter it follows that Peretz's poem was written either at the end of 1875 or at the very beginning of 1876, while he lived in Warsaw. The poem was lost, probably by the editors of "Yisra'elik". This journal existed only just over six months (July 23rd, 1875 to February 2nd, 1876) and ceased to appear a few days after Braudes wrote his letter ¹²⁷. However, as a matter of fact, we have no proof that the poem was ever really sent

by Peretz to the editors of "Yisra'elik" ¹²⁸ .

We do not know anything about this, Peretz's first Yiddish work intended for print. It would have been very much in line with Peretz's custom if some motives of the lost poem had returned in one of his later works. Still, we hesitate to suggest that maybe something of "A Letter of the Polish Females" went towards the Hebrew poem "To the Jewish Maiden Estranged from Us" ¹²⁹, published in 1886.

There were probably more Yiddish works composed by Peretz in the years 1870-1878 that were lost. We know that already in the 1870's (albeit mostly in the 1880's) Peretz's Yiddish poems were sung by the Jews of Zamość. These were written in a way reminiscent of folk-songs and were influenced by popular poems of Abraham Goldfaden ¹³⁰ and others. Some of them can be identified. A few were preserved only partly. Some, no doubt, were lost altogether and even their names did not survive ¹³¹ .

We have already suggested ¹³² that out of Peretz's many lost Yiddish writings, written before 1888-1889 and mentioned in his letters to Shalom-Aleykhem ¹³³ , some may have been written in the years 1870-1878. A few may have survived under a different name and in a different form. Unfortunately, it is altogether impossible to say which of the lost works belonged to the above period, or which of them survived under a new guise.

Probably while still in Warsaw Peretz wrote a very little Yiddish prose fragment beginning with the words "Cossacks with whips [?]. . .", preserved in the Unknown Manuscript. This is the only known piece of Peretz's "literary prose" in Yiddish from the 1870's ¹³⁴ .

Except for "A Letter to the Polish Females" and the fragment in the Unknown Manuscript, all Peretz's known Yiddish works of the 1870's belong to the period after his return to Zamość (probably in the second half of 1876). It is, but for a single case, not at all certain whether they were written before Peretz's second marriage (i.e. before February 14, 1878) or after this event. The only literary work in Yiddish about which we know that it was written after Peretz's return to his native town and before he married Helena Ringelheim is the translation of the beginning of Y.L. Gordon's poem "Qoso shel yud" ("The Dot on the 'i').

Yehudah Leyb Gordon (1830-1892) ¹³⁵ was the greatest Hebrew poet of the whole Haskalah period. His impact on Hebrew literature, far beyond the limits of Haskalah, was important and fruitful. Although Peretz's attitude to Gordon from the late 1890's on (as his attitude towards the Haskalah in general) was rather negative, he was (as we shall see) influenced by Gordon's poetry in the 1870's. Peretz wrote two long articles about Gordon and mentioned the great poet several times in his works ¹³⁶.

In one of his Russian letters to Helena Ringelheim in which Peretz dealt with the problem "Of the Work of Women", he inserted a Yiddish translation of the beginning of Gordon's most famous poem "The Dot on the 'i'" ¹³⁷. Peretz's letter is undated but it is a "continuation" of the previous one, dated "September 1st [Old Style], i.e., 13th], 1877". The letter containing Peretz's translation was probably written a few days after this date but certainly before the next letter, dated "September

9th [i.e. 21st] 1877" 138.

To illustrate the tragic situation of the Jewish woman Peretz translated for Helena the beginning of Gordon's poem into Yiddish ¹³⁹. The translation covers, with some omissions, the first chapter of "The Dot on the 'i'" ¹⁴⁰. Writing for his young fiancée Peretz omitted or changed some of Gordon's coarse Biblical and Talmudic expressions. He did not even hesitate to add here and there a line of his own. However, he did not weaken Gordon's magnificent outburst of indignation with which the great poet opened his poem.

Of Peretz's songs composed in the 1870's that were sung by the Jews of Zamość ¹⁴¹ only one survived complete: "The Order in Zamość" ¹⁴². As in the case of nearly all Peretz's Yiddish songs of this kind, that were not meant for printing, there does not exist an authorized text. "The Order in Zamość" was sent after Peretz's death by two of his friends of Zamość Sh. 'Ashkenazi (the author of memoirs on Peretz quoted several times above) and Mordkhay Becher ¹⁴³, to Peretz's best friend for many years Ya'aqob Dinezon. This text was revised by N. Meisel, with the help of 'Ashkenazi and Becher, during his visit to Zamość in 1928 ¹⁴⁴ and printed in his book "Y. L. Peretz. His Life and Work" in 1945 ¹⁴⁵. Preserved mainly orally or in unauthorized copies, this text certainly does not reflect the original in every detail. Variants were bound to appear. Peretz himself quoted in "My Memoirs" four lines from the first stanza of "The Order in Zamość" (without mentioning the name of the song). ¹⁴⁶ One of these lines is not to be found in Meisel's text ¹⁴⁷.

The song was produced exclusively for local consumption. It is full of allusions to events and problems of the Jewish population of Zamość. People of Zamość are mentioned frequently; sometimes just as "rabbi", "doctor", etc., but often by nicknames, first names, or even surnames. The song gives, in a form reminiscent of folk-poetry¹⁴⁸, a satirical picture of the disorders in the life of the Jewish Community in Peretz's native town.

Peretz begins with the hardship of the poor, suffering because of the high price of their staple food and exploited by the suppliers of ritually "fit" ("kasher") meat. He does not spare the "rabbi" and other religious "officials" of the Community. He describes the disorder in the old, venerable "House of Study" ("Beyt ha-midrash") of Zamość (where he himself used to study and read while a boy¹⁴⁹). Peretz criticises the bad arrangements in the Jewish communal hospital ("heqdesh"). He pokes fun at the long and futile attempts to build a ritual bathing-pool ("miqweh") of which he did not think very much altogether¹⁵⁰. And he ridicules the equally unsuccessful plans for founding a school¹⁵¹. He says that obviously without a "ukase" from Petersburg to teach the parents themselves there will never be a school for their children.

The last stanza of "The Order in Zamość" deals with the hasidim in two fairly innocent lines and reproaches "us" (i.e., the "enlightened") for addiction to cards and luxury. The maskilim are also admonished for their unwillingness to spare money or time for the benefit of the Community.

As Niger remarks ¹⁵², the song is typical of a maskil. It is characteristic that "us" in "The Order in Zamość" means - the maskilim.

There exists only one external evidence as to the date of Peretz's satirical poem. In "My Memoirs", quoting a few lines from "Zamoshcher Pozhondik", Peretz mentions ¹⁵³ that "later", in "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems", he included a poem "Hanah" ¹⁵⁴. "Rhymed Stories" was published in 1877. This would have fixed the "terminus ad quem". However, Niger suggests that Peretz did not mean the date of publication but the date of writing of "Hanah", which was - according to him - "not later than 1874" ¹⁵⁵. We believe that arguments can be found against Niger's thesis.

It is obvious that "The Order in Zamość" could only have been composed while its author lived in this town, i.e. either before 1873, or between the second half of 1876 and the second half of 1889 or the beginning of 1890 (when Peretz ultimately left his native town) ¹⁵⁶.

Peretz's strongly negative attitude to the "rabbi" of Zamość excludes, in our opinion, the possibility that he alluded here to rabbi Mosheh Wahl, whom he adored. Rabbi Wahl was the rabbi of Zamość between 1834 and 1873 ¹⁵⁷. Hence, the poem could have been written only after Peretz's return to his native town in the second half of 1876. In those days, and until about 1879, the rabbi of Zamość was rabbi Shelomoh Silber. The Jewish Community of Zamość did not think much of rabbi Silber ¹⁵⁸. Thus, we may presume that "The Order in Zamość" was written between the second half of 1876 and about 1879.

Peretz mentions in his satirical song a certain Sienicki¹⁵⁹. He is perhaps identical with the chief officer of the Zamość fire-brigade, mentioned by Peretz in a letter to his wife, written probably in 1882 (or 1883)¹⁶⁰. As we already know, Peretz joined the fire-brigade probably in 1877 or 1878 and was a member until 1882-1883¹⁶¹.

Peretz's lenient attitude towards the hasidim indicates the years before 1882. The problem of a school for the Jewish children of Zamość was, according to D. Schiffmann¹⁶², solved (if only temporarily) towards the end of 1879. This brings us again to the period between the second half of 1876 and 1879.

Judging from Peretz's jocular mood and his social position (as described by himself while speaking of "us" - the "enlightened") we are inclined to think that "The Order in Zamość" was written while Peretz was already a successful lawyer and a happy fiancé. The life of "us" is very much the life he describes in his letters to his bride¹⁶³. This puts "The Order in Zamość" at the utmost only a short time after the "Rhymed Stories" was published. However, it could also have been written some time after Peretz's marriage, in 1878 or 1879.

The indifference of the maskilim to Community life, as described in Peretz's song, suits the situation in the late 1870's and after¹⁶⁴. Anyway, "Hanah" was written and even printed before and not after Peretz composed "The Order in Zamość".

While criticising the disorders in Zamość Peretz's first concern is for the poor. In a small fragment preserved of a song called "The

Little Tailor"¹⁶⁵ Peretz was concerned with a poor, unlearned workman. He seems jokingly to defend "the little tailor" from the derision of the "learned".

The "little song" was sung to Sh. L. Citron by an old Jew from Zamość, a certain Ya'abes. Citron kept in his memory only six lines of it (probably the beginning), which he published in 1925¹⁶⁶. It is hardly possible to decide when the tiny fragment was written. We are inclined to believe that the song about "The Little Tailor" was composed more or less at the same time as "The Order in Zamość" or at least between the second half of 1876 (let us remember that the song was obviously sung in Zamość) and 1881 (the beginning of the pogroms)¹⁶⁷.

The same Citron who preserved the fragment of "The Little Tailor" relates in his memoirs on Peretz¹⁶⁸ a long story about his interest in the poor pupils of the traditional Jewish religious school for beginners ("heder"). According to Citron, Peretz often used on his way to the court (which was outside Zamość) to take a child from a "heder" on a day's outing in the country. In connection with this habit of Peretz, Citron quotes a short poem (eight lines) written by the young¹⁶⁹ lawyer. It has no name and begins with the words; "Why do you torment..."¹⁶⁹ The little poem is full of compassion for the poor, hungry children tormented by their "rabbis" who teach them complicated religious laws ("your laws" - says the poet¹⁷⁰). Citron does not mention the origin of the text he printed. He places Peretz's outings with the children in the middle of the 1870's¹⁷¹. Niger rightly remarks¹⁷² that this

could not have taken place before 1877 because only in this year did Peretz pass his examination as a lawyer. If Citron's story, which sounds very much like an anecdote, is to be trusted, we may presume that "Why do you torment. . ." was written in the late 1870's, perhaps in 1877, before Peretz's marriage (?) Peretz's commiseration with the Jewish children, deprived as they were of all the plays and pleasure of a normal childhood, is one of the most sympathetic trends in his works. Already in the 1870's Peretz liked to tell fairy-tales to little children ¹⁷³ . Later he sometimes wrote childrens' stories ¹⁷⁴ and songs for children. ¹⁷⁵

Poor and artistically undeveloped is Peretz's Yiddish performance in the 1870's. Even so it is not entirely insignificant.

Peretz's Yiddish songs of this period have a freshness of folk-poetry and something of their author's later fighting spirit. The fate of the poor and the suffering is close to his heart. The hard lot of the Jewish woman, the child from the "heder", of the poor and the unlearned, exploited and scorned by the wealthy and "learned" - these are the main topics of Peretz's few Yiddish writings from the years about 1870-1878. A certain, not ^{yet} very sharp, anti-clerical and "anti-nomian" trend, is discernible. (As we shall see it is much stronger in Peretz's Hebrew writings). His weapon is ridicule and irony and not venomous satire.

The public to whom Peretz appealed in his Yiddish works of this period was a very limited one. None of these works was meant for publication, with the exception of a single, lost poem. Peretz's public was a small circle of the Jewish inhabitants of Zamość (and once, his bride only). But for one little prose fragment, all Peretz's preserved Yiddish works of the period were probably written between the second half of 1876 and 1878-1879 (or 1880).

These facts have to be borne in mind when one compares Peretz's preserved Yiddish works of the years about 1870-1878 on the one hand with his Polish poems¹⁷⁶, and on the other - with his Hebrew works of the same years, with which we shall deal in the following chapters.

NOTES

1. Comp. e.g.: A. A. Roback, The Story of Yiddish Literature, New York, 1940, 33-92.
2. As late as 1888 Peretz complained in his Yiddish poem "Monish" (A, I, 20-21) of the limitations of "Zhargon", as he calls it.
3. "A nayer nisahon" (A, IX, 118).
4. On A. Zederbaum see above: Ch. 4, p. 32.
5. "Yiddishes Folksblat" was first published by Peretz's fellow-townsmen A. Zederbaum (see e.g.: L. Wiener, The History of Yiddish Literature. . ., London, 1899, 357). According to Sh. L. Citron (Dray literarishe doyles. . ., Vol. I, Wilno, 1922, 134) Peretz intended to publish in this journal some of his short-stories but, when it was taken over by the "crazy" Y. Lewi, whom he could not stand, Peretz dropped this plan. - On Y. Lewi see: Citron, o.c., Vol. III, Wilno, 1922, 152-164.
6. Y. L. Peretz, Briv un redes, ed. by N. Meisel, [1st ed.], Wilno, 1929, 15-16.
7. In Peretz's peculiar terminology here Yiddish is called "ibrit" (i.e. "Hebrew"), or "Zhargon", and Hebrew - "leshon ha-qodesh" (i.e. "the Holy Tongue").
8. Comp. above: Ch. 3, pp. 13-14.
9. Comp. above: Ch. 4, pp. 32 and 34.

10. The Yiddish "tradition" of Zamosc["] was instrumental in Peretz's later evolution.
11. B, 321.
12. Z, 53-54, 60, 68, etc., and particularly 84 ("I had hardly put my foot into the 'movement'") and 93.
13. Z, 75-76.
14. Comp. above: Ch. 14, p. 200.
15. Comp. above: Ch. 12, p. 178 and p. 191, note 133; and see particularly "Briv un redes", [1st ed.], 31.
16. O.c., 16.
17. L.c.
18. O.c., 31.
19. Comp. above: Ch. 14, p. 225, note 130.
20. Comp. above: Ch. 14, p. 216.
21. "Briv un redes", [1st ed.], 11-35, 37-45.
22. Unfortunately, as mentioned, Meisel published in his second edition (= B) only the Yiddish translations of non-Yiddish letters. Hence the necessity of using the first edition and other sources.
23. B, 157-159.
24. B, 157 (and comp.: 155 and note 1).
25. "Briv un redes", [1st ed.], 43.
26. B, 199-211.
27. B, 228-229.
28. However, he continued to write in Polish to his wife (B, 351).
29. True, Peretz was ready at the end of 1875 or in the very beginning of 1876 to publish a Yiddish poem, but this was only after Braudes "encouraged" him to do so (comp. above: Ch. 11C, p. 155).
30. Comp.: Job, 38, 14.
31. MS, 6, ll. 10-14. See also Peretz's letter to Shalom-Aleykhem of June 7th, 1888 ("Briv un redes", [1st ed.], 12-13).
32. "Briv un redes", [1st ed.], 12. And comp. above: Ch. 14, p. 200.
33. Comp.: Z. R[eisen], Peretzes ershte poemes in Yiddish, YB, XII (1937), 260.
34. P. Diner, Di vortslen fun Peretz's shafn. A pruv fun marxistisher baloykhtung. . ., Warsaw, 1934, 15-16.
35. Comp.: MS, 4, ll. 1-20. As a matter of fact in the 1870's he did not even recognise "Jargon" as worthy of this mission.
36. a) Peretz's letter to Shalom-Aleykhem of July 4th, 1888 (see above); b) The first version of "Monish", (YB, XII, 1937, 271) which was, in our opinion, written in the 1880's and not in the 1870's (see below); c) "Manginot ha-zeman" (K, IX, [pt. II], 40-41), published in 1886.
37. "Briv un redes", [1st ed.], 38.
38. A, VIII, 8. Comp. also Peretz's letter to Y. N. Goldberg ("Y. K.N.H.Z"), written in the same year (YB, XXVIII, 1946, 200). To the whole problem of Peretz's attitude towards Yiddish: N, 388-399.
39. Comp.: M. Ravitch, Vegn farsheydene oysgabes fun Y.L. Peretzes

- "Gezamelte" un "Geklibene" verk, YB, XXXVI (1952), 85.
40. "Briv un redes", [1st. ed.], 17.
 41. O.c., 24. The words "some more" indicate that already before July 18th (probably between the 4th and the 18th) Peretz sent some of his "sketches" to Shalom-Aleykhem.
 42. See particularly: N, 144-170.
 43. Z. Reisen, Lexikon fun der yiddisher literatur. . ., Vol. II, Wilno, 1930³, 984-985.
 44. Comp.: Z, 89 (and above: Ch. 8, p. 110).
 45. Peretz's own manuscript of "Di geshmisene'emes" ("The Flogged Truth") and a copy of the first version of "Monish" (see: YB, XII, 1937, 261).
 46. S. Niger, Y. L. Peretz, Buenos Aires, 1952, 568 pp. (=N.)
 47. N, 152-153.
 48. See below.
 49. N, 154-156.
 50. Comp.: B, 321 (and above: Ch. 14).
 51. However, Peretz's "anti-clerical" mood did not cease. We may mention e.g. two of Peretz's short-stories: "Dos shtrayml" (A, II, 249-260; published in 1893) in which he ridiculed the influence exercised by the "mitnagdic" rabbis, and "Dem rebens tsibuk" (A, IV, 36-42; published in 1895) - in which he mocked the influence of the hasidic "rabbiim".
 52. Comp. above: Ch. 10, pp. 118-119.
 53. Comp., e.g., above X (p. 234): the quotation from Peretz's article "Education" (1891).
 54. S. M. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland. . ., translated. . . by J. Friedlaender, Vol. II, Philadelphia, 1918, 191-193, 215-216.
 55. G. Vernadsky, A History of Russia, New Haven, 1953³, 171.
 56. Dubnow, o.c., Vol. II, 202.
 57. In MS.
 58. N, 152-153.
 59. A, I, 337-338. Comp. above: Ch. 10. Published as "Vos zol zayn fun mir?" in "Forverts", April 27th, 1930.
 60. Y.Y. Peretz, Y. L. Peretz als kelel-tuer in Zamosc eyder er iz gevorn a barimter shrayber, "Forverts", April 6th, 1930.
 61. N, 164.
 62. A, I, 338.
 63. Dubnow, o.c., II, 319-320.
 64. A, I, 339-340. Published as "Neshamah veterah" ("Neshome yeseyre") in "Forverts", April 27th, 1930.
 65. Y.Y. Peretz, l.c.
 66. M, 31-32.
 67. A, I, 341-343. Published as: "Vigen-lid" in "Forverts", April 27th, 1930.
 68. Y.Y. Peretz, l.c.
 69. N, 164-167.

70. "Forverts", April 27th, 1930. Not included in A.
71. N, 152 and 164.
72. "Forverts", April 27th, 1930. Not included in A.
73. N, 152 and 164. There may be some doubt whether "The Little Israel" was really written after the pogroms.
74. A, I, 181-182. Comp. above: Ch. 12. "The Kingdom. . ." was printed in 1895 (see: A, I, p. XIII).
75. Y.Y. Peretz, l.c. He calls it: "The Kingdom of the Heavens is like the Kingdom of the Earth". This deviates from the Talmudic proverb used by the poet for its title (see: Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot, 58a), but suits more the idea expressed in the poem.
76. Z. Reisen in YB, XII (1937), 260.
77. A, I, 181.
78. On Katkov see e.g.: "Entsiklopedicheskiy Slovar" (publ. by Brockhaus-Yefron), Vol. XIV (1895), 731-734 and W. E. Harkins, Dictionary of Russian Literature, London, 1957, 176.
- 78a. It is possible that when N. Sokolow (in "Ishim", Vol. II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 48-49) mentioned Peretz's "epigrams", which circulated in Zamosc and sometimes got their author into trouble with the Russian authorities, he had in mind this poem and others (now lost) of the same kind.
79. A, I, 328-336.
80. Paulina Altberg's reminiscences in YB, XII (1937), 306-308.
81. O.c., 307 (and comp.: 261).
82. N, 156, 158, and particularly 160-164.
83. See the facsimiles of: a) Peretz's Hebrew letter to G. Y. Lichtenfeld from about 1872-1873 (YB, XII, 1937, facing p. 185); b) A Hebrew poem (included in Peretz's collection of Polish poetry) from 1874 (o.c., facing p. 201); c) The beginning of Peretz's Yiddish translation of Y. L. Gordon's "Qoso shel yud" from 1877 (o.c., facing p. 25); d) A photostatic copy of one page of MS was sent by the writer of these lines to the "Yiddish Scientific Institute" (YIVO) and published in YB, XXXVI (1952), 260. This page (from "Ha-neqamah") was written in about 1876-1877 (see below: Ch. 19E, no. 1).
84. The beginning and the end of this manuscript are reproduced in YB, XII (1937), 279[d].
85. "Kise' Shelomoh" (A, I, 113-120).
86. YB, XII (1937), 270-279 [c] (p. 279 [b] should be before p. 279 [a]).
Not included in A.
87. Paulina Altberg's reminiscences, o.c., 306-307.
88. N, 158.
89. N, 161.
90. On hasidim and mitnagdim see above: Ch. 4, pp. 24-26.
91. "Le-'amah 'ibriyah we-hi' mitnakerah" (K, IX, [pt. 2.], 62).
92. "Ha-'ir ha-qetannah" (K, IX, [pt. 2.], 46-60). Both poems were published in 1886 and not in 1887, as Niger has it. Niger was obviously misled by the Hebrew date: [5]687.

93. N, 167-168.
94. YB, XII (1937), 275 (comp. also: 271-272).
95. O.c., 271.
96. L.c.
97. See particularly: D. Schiffmann in "Ha-Melis", Vol. XVIII (1882), 669-670, 690 and 729-730; Sh. 'Ashkenazi in "Zamość. . .", Tel-Aviv, 1953, 232; etc.
98. B, 87-90.
99. Comp. also: B, 116 and 117.
100. On Peretz's "anti-clericalism" in general even after the 1880's see above: note 51.
101. They were called so because of the birth-place of Haskalah.
102. YB, XII (1937), 271
103. Comp. above: p. 229.
104. "Le-qalmah 'ibriyah, . ." (K, IX, [pt. 2], 61-62; comp. above).
105. The first version of "Monish" was preserved not in Peretz's own manuscript, as "The Flogged Truth", but only in a copy made by somebody else (see: YB, XII, 1937, 307).
106. A, I, 29-33 (comp. also 144-145: "From Ezekiel chapter 33").
107. N, 153.
108. 1: 13, 1-9; 2: 34, 1-10; 3:34, 17-22; 4:37, 1-10.
109. Chapters 1-3 (out of four) of the paraphrase.
110. A, I, 29.
111. A, I, 30. See: a) First version of "Monish" (YB, XII, 1937, 271) and b) Peretz's short-story "Dem rebens tsibik [tsibuk]" ("The Pipe of the Hasidic Rabbi") published in 1895 (A, IV, 36-42). Comp. also: "Me-ha-nifla'ot. . .", "Sipurim be-shir. . .", Warsaw, 1877, 111.
112. Sh. 'Ashkenazi in "Zamość", Tel-Aviv, 1953, 231.
113. Z. Reisen (in his "Lexikon fun der yiddisher literatur. . .", Vol. II, Wilno, 1930³, 985) quotes 'Ashkenazi but mentions chapter 34.
114. Niger quotes P. (!)'Ashkenazi's opinion that "Fun Yehez^k'el" was written in the beginning of the 1880's (N, 153). However, he himself seems inclined to attribute this work to the 1870's, albeit he is not altogether sure of it (N, 156, 158, 160).
115. A, I, 153-154.
116. So: Paulina Altberg (YB, XII, 1937, 307).
117. L.c.
118. "The Song of the Shirt" was very popular and was contemporaneously translated into many languages, i.a. into Russian by Mikhail Larionovich Mikhaylov (1826-1865) in 1861 (see e.g.: "Bolshaya sovetskaya entsiklopediya", Vol. XIII, 1952, 178); into German by Hermann Ferdinand Freiligrath (1810-1876; see e.g.: "Der Grosse Brockhaus", B. V, 1954, 539); etc.
119. N, 156, 158, 160, 181.
120. "Baym fremdn hupe-kleyd" (published in 1896; A, I, 213-228).
121. "Purim shpiler" (published in 1895; A, II, 466-468).
122. Pronounced: Plotsk.

123. See: Mosheh Altberg's reminiscences (YB, XII, 1937, 305) and Peretz's letters to his son (B, 120-128).
124. Z. Reisen, o.c., II, 987.
125. Comp. above: Ch. 8.
126. "A brief fun poylishe neqeyves". There is no proof of Weinig's suggestion (YB, XII, 1937, 197) that Peretz wrote literary works in Yiddish in about 1874.
127. Comp. to all this above: Ch. 11C, p. 155.
128. R, 220, note 2.
129. "Le-'almah 'ibriyah we-hi' mitnakerah" (K, IX, [pt. 2], 61-62 (comp. above)).
130. According to its subtitle, "Yisra'elik" was a paraphrase of Goldfaden's poem (see: "Forverts", April 27th, 1930); probably of his poem "Dos Yudel" (see: A. Goldenfodim [this was Goldfaden's original name], "Dos Yudele.Yudishe lider. . .", Zhitomir, 1876, 8-12). Peretz's poems "Ikh zol gornisht zayn" (A, I, 337-338) and "Di neshome yeseyre" (I, 339-340) adopted the tunes of two of Goldfaden's songs: "Cain", (Goldenfodim, o.c., 71-77) and "Hamabdil" (o.c., 44-47) respectively (comp. above: Ch. 7, p. 104 note 123 on Goldfaden in Peretz's works).
131. Z. R[eisen] in YB, XII (1937), 260; M, 38; N. Sokolow, 'Ishim, Vol. II, 1935, 48-49; N, 165 and 170.
132. Above: Ch. 13, p. 195.
133. "Briv un redes", [1st. ed], 11-35, 37-45.
134. It will be dealt with below, in connection with MS (Ch. 19B).
135. On Gordon see e.g.: A. B. Rhine, Leon Gordon. . ., Philadelphia, 1910.
136. Peretz's articles on Gordon: a) "Meh hayah Gordon - balshan 'o meshorer?" ("Ha-sefirah", 1896, nos. 255-257, 260-261, 265, 269, 277, 280, 282-284, 286); b) As a continuation: "Gordon we-tub ta'am" ("Ha-sefirah", 1897, nos. 25-27, 33, 35, 37). Both articles were published anonymously and both were unfinished (comp.: J. Klausner, Historiyah shel ha-sifrut ha-'ibrit he-hadashah, Vol. IV, Jerusalem, 1954², 302). Neither of them was included in K. - Peretz mentioned Gordon in: K, VII, 203, 358, 363-364; A, VII, 29 (should be: "Gordon", and not "Gordin"); A, IX, 334; B, 158.
137. The original see e.g.: "Kolshirey Yehudah Leyb Gordon. . .", Vol. IV, Wilno, 1898, 5-43. The date at the end of the poem (p. 43) "1878" is wrong. It was first published in "Ha-shahar", Vol. VII (1876 (!)), 565-573, 635-645, 713-719. The part translated by Peretz: 565-567.
138. Comp.: YB, XII (1937), 19, 21 and 32. The letter containing the translation: 21-26.
139. YB, XII (1937), 22-24. Comp. above: Ch. 12, pp. 174-175.
140. "Kol shirey Y. L. Gordon. . .", Vol. IV, 5-9.
141. See e.g. Y. H. Zagorodski in "Ahi'asaf.Luah sifrut we-shimushi. . .", Vol. IX, for the year 1901/2, Warsaw, 1901, 354.
142. "Zamoshcher Pozhondik" (A, I, 323-326).
143. On Becher see: M, 32-33.
144. M, 39.

145. M, 40-42. Meisel had modernized the spelling (the first eight lines of his text are not printed in the right order; comp.: A, I, 323).
146. Z, 75-76.
147. A different variant of the beginning was preserved by Y. H. Zagorodski, l.c.
148. Comp.: N, 156.
149. Comp. above: Ch.Ch. 4 and 7.
150. D. Schiffmann complained about the delays in building the "miqweh" several times in his correspondence from Zamość published in "Ha-Melis": Vol. XIV (1878) 415; Vol. XV (1879), 262 and 895; Vol. XVIII (1882), 670. Comp. also probable allusions in Peretz's works: a) A letter to his wife, written probably in 1882 or 1883 (B, 98); b) "Mah hi' neshamah" (K, IV, pt. 1, 13); c) "Yosi bahur-ha-yeshibah" (K, V, pt. 1, 126); c) "A qashe oyf vene layt" (A, II, 265, 267).
151. Comp.: D. Schiffmann in "Ha-Melis", Vol. XV (1879), 895.
152. N, 156.
153. Z, 76.
154. "Sipurim be-shir we-shirim shonim", Warsaw, 1877, 117-138.
155. N, 158.
156. Comp.: N, 195-197.
157. Comp. above: Ch. 4, pp. 38-39.
158. J. Shatzky, Haskalah in Zamosc, YB, XXXVI (1952), 47 and 48, note 55. Comp. D. Schiffmann in "Ha-Melis", Vol. XV (1879), 262. Perhaps the rather derogatory remark about a rabbi in Zamość after rabbi Wahl in Peretz's "My Memoirs" (Z, 77) alludes to rabbi Silber.
159. The spelling is uncertain because this name is known only in Peretz's Yiddish transliteration, which is here: "Shinitzki" or "Shienityki" (In "Sienicki" the first letter is to be pronounced as a palatal "sh").
- è 160. Comp. above: note 150. His name is spelt here "Senityki".
161. Comp. above: Ch. 12, p. 179.
162. D. Schiffmann's correspondence in "Ha-Melis", Vol. XV, (1879), 895. The correspondence is dated: October 30th [Old Style], i.e. November 11, 1879.
163. Above: Ch. 12 and particularly pp. 171-172.
164. J. Shatzky, o.c., 36-37 and 48 (comp. above: Ch. 4, p. 37) and see also: D. Schiffmann, Masa' Zamosc, "Ha-Melis", Vol. XIV (1878), 415.
165. "Dos shnayderl" (A, I, 322).
166. Sh. L. Citron, Fun mayne zikhroynes, "Literarische Blätter", 1925, no. 49-50 (comp.: M, 38-39).
167. Niger tends to attribute it to the very beginning of the 1870's (N, 159-160).
168. Sh. L. Citron, Dray literarische doyres. . ., Vol. I, Wilno, 1922, 138-143.
169. "Vos mutchet ir. . .", (Citron, o.c., 142-143). Not included in A. Reprinted in Niger's book (N, 159).

170. Peretz's dislike of minor religious prescriptions found its expression not only here and in "Zamoshcher Pozhondik", but also in an enthusiastic sermon delivered by him probably in the 1870's. See: Y. L. Peretz in "Zamoshcher shtime", 1928, no. 6 (comp.: B, 356).

171. Citron, o.c., I, 138.

172. N, 159.

173. Comp.: Citron, o.c., I, 139 and 141.

174. Peretz once (in "My Memoirs"; Z, 112) expressed his view that perhaps his best work was a childrens' story "Dray hupes. . ." ("Three Wedding-Canopies"; A, V, 14-72).

175. A, I, 345-440.

176. Above: Ch. 14.

16. Peretz's Hebrew Writings in the Years 1870-1878.

Most of Peretz's statements about the Hebrew language belong to the years after he started publishing in Yiddish. From this time on he often felt the urge to clarify to himself and to others his attitude towards the two "Jewish" languages ¹ .

During his whole life Peretz never ceased to love and adore the language of the Bible. In 1886 he encouraged his son, Lucjan, to study Hebrew ² : "the language of your Nation, a language that is also the most beautiful and the most poetic, the language in which was written the Bible, [the book] compared to which the Homers fall into the shade and the Virgils hide in a corner. . .".

In days of sorrow and distress Peretz abandoned all other languages and turned to Hebrew which was nearest and dearest to him. When, at the end of the 1880's, he lost his licence as a lawyer and suddenly saw himself without any means of existence and any prospects for the future, he wrote to his old friend Mosheh Altberg:

"I write to you again in Hebrew. Strange - from this bitter and evil day foreign languages are loathsome unto me. . . . I cannot write to you in Polish. . ." ³ .

In 1891, when Peretz was already a well known Yiddish writer, he published his Yiddish article "Education". While sympathizing "with those

who want to supercede Jargon by a living language of the country" ⁴ , he added: "even more strongly we sympathize" with those who aim at "propagating Hebrew literature". . . . "We want the whole Nation to know Hebrew" ⁵ .

In Peretz's opinion Hebrew was the chain binding together the Jews in space and time. Thanks to Hebrew, the Jews, dispersed in so many countries all over the world and speaking so many different languages, were still one Nation. And Hebrew constituted the link between this Nation and its past, its rich cultural inheritance ⁶ .

Peretz turned to Yiddish mainly because he wanted to be understood by the Jewish masses but he never forsook "The Holy Tongue" and even sometimes expressed his belief that the future would belong to Hebrew ⁷ .

With all his love of Hebrew Peretz never saw in it (or in any other language ⁸) an aim in itself. As early as the 1870's he was opposed to the blind adoration of everything that was written in Hebrew solely because it was written in "the Holy Tongue". To him a language was only a means, nothing but a form ⁹ . Peretz demanded from the writer an idea; he wanted literature to serve for educating the nation. Therefore he sharply criticized the old generation of maskilim, all the writers who made their works a jigsaw of quotations from the Bible and other old sources, devoid of any ideas ¹⁰ . Peretz repeatedly expounded all this in the Unknown Manuscript ¹¹ , in the printed version of his poem "Nagni'el" ¹² , and later in the above-mentioned article "Education" ¹³ (1891), and elsewhere.

It is not necessary to stress that Peretz's views did not diverge very much from the views of the younger generation of maskilim, influenced by realism and "positivism" ¹⁴ .

As we shall see, the tendencies of the later Haskalah are much more prominent in Peretz's Hebrew writings of this period than in his contemporary Polish or Yiddish ones.

Writing about his literary beginnings to Y. Zinberg, Peretz bluntly states: "The first was a Hebrew poem in 'Ha-shahar' (Li'omrim [I am told]). . ." ¹⁵ . From the context it is obvious that it can only mean "the first" of his printed works. Even so - the statement is not exact ¹⁶ .

Peretz started writing in Hebrew very early, probably when he was about fifteen years old ¹⁷ . The earliest sample of Peretz's Hebrew that has survived is probably his letter to his father-in-law, G. Y. Lichtenfeld, written in 1872 or 1873 ¹⁸ .

There can be no doubt that Peretz wrote many literary works in Hebrew in the 1870's. He refers to them at the beginning of the version of "Nagni'el" preserved in the Unknown Manuscript, saying that he had written an "abundance of poems and essays" ¹⁹ . Some of Peretz's Hebrew works from those years were lost, some were printed during the 1870's, a few were published many years after Peretz's death, and some are still not printed (most of those preserved in the Unknown Manuscript).

Among Peretz's earliest known Hebrew works were two poems originally included in the (now lost) manuscript of Peretz's Polish "Poems of Diverse Contents" from 1874²⁰ : "Do you remember?" and "To the Birthday of X".

"Do you remember?"²¹ is known only from a short description in N. Weinig's article²² . The subject of this poem (of five eight-line strophes) was: why did the beloved desert him. This was obviously one more of the many short love poems in this manuscript; only it was written in Hebrew and not in Polish as were all the others.

According to Weinig²³ "To the Birthday of X" is "a paraphrase" of a lost Polish version²⁴ . A facsimile of a page of Peretz's manuscript containing the Hebrew poem was printed by Weinig²⁵ . The poet would like to send a birthday present to a lady. His soul and heart are already hers. He cannot send flowers because the summer is gone. He would not send his songs - they would make her sleepy. He has no money to send. As to his wishes, they are already known to her. His poverty is the only thing he can bring with him. He hopes he will still be welcome.

The poem consists of ten quatrains. Only the second and the fourth lines of each quatrain are rhymed. The lines are short and uneven. Thus the form contributes to the liveliness of Peretz's facetious birthday poem. Niger²⁶ suggests Heine's influence. However, it may have been influenced by Goethe. We must remember that the influence of Goethe's light love poems on Peretz's "Poems of Diverse Contents" was remarkable. Niger points out that there was hardly another Hebrew poet in the 1870's

who could write a light and vivid ironical-sentimental poem of this kind. Surely this was not the work of a beginner ²⁷. Peretz's Hebrew poems included in his Polish manuscript were most probably written, as all other poems in this manuscript, in 1873 or 1874 ²⁸.

Peretz's friend, Dr. Yishag Geliebter, told R. Imri (Feigenberg) in 1928 that "Peretz's first work was a passionate poem on. . .the blue fringes ²⁹, that the rabbi of Radzyń prepared from rock-whelk ³⁰ which he discovered, and ordered his hasidim to adorn with them the borders of their praying-shawls. . .³¹ After that he wrote three love poems" in honour of the bride of Geliebter's roommate. Geliebter was at that time a student at the University of Warsaw. Peretz, who was also in Warsaw, wrote the poems and Geliebter composed the music ³².

The old doctor's memory probably betrayed him this time. Dr. Geliebter himself stated on another occasion that Peretz started to write when he was fourteen years old, that is, in 1866 ³³. The three love poems could not have been among his first literary experiments. Peretz stayed in Warsaw in the years 1875-1876, and in those years the love poems were written ³⁴. They did not survive.

R. Imri does not mention in which language Peretz's "first" works were written. For some reason N. Meisel ³⁵, and in his footsteps S. Niger ³⁶ also, include them in chapters dealing with Peretz's Yiddish works. We are inclined to believe that the love poems were written in Hebrew, as was nearly everything Peretz wrote during his stay in Warsaw in the years 1875-1876.

"The Poem on the Blue Fringes" did not survive either. It was probably a satirical poem against the ḥasidim. If such, it was probably also written in Hebrew, and not in Yiddish as obviously Meisel ³⁷ and Niger ³⁸ take for granted.

According to Dr. Geliebter this poem was composed before the three love poems, but we do not know how long before. Niger ³⁹ points out that the new custom was first launched by rabbi Gershon Henokh only in the second half of the 1880's. Gershon Hanokh (Henokh) Leiner (1839-1891) was the ḥasidic rabbi of Radzyń, a small town to the north of Lublin ⁴⁰. His first book dealing with the problem of the "blue fringes" was not "Riband of Blue"⁴¹ (1888) - as Niger has it - but "Treasures Hid in the Sand"⁴² (Warsaw, 1887). Even if this book appeared some time after the introduction of rabbi Gershon Henokh's "innovation" ⁴³, we may still doubt whether Peretz's poem could have been written before 1875-1876. We must remember that rabbi Gershon Henokh's first book, which won him a name ⁴⁴, was only published in 1873. It is not entirely impossible that Peretz's poem was concerned with the ḥasidic rabbi of Radzyń but not with his "blue fringes". Perhaps it described an episode mentioned by Peretz in "My Memoirs": Rabbi Gershon Henokh tried to settle down in Zamość but was evicted "not with great honours!" ⁴⁵. Although Peretz says that the rabbi was called "of the Blue [Fringes]", it is possible that this episode took place before Peretz left Zamość in 1873. If this was the main topic of Peretz's poem, we may presume that the poem was written a very short time after the turning out of the rabbi

of Radzyń from Zamość and was one of local interest, such as he used to write in Yiddish. In this case Dr. Geliebter might have been not far from the truth in saying that it was Peretz's "first work", but - if so - it could not have been about the "blue fringes". On the other hand we must remember that Peretz never mentioned that he had described the eviction of rabbi Gershon Henokh in a poem ⁴⁶.

Sh. L. Citron suggests that Peretz's first printed works were articles on natural sciences published in 1874 in the Hebrew weekly "Ha-sefirah". They were signed Y.L.P., initials used by Yishaq Leyb Peretz more than once in the 1870's ⁴⁷. However, F. Lachower points out that the style of these articles is quite different from Peretz's ⁴⁸. Lachower believes that they were probably written by Yosef Leyb Pietuchowski ⁴⁹ (whose initials might also have been: Y.L.P.). Pietuchowski was the author of several articles on natural sciences published in "Ha-sefirah" and "Ha-magid" and signed with his full name.

Neither articles on natural sciences nor the poem "I am told", mentioned by Peretz himself, was his first printed work. This honour belongs to a Hebrew fable "The Bat and the Moon" ⁵⁰.

"The Bat and the Moon" was provoked by polemics between Peretz's father-in-law Gabri'el Yehudah Lichtenfeld and the famous mathematician and writer, the editor of "Ha-sefirah", Hayim Zelig Slonimski (1810-1904) ⁵¹. In 1865 ⁵² Lichtenfeld published a book on geometry "The

Knowledge of Measures" ⁵³. It seems that Slonimski prevented Lichtenfeld from having his book subsidized by the "Society for the Promotion of Haskalah" ("Hebrat mefisey haskalah"). Moreover, in the same year he himself published a similar book named "The Elements of the Science of Measures" ⁵⁴, with the help of the "Society" ⁵⁵. Lichtenfeld did not dare to attack Slonimski as long as he held an official position as a supervisor of the government Rabbinical Seminary in Zhitomir (1863-1873) and a censor of Hebrew books ⁵⁶. Thus only in 1874 did Lichtenfeld launch the first missile against his competitor: a little book called "Decipherer of Secrets" ⁵⁷.

Slonimski's reply was not long in coming. He wrote an article in "Ha-sefirah" ⁵⁸, whose publication he had resumed. Moreover, in the same year Slonimski published a pamphlet "The Jealousy of Scribes" ⁵⁹ by 'A. B. Schweizer. According to W. Zeitlin ⁶⁰, the pamphlet was also written by Slonimski himself, who concealed his identity under a pseudonym ⁶¹. Lichtenfeld did not hide his hand in his bosom and very soon published a second leaflet against Slonimski and Schweizer: "An Addition to the Deposit" ⁶²; the "Deposit" was his "Decipherer of Secrets".

At the end of the "Addition" there is the following remark: ⁶³ "In order not to leave blank pages.....I shall print here a poem which was written by a young man Mr. Y.L.P.R. of Zam. [i.e.: Yishaq Leyb Perez of Zamosc"] when he saw this Tosefet le-ha-Cerabon, and the leaflet Q.S. [i.e.: "Qin'at sofrim"] by 'A.B. Schweizer". After this remark follows Peretz's

fable "The Bat and the Moon"⁶⁴ .

No doubt Lichtenfeld's remark was not altogether sincere and Lichtenfeld did not mean to offend his son-in-law⁶⁵ . Peretz's fable was a glorification of Lichtenfeld (The Moon) and a biting satire on Slonimski (The Bat) and Schweizer (The Dog). Certainly Lichtenfeld printed Peretz's fable at the end of his book not only "in order not to leave blank pages". This was merely a very transparent excuse for including Peretz's little poem as a "finale" to his own attacks and accusations against his enemies⁶⁶ .

In the darkness of the night the Bat attempts to fly. The Donkey, the Horse and the Bull believe him to be an eagle. However, the Moon appears and the Bat becomes visible in all its ugliness. It asks its friend, the Dog, to bark at the Moon and frighten it off⁶⁷ . The Dog does its best, but to no avail. The Bat can no longer stand the light of the Moon and, blinded, falls "to the sides of the pit"⁶⁸ . Now it becomes a laughing-stock even to the Bull and the Donkey.

The censor's permission to print "An Addition to the Deposit" is dated January 28 [Old Style], (February 9) 1875. This leads Niger to the conclusion that Peretz's first printed work was probably written already in 1874⁶⁹ . This is possible but not necessarily true. More important is the fact that anyway "The Bat and the Moon" was composed while Peretz was still living in Sandomierz. Perhaps this fable had to pave the way for Peretz who already planned to join his father-in-law in Warsaw (where he arrived in summer 1875)⁷⁰ .

"The Bat and the Moon" is not altogether devoid of humour and of some artistic value. It achieved its aim and ridiculed Lichtenfeld's opponents. According to Peretz, Slonimski could not forget the young poet's satire several years later ⁷¹ .

Fable, as we know, was one of Peretz's favourite literary forms even before "The Bat and the Moon". Several fables were included in Peretz's manuscript of "Poems of Diverse Contents" ⁷² .

The polemics between Lichtenfeld and Slonimski continued and its echoes resounded again in Peretz's poem "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" ⁷³ (which will be dealt with in the next chapter).

Summing up his literary activity, Peretz wrote on July 4th, 1888 to Shalom-Aleykhem: "In Ha-shahar there were published some little poems by me" ⁷⁴ .

"Ha-shahar" ("The Dawn") was a very important Hebrew monthly published in Vienna in the years 1868-1885. Its editor was the famous Hebrew novelist and one of the earliest dreamers of Jewish national revival Peres Smolenskin (1840-1885) ⁷⁵ . Three of Peretz's Hebrew poems were published in Smolenskin's monthly: "The Partnership", "The Distribution of Knowledge", and "I am told".

The first of the three, "The Partnership", was printed in June-July 1875 issue of "Ha-shahar" ⁷⁶ . Perhaps it was Smolenskin's agent in Warsaw, Abraham Zúckermann, who encouraged Peretz (just arrived

in the Polish capital) to send his poems to "The Dawn" ⁷⁷ .

It happened in the year 1860, says the poet, obviously to make his story more verisimilar. During an epidemic a frightened peasant asks a hasidic rabbi to save his sheep. The rabbi consents on the condition that he himself will be a partner to the peasant's herd. In spite of the "saint's" promise, all the sheep die. Nevertheless, the rabbi demands from the peasant half of the skins - on the strength of their "partnership".

For a long time "The Partnership" was regarded as Peretz's first printed work ⁷⁸ . It is one of the typical anti-hasidic anecdotes of which scores were published by the maskilim in Hebrew journals. There are no traces of personal hatred for the hasidim in Peretz's poem.

Like "The Partnership", "The Distribution of Knowledge" ⁷⁹ is also a little satirical poem.

God calls to men to take each his share of Knowledge. Everybody comes running to take what suits him best. Peretz exploits this occasion to make many ironical remarks on account of lawyers, doctors, religious philosophers and especially "the investigators of antiquity". These last were a permanent target for Peretz's irony, perhaps not without the influence of Lichtenfeld ⁸⁰ . It is significant that the first-mentioned in Peretz's poem are the mathematicians ("mebaqshey hishbonot"). However, these are spared his irony: Peretz's father-in-law was a mathematician and in those days Peretz himself was taught by him this subject ⁸¹ .

Long after everyone returns joyfully home with the Knowledge he ~~has~~ been given, there appears before God a man asking for his share. Nothing is left. Yet when the man prays and cries, God has pity on him - "And while only nil was left, He gave him the negation". With the help of negation the man denies the wisdom of the writers, robs the dead of their honour and nullifies the prudence of everybody. Very soon the wise men realize the trouble - "That from lack of Knowledge was created the Critic".

Peretz's attitude towards the critics should not be deduced from "The Distribution of Knowledge". It is a joke and nothing more. As a matter of fact Peretz in those days was not only a "critic of life" - as Niger puts it ⁸² but also a critic of books. A great deal of the Unknown Manuscript contains literary criticism. Moreover, Peretz defended the usefulness of literary criticism against an attack by A. Zederbaum in a nameless fragment preserved in the Manuscript ⁸³. We may add that the young author himself did not yet suffer from critics.

We do not think that "The Distribution of Knowledge" was influenced by an Arab story, as suggested by M. Kosover ⁸⁴. In this story Allah, when creating the world, gives everybody a gift. The fellah is late. The only thing God still has is..... Foolishness. Allah wants to give him half of it. The fellah insists and gets the whole of Foolishness.

In our opinion, the source of Peretz's inspiration was Schiller's well-known ballad "Die Teilung der Erde" ⁸⁵ (1795). Not only the

general frame (as in the Arabian tale) but the contents are much more similar, and the opening is practically identical:

Schiller: "Nehmt hin die Welt!" rief Zeus von seinen Höhen. . .", etc.

Peretz: "Take for yourself Knowledge! called God from the Heavens. . .", etc.

Twice in his writings Peretz retells the contents of "Die Teilung der Erde" - in a criticism of a short-story by R. A. Braudes included in the Unknown Manuscript ⁸⁶, and in his sketch "In the House of the Ritual Slaughterer" ⁸⁷.

It is obvious that Peretz did not attach any importance to his first printed works, This, and not forgetfulness, was the reason why he regarded "Li'om\rim" ("I am told") as the beginning of his literary career ⁸⁸.

Niger has already pointed out that Peretz's literary jubilee was celebrated in 1901 because it was twenty-five years after the publication of "I am told" ⁸⁹. He quotes an article published in 1901 by a well-known critic "Ba'al mathashabot" (i.e. Yisra'el Eliashev, 1873-1924) who said that there had passed twenty-five years since Peretz started to write his first short-stories. Niger states that twenty-five years before his literary jubilee (i.e. in 1876) Peretz not only had not published, but even had not written any short-stories. However, from an article by the writer of these lines ⁹⁰ - quoted by Niger several times ⁹¹ - he could have known that a Hebrew short-story, written in

about this time - is preserved in the Unknown Manuscript. "Ba'al Ma-hashabot", Peretz's intimate friend ⁹², could have heard something about it from him.

In the poem "I am told" ⁹³ we feel for the first time the great artist. It is one of the best lyric poems ever written by Peretz. The approach to the problem of human suffering in general and of the suffering of the Jewish nation in particular, is sincere and devoid of any bathos. The short poem reveals the poet's feelings. It expresses his true sympathy with all sufferers and his belief in a better future. "Li'omrim" is perhaps the result of Peretz's conquest of doubts and pessimism which tore his soul for years ⁹⁴.

The poet is told that every free thought is but a lie. He is told that inequality among human beings is eternal, that oppression, suffering, wars and hatred will never cease. And about his own Nation he is told that its degradation and torment will last endlessly. Yet the poet's heart does not know any fear. He firmly believes that the end of all the blood-suckers will come. The night will pass -

"Behold, its dawning in the East, behold there!
Behold, before it rises the sun bathes
In a stream of light like a stream of blood!"

In his mind's eye Peretz already saw the coming changes. And he knew: they would not come without "a stream of blood".

The revolutionary tone (carefully concealed before the watchful eye of the Russian censor) was not exceptional in Hebrew literature of the 1870's. Smolenskin himself printed in his "Ha-shahar" poems with a strong socialist trend by Yehudah Leyb Lewin (1844-1925), Dr. Yishag

Kaminer (1834-1901), and others. Complaints on the sufferings of the Jews under the rule of the tsars and all over the world were frequent. However, very few Hebrew lyric poems written in this period (with the exception of those by Y.L. Gordon) reached the simplicity, dignity, sincerity and art of "I am told".

There is one unusual thing about this poem: it was not printed in the text of "Ha-shahar", but among the advertisements. Smolenskin announced that he was ready to publish poems, articles, etc., which for some reason he was not able to print in his journal, in a "supplement", for which the editor would not be responsible. The authors were in this case to pay for having their works printed ⁹⁵. Thus Peretz, whose financial situation during his stay in Warsaw was more than precarious, paid Smolenskin for printing one of the best Hebrew poems written in those days. And this happened after Smolenskin had printed two other poems by Peretz, of much inferior quality, in the text of "Ha-shahar".

This certainly was not done because of the revolutionary tone of "I am told"; as already mentioned, Smolenskin published this kind of poem by other writers without hesitation. The explanation favoured by scholars dealing with Peretz's early writings is that Peretz did not want to risk this poem being "improved" by the editor ⁹⁶. We may add that Peretz's works suffered from the treatment by the editors not only in the 1880's ⁹⁷. Even in the same year in which "I am told" was published (1876), a few months before it was published, a Hebrew editor was busy mutilating Peretz's poem "Nagni'el". And at more or less the same time G. Y. Lichtenfeld was "improving" his son-in-law's poems to be included in

"Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems".

Still, we believe that it is possible that Smolenskin simply did not want to print in the same volume of his journal more than one poem by a beginner. Moreover, the fact is that after 1876 Peretz did not print anything in "Ha-shahar" and already in this year he started publishing in its competitor "Ha-boqer 'or", and was preparing his poems for a collection published together with his father-in-law. We do not know of any crisis in the relations between Smolenskin and Peretz ⁹⁸. In about 1876-1877 Peretz mentioned Smolenskin and "Ha-shahar" in the Unknown Manuscript, praising both the writer and his journal ⁹⁹. However later Peretz only occasionally mentioned ¹⁰⁰ that in "Ha-shahar" was printed a favourable criticism of "Rhymed Stories. . .". He did not mention that the author of this criticism (published in 1878) was the editor of "Ha-shahar" himself ¹⁰¹.

Whatever the reason for publishing "I am told" among the advertisements, the result was that the text of this poem is more authentic than the text of any other of Peretz's early poems of which no writer's manuscript survives ¹⁰².

We may be sure that Peretz did not underestimate the value of "I am told". He regarded it as the beginning of his whole literary career. Moreover, as late as 1892 he published a Yiddish paraphrase of this poem ¹⁰³. The curious thing is that the Yiddish version of "I am told" did not retain the universality and the artistic values of the

Hebrew original ¹⁰⁴ .

In a letter to Shalom-Aleykhem of July 4th, 1888 - quoted more than once above - Peretz wrote: "In Ha-boqer 'or [I published] a poem 'Nagni'el' and a little prose (Ha-boqer 'or appeared in those days in Galicia)" ¹⁰⁵ .

The monthly "Ha-boqer 'or" ("The Morning Light")¹⁰⁶ was published by A. B. Gottlober in the years 1876-1886. Three first volumes of it appeared in Lemberg (Galicia) ¹⁰⁷ . Whether because Smolenskin had not enough room for the young poet, or just influenced by R. A. Braudes, Peretz was prompt in sending his works to "Ha-boqer 'or". The beginning of "Nagni'el" was published already in the first issue of Gottlober's journal. The old maskil founded "The Morning Light" to compete with Smolenskin's monthly. Gottlober was probably eager to attract young contributors from "Ha-shahar" to his own journal.

Besides "Nagni'el"¹⁰⁸ , Peretz also published in "Ha-boqer 'or" another poem "Qidush ha-shem", which he failed to mention to Shalom-Aleykhem. On the other hand, there is no prose work signed by Y. L. Peretz in "Ha-boqer 'or".

However, F. Lachower ¹⁰⁹ has discovered in the first volume of this monthly (1876) a witty feuilleton called "A Letter from Asmodeus to Baal-zebub" ¹¹⁰ , signed: H. Y. Peretz. Lachower points out the similarity of style and two details (an attack on the "investigators of antiquity",

and the mention of Zamojski's library) as proof that the feuilleton was written by Y. L. Peretz. He does not try to explain the different initials.

Prof. J. Klausner^{110a} also ascribes the "Letter" to Y. L. Peretz on account of its general contents and its style. He believes that Peretz changed his first name (i.e. initials) because of the censorship or "for another external reason".

In a short article on "The Unknown Manuscript of Y. L. Peretz"¹¹¹ the writer of these lines rather summarily decides against attributing the "Letter" to Y. L. Peretz. This was only a casual remark made without tracing Lachower's note, hidden among the "Bibliography" at the end of his volume. Closer examination shows that there can be hardly any doubt as to Peretz's participation in the writing of this feuilleton.

In the following summary we shall underline those proofs of Peretz's authorship that can be traced.

The full name of the feuilleton is: "A Letter from Asmodeus to Baal-zebub. Translated from the Tongue of Hell into the Tongue of Poland by one of the Priests, and from the Tongue of Poland into the Hebrew Tongue by H. Y. Peretz".

First comes a long "Preface of the Translator (into Hebrew)", written in the first person¹¹². "The Translator" envies writers who acquire not only fame but also beautiful and rich brides¹¹³. Although still a lad ("na'ar"), he has decided to be a writer. However, he has chosen not to write novels based on real life or literary criticism but "investigations of antiquity". The "investigator of antiquity" has nothing to fear from evil people who believe that besides grammar, the

writer should "also know what he is writing about and be in some way useful to his many readers" ¹¹⁴ .

The long and witty parody of the views of an "investigator of antiquity" is very similar to Peretz's attacks on the "hoqer qadmoniot" in many of his writings ¹¹⁵ . Whether the author of the "Letter" had in mind Ya'aqob Reifmann ¹¹⁶ , as suggested by Lachower ¹¹⁷ , is not absolutely certain. He most probably refers to Reifmann in the beginning of his career when the scholar was very young and had not yet written anything ¹¹⁸ . This happens because the "investigator" lives in a little town where there are no "antiquities". He cannot find any old tomb-stones with inscriptions worthy to be published ¹¹⁹ . In the synagogue there are no cobwebs which might hide a "robot" ("golem") ¹²⁰ . And in "The House of Study" ("Beyt-ha-midrash") there are neither manuscripts nor old books. In his town there does not exist a "library of Lord Zamojski or of any other lord" ¹²¹ . Thus the "investigator" is not even able to "announce from time to time the books he will, with God's help, publish" ¹²² . And he never leaves his town: "I am a tent-dweller, plain as our Father Ya'aqob" ¹²³ .

Suddenly an old priest dies. His huge library of ancient books is sold at auction. The snag is that the "investigator's" extreme poverty ¹²⁴ prevents him from buying even a single book. Luckily, on leaving the auction he picks up from the threshold a Polish manuscript. He diligently learns the Polish language and, after three years of persistent labour, is able to translate the manuscript into Hebrew. One of two letters from Asmodeus to Baal-zebub which he found in the manuscript

he publishes now. Originally written in the language of Hell, the letters were translated into Polish by the old priest.

The letter itself follows ¹²⁵. It starts with Asmodeus' complaints of the difficulty he has in writing letters. These complaints remind one of Peretz's attitude to letter-writing ¹²⁶.

Asmodeus has been a long time in disgrace with Satan. As a result no sinners have been sent to him for punishment and torture. After a very long interval, a few chained evil-doers are brought before him. They are hasidim, ^{merchants} by occupation. They did not deal fairly but cheated. Asmodeus is after them but they stop him with their prayers. He cannot do them much harm because they were forced by their enemies to cheat. They were not admitted to schools, they were not appointed to any public post, and even their business opportunities were limited. They cheated to survive ¹²⁷ ½.

Asmodeus is in despair, and, influenced by Hartmann's philosophy, nearly commits suicide ¹²⁸. He has tried to live in peace with these Jews, but - as he says: "I cannot understand the Jews' tongue ¹²⁹, because it is not a language but a collection of corrupted words from every tongue and dialect" ¹³⁰.

There follows an invective against rabbinical laws ¹³¹. As to the Hebrew language ¹³², Asmodeus hates it because the Bible was written in this language.

Again many years pass before another group of Jews is sent to Asmodeus. They are utterly assimilated and even ashamed of being Jews. These have no excuse for their cheating, and Asmodeus "blesses seven times

daily the commerce that creates swindlers" and Assimilation.

In a short time the country gentry and the priests also turn to business. They become "simple merchants, naturally also simple ~~thieves~~ thieves", and fall into Asmodeus' clutches. Even the newly-freed peasants, when they too start buying and selling, begin to be sent to Asmodeus: "It seems there is no commerce without cheating" ¹³³.

Asmodeus, now perfectly happy, finishes his letter to meet a new bunch of cheats who are sent to him: writer-swindlers.

Taking under consideration the analogies between the "Letter" and Y. L. Peretz's writings (particularly those from the 1870's) and the many allusions that can easily be explained if he was its author, we can hardly deny Peretz's authorship of this satirical piece.

It is possible that his brother, Hayim Yosef Peretz, had some share in the feuilleton. Hayim Yosef may have given his brother the idea for the "Letter" (as R. A. Braudes gave him the idea for his first Yiddish poem - "A Letter of the Polish Females"¹³⁴), or participated in some other way. Peretz, who loved him dearly ¹³⁵, probably did not hesitate to put his name under the "Letter": H. Y. Peretz.

"A Letter from Asmodeus to Baal-zebub", the first published prose work of Peretz, shows the young writer's many-sided talent. Satire and allegory, employed by him here for the first time in a prose work, were to be one of his choicest means of expression.

The artistic value of the feuilleton is not great. Its main fault is prolixity i- an artistic crime committed by the young Peretz.

also in some pieces preserved in the Unknown Manuscript, and elsewhere. At least once he himself was aware of this and remarked: "Too much" ¹³⁶.

In the second volume of Gottlober's monthly Peretz published a ballad "Qidush ha-shem" ¹³⁷ i.e. "The Sanctification of the Name" [of God]; thus is called a death willingly accepted "ad maiorem Dei gloriam". Peretz added a note explaining that: "this poem is based on an episode that really happened on the 20th siwan [5]408 [i.e. June 10th, 1648]", during the terrible massacres organized by the Cossacks of Bogdan Chmielnicki in the Ukraine ¹³⁸. He also mentions his sources: "the book 'Troublous Times' and the book 'History of Russia' by . . . Mendelkern [!] part 2, page 57".

"Troublous Times" ("Soq ha-'it'əm") ¹³⁹ is a contemporary rhymed chronicle first published in Cracow in 1650 ¹⁴⁰. The three volumes of Dr. Shelomoh Mandelkern's (1846-1902) "History of Russia" were published in 1875 ¹⁴¹. It is certain that Peretz relied on Mandelkern's quotation from "Troublous Times" ¹⁴² when he wrote "Qidush ha-shem". This was probably during his stay in Warsaw (1875-1876).

Niger ¹⁴³ regards Peretz's ballad as a poetic precursor of his famous prose "Folk Tales" ¹⁴⁴. It may be so. Anyway, it somehow does not fit into Peretz's realistic-"positivistic" programme of the 1870's and foreshadows his later, post-Haskalah writings. Yet, at the same time, "Qidush ha-shem" was probably in a way influenced by the ballads of Schiller and Goethe read by Peretz in those days ¹⁴⁵.

The Cossacks conquer a town ¹⁴⁶ and massacre its Jewish population, setting the houses on fire. One of the Cossacks falls in love

with a Jewish girl whose parents have been killed. She promises to satisfy his lust if he will marry her in the church: she does not want to be his concubine. On their way to the church, while they are crossing a river in a boat, the girl jumps into the water. She prefers death to shame and apostasy.

The simple and touching story, one of so many similar episodes in Jewish history ¹⁴⁷, was given by Peretz an artistically elaborated form. The rhythm of the ballad varies and is well suited to the dynamism of the story. Unfortunately the poet does very little to penetrate into the souls of his two heroes - the Cossack's, and especially the girl's.

"The Sanctification of the Name" was the last of Peretz's works printed in "Ha-boqer 'or". This was perhaps because Peretz's attitude towards Gottlober changed ¹⁴⁸.

All Peretz's Hebrew works described in this chapter, and all those included in "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems" ¹⁴⁹, were written before Peretz left Warsaw for Zamość (i.e. probably before the second half of 1876 ¹⁵⁰). We do not know for certain whether Peretz wrote any Hebrew works in the short period between his return to his native town and his second marriage ¹⁵¹. We can only quote two statements about his activity in those days.

The first statement is by Yonah Yehoshua Peretz who relates ¹⁵²

that in about 1878 his brother translated Napoleon's Code of Law into Hebrew. A copy of the Code with a translation in Peretz's own handwriting in the margins was - according to Yonah Yehoshua⁶ Peretz - lost during the First World War.

It seems hardly possible that a complete translation could have been put down in the margins. Perhaps those were only notes and comments, and (or?) partial translation. Peretz might have done it while studying for his examinations or at the beginning of his career as a lawyer. He made his first acquaintance with Napoleon's Code of Law (in a Polish translation) when he was a young boy¹⁵³. As a lawyer he dealt mainly with Russian law, introduced into Poland in 1876¹⁵⁴. In any case we cannot simply brush aside Yonah Yehoshua⁶ Peretz's statement as unreliable; he was a lawyer himself¹⁵⁵ and it is only natural that his brother's notes in a code of law did not escape his memory.

The second statement is by Peretz's friend from Zamość Shemu⁷el⁸ Ashkenazi. Ashkenazi told N. Meisel that as early as 1877 he listened to a two-hour Hebrew lecture delivered by Peretz. This lecture was not written down and no details are known. According to Ashkenazi Peretz spoke Hebrew fluently¹⁵⁶.

NOTES

2 1. To the whole problem comp. particularly: N, 388-399. See also Y.A. Klausner, Y. L. Peretz's Strivings for the "Higher", "Sifrut", no. 2, (1956), 36-37.

2. B, 121.

3. B, 133.

4. Quoted already above: Ch. 15, p. 234.

5. "Bildung" (A, VIII, 8).
 6. O.c., 8-9.
 7. B, 374-375. See also: Peretz's speech delivered in 1904 in honour of N. Sokolow in "Ḥag-yobel ha-sifrutī shel N. Sokolow. . .", Warsaw, 1904 (and comp.: YB, XXXVIII, 1946, 204-205); "Bildung" (A, VIII, 9-10 and 13).
 8. See Peretz's interesting relevant remark in "Ya'aqob Dinezon" (A, VII, 168).
 9. MS, 3-11. See also his later article "Education" ("Bildung") where these ideas found their best formulation (A, VIII, 9-12).
 10. MS, 4, l. 12 - 5, l. 6.
 11. MS, 3-11; 67, l. 7-70, l. 1. ("Hagni'el"); 181-183 (= "Gilyonot", Vol. XXV, 1951, 266-267); etc.
 12. "Ha-boqer 'or", Vol. I (1876), 101-102.
 13. "Bildung" (A, VIII, 3-17).
 14. Comp. above: Ch.Ch. 3 and 10.
 15. B, 321-322.
 16. Comp. above: Ch. 14, p. 198.
 17. Comp. above: Ch. 8, p. 110.
 18. YB, XII (1937), 183-184. (comp. above: Ch. 11A, pp. 128-129).
- On Peretz's use of Hebrew in his letters see: Ch.Ch. 14 and 15.
19. MS, 56a, ll. 1-2 (and comp. above: Ch. 13, p. 195).
 20. Comp. above: Ch. 14.
 21. "Ha-khi tizkri?".
 22. YB, XII (1937), 203.
 23. Weinig, l.c.
 24. Comp. above: Ch. 14, p. 207.
 25. YB, XII (1937), facing p. 201 (comp. also: 203). Reprinted in K, IX, [pt. 2], 7-8 (the 7th quatrain is omitted here by mistake; so also in: S. Niger, Y. L. Peretz u-khetavaw ha-'ivrim, "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, (1946), 443-444, where this poem is quoted in extenso.
 26. Niger, o.c., 443 and N, 82.
 27. S. Niger in "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 444-445 and N, 83.
 28. Comp. above: Ch. 14.
 29. "Sisiyot" (sing.: "sisit").
 30. "Ḥilazon"; Latin: "murex". Comp. e.g.: "The Encyclopedia Britannica", Vol. X (1929-34), 69 (s.v. "Gastropoda").
 31. "Talitot" (sing.: "ṭalit").
 32. R. 'Imeri (Feigenberg), Mah she-hayah. . ., "Ha-'olam", 1944, no. 12 (December 14th, 1944), 131.
 33. Z. Reisen, Lexikon fun der yiddisher literatur. . ., Vol. II, Wilno, 1930³, 981 (and comp. above: Ch. 8, p. 109).
 34. N, 150-151.
 35. M, 39.
 36. N, 150-151.
 37. M, 39.
 38. N, 150-151.
 39. N, 150.

40. On rabbi Gershon Henokh see e.g.: "Encyclopedia Judaica", Vol. X (1934), 756-758.
41. "Petil tekhelet" (comp.: Numbers 15, 38).
42. "Sefuney temuney hol" (comp.: Deuteronomy 33, 19).
43. So: M. Schweid, Treyst mayn folk. . ., New York, cop. 1955, 59 (not very reliable).
44. "Sidrey taharot".
45. Z, 76 (comp.: N, 151, note 1). "The rabbi of Radzyn" is mentioned by Peretz also in "Oykh a feuilleton" (A, VIII, 113) and his "innovation" is alluded to in "The Rabbi of Jarczów" (K, III, pt. 1, 44).
46. Peretz's lost "book": "The Dream of the Snail and its Interpretation" ("Halom ha-hilazon [this word has more than one meaning!] u-fitrono") - see: "Briv un redes", [1st ed.], Wilno, 1929, 17, and B, 158 (here called for short "Hilazon") probably had nothing to do with "The poem on the Blue Fringes".
47. Sh. L. Citron, Reshimot le-toldot ha-^litonut ha-^librit, "Ha-^lolam", 1929, no. 6.
48. F. Lachower, Toldot ha-sifrut ha-^librit he-hadashah, Vol. III, pt. 2, Tel-Aviv, 1939², 216.
49. On Pietuchowski see: W. Zeitlin, Bibliotheca Hebraica Post-Mendelssohniana. . ., Leipzig, 1891-1895², 265-266.
50. "Ha-tinshemet we-ha-yareah". "Tinshemet" (Leviticus 11, 18) is translated in the Authorized Version "swan". Modern Hebrew lexicography usually identifies "tinshemet" with "owl" (see e.g.: A. Eben-Shoshan, Milon hadash. . ., Vol. IV, Jerusalem, 1953³, 1810). Peretz and his contemporaries used the word for "bat" (comp. also: N, 80, note 1).
51. Slonimski is mentioned by Peretz in "My Memoirs" (Z, 38 and 121) and in some of his letters (B, 157, 178, 179). He is alluded to in "Hayey meshorer ^libri" (see below). On the polemics see particularly M. Wakser, YB, XII (1937), 233-234; comp. also: J. Klausner, Historiyah shel ha-sifrut ha-^librit he-hadashah, Vol. IV, 1954², 131, and W. Zeitlin, o.c., 209-210, 294, 365-367.
52. And not in 1869, as Wakser, o.c., 234.
53. G. Y. Lichtenfeld, Yedi^lot ha-shi^lurim. . ., Warsaw, 1865.
54. H. Z. Slonimski, Yesodey hokhm^lat ha-shi^lur, Zhitomir, 1865.
55. G. Y. Lichtenfeld, Sofnat pa^lneah, Warsaw, 1874, 1; Y. L. Rosenthal, Toldot hebrat marbey haskalah be-Yisra^lel be-^leres Rusiya, Vol. I, Petersburg, 59 and 62 (comp.: Wakser, l.c.).
56. Wakser, l.c.; Klausner, o.c., IV, 124.
57. "Sofnat pa^lneah", Warsaw, 1874 (32 pp.). To the title comp.: Genesis 41, 45.
58. "Ha-^lsefirah", 1874, no. 12.
59. "Qin^lat sofrim", Warsaw, 1874 (8 pp.). To the title comp.: Babylonian Talmud, Baba^l batra^l, 21a.
60. Zeitlin, o.c., 210.
61. Comp. also: G. Y. Lichtenfeld, Tosefet le-ha-^lerabon. . ., Warsaw, 1875, 1 and his: Ma^lamar kohen le-lo^l-^lelohim. . ., Warsaw, 1876, 8.

62. "Tosefet le-ha-^lerabon. . .", Warsaw, 1875 (2 plus 36 pp.)
63. O.c., 33.
64. "Ha-tinshemet we-ha-yareah", o.c., 33-34. Reprinted in K, IX, [pt. 2], 9-10.
65. As Niger thinks: "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 442, and N, 79.
66. "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 442; N, 80.
67. Hence Peretz's mistake when in a letter to Shalom-^lAleykhem of July 4th, 1888 he mentioned this fable as "a little poem 'The Dog[!] and the Moon'" ("Briv un redes", [1st ed.], Wilno, 1930, 16).
68. Isaiah 14, 15.
69. "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 443. The dates of the censor's permission given by Niger in N, 81 are incorrect.
70. Comp. above: Ch. 11C, p. 148.
71. See: Peretz's letter to Shalom-^lAleykhem dated July 4th, 1888. ("Briv un redes", [1st ed.], 16-17) and Slonimski's remark (referred to in Peretz's letter) in "Ha-sefirah", 1878, no. 14, p. 112 (comp.: Wakser, o.c., 250). However, see below: note 73.
72. Comp. above: Ch. 14.
73. "Sipurim be-shir we-shirim shonim. . .", Warsaw, 1877, 59-61. - Most probably this passage, and not Peretz's fable from 1875, provoked Slonimski's enmity in 1878 (comp. above: note 71).
74. "Briv un redes", [1st ed.], 17.
75. Smolenskin and his "Ha-shahar" are mentioned in one of Peretz's Yiddish articles ("Vegn mile-skandal"; A, IX, 110), in the above letter to Shalom-^lAleykhem, and several times in MS.
76. "Ha-shutafut", "Ha-shahar", Vol. VI, no. 10 ("siwan [5] 635 = 4, VI/3.VII 1875), 551-552. Reprinted in K, IX, [pt. 2], 14-16.
77. Comp. above: Ch. 11C, p. 157.
78. See e.g.: Z. Reisen, o.c., II, 1930³, 981-982 (not the "saint" - as Reisen has it - but the peasant is called "Hamu'el").
79. "Halqat he-hokhmot", "Ha-shahar", Vol. VII, (1876), no. 4, 192-193. Reprinted in K, IX, [pt. 2], 11-13.
80. Comp. above: Ch. 6, p. 67 and p. 72, note 98.
81. Comp. above: Ch. 11C, p. 152.
82. "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 448 and N, 87.
83. MS, 101-103 (comp. below: Ch. 19G, no. 1.)
84. M. Kosover in "Forverts", June 5th, 1949 (comp.: N, 86-87).
85. See e.g.: "Schillers Werke. Auswahl in zehn Teilen", ed. by A. Kutscher, I, T, Berlin etc., n.d., 105-106.
86. MS, 168.
87. "Be-beyt ha-shohet" (K, III, pt.1, 54-55). - Schiller is mentioned many times in Peretz's writings. In Z, 120; K, III, pt. 1, 198; and in YB, XII, 1937, 279 [b], Peretz quoted from "Der Jüngling am Bache" (see e.g.: "Schillers Werke. . .", T. I, 230-231).
88. Not only the three poems dealt with above but also the poem "Nagni'el" was printed before "Li'om/rin" (see below).

89. N, 76.
90. Y. A. Klausner, Ketab-yad bilti-yadua⁶ shel Y. L. Peretz, "Gilyonot", Vol. XXV (1951), 265-267.
91. N, 85, 96, etc.
92. Comp. e.g.: N. Meisel, Yishaq Leybush Peretz un zayn dor shrayber, New York, cop. 1951, 397.
93. "Li 'omArim", "Ha-shahar", Vol. VII (1876), no. 10. Reprinted in K, IX, [pt. 2], 21-22.
94. Niger in "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 449 and N, 72 (and also: 117).
95. Comp.: Wakser in YB, XII (1937), 212 and 258, note 44.
96. Wakser, o.c., 251; Niger in "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 441 and in N, 78-79.
97. See, e.g.: N, 130 and 170.
98. M. Wakser's argumentation (l.c.) is not at all convincing.
99. MS, 3, ll. 13-16; 6, ll. 2-8; 11, ll. 1-2.
100. In his letter to Shalom-⁶Aleykhem of July 4th, 1888 ("Briv un redes", [1st ed.], 16).
101. Peretz's mention of "Ha-shahar" in a Yiddish article printed in 1908 (see above: note 75) is of no significance.
102. Comp. Wakser, l.c.
103. "Menpogt. . ." (A, I, 111-112). It was originally signed: "After Y. L. Peretz by M. Perl". However, according to Wakser (YB, XII, 1937, 251-252), "M. Perl" was Peretz's pseudonym.
104. In spite of this, we would hesitate to decide that M. Perl is not Peretz, albeit this possibility should be borne in mind.
105. "Briv un redes" [1st ed.], Wilno, 1929, 17.
106. Comp.: Genesis 44, 3.
107. See e.g.: J. Klausner, Historiyah shel ha-sifrut ha-'ibrit he-hadashah, Vol. V, Jerusalem, 1949, 388-389 (and comp. above: Ch. 11C pp. 155-157).
108. "Nagni'el" will be dealt with later, in connection with the Unknown Manuscript which contains the original version of this poem (below: Ch. 19C, no. 3).
109. F. Lachower, Toldot ha-sifrut ha-'ibrit he-hadashah. . ., Vol. III pt. 2, Tel-Aviv, 1939², 45 and particularly the note in "Bibliography" at the end of the book: p. 216.
110. "Mikhtab 'Ashmday'el Ba'al-zebub", "Ha-boqer'or", Vol. I, (1876), 371-377 (not included in K).
- 110a. J. Klausner, o.c., V, 391-392.
111. Y. A. Klausner, o.c., "Gilyonot", XXV, 265.
112. "Ha-boqer'or", Vol. I, (1876), 371-373.
113. Comp. MS, 177, ll. 4-6: "A lad whose parents are looking for a pretty bride for him, from a good family and with plenty of money, and who himself. . . is looking for fame. . . lads of this kind write poetry, essays and articles! -". And see also: "Hayey meshorer 'ibri", "Sipurim be-shir. . .", Warsaw, 1877, 15.

114. Comp. e.g.: MS, 170, l. 8-171, l.4. However, these views were common property in Hebrew literature of the 1870's.

115. Comp. above: Ch. 6, p. 67 and p. 72, note 98.

116. On Reifmann see above: Ch. 6, pp. 65-67.

117. Lachower, o.c., Vol. III, pt. 2, 216.

118. "Ha-boqer 'or", I, 371.

119. Comp. MS, 188 (= "Gilyonot", XXV, 267): Peretz goes to see Reifmann mainly to take his advice about old tomb-stone inscriptions.

120. Comp.: "Der Golem" (A, II, 310): "The Golem is still hidden in the synagogue of Prague. . . covered with cobwebs. . .". This alludes to a well-known legend according to which the rabbi of Prague, rabbi Yehudah Liwa' (died in 1609) created, with the help of cabala (Hebrew: "qabalah" i.e. tradition) a "robot". The legend was retold i.a. in Gustav Meyrink's well-known novel "Der Golem" (1915).

121. All this might refer to Opatów (where Reifmann suffered from lack of books) and perhaps to a certain degree also to Szczebrzeszyn. - The library of the Zamojskis, one of the most important in Poland, was until 1804 in Zwierzyniec (pronounced: Zvyezhy nyets) near Szczebrzeszyn. See: B. Horodyski, Zarys dziejów Biblioteki Ordynacji Zamojskiej, "Studia nad książką, poświęcone pamięci K. Piekarskiego", Wrocław, 1951, 295-341.

122. A well-known custom of Reifmann (comp. above: Ch. 6, p. 71, note 75), but also of many other contemporary Hebrew writers.

123. Comp.: Genesis, 25, 27. Curiously enough "a tent-dweller" was the usual expression for one who did not move from his place. - The comparison with "our Father Ya'aqob" may hint at Reifmann's first name.

124. The "investigator's" poverty resembles the sad conditions in which Reifmann spent most of his life in Szczebrzeszyn. This, however, was a lot common in those days to more than one Hebrew scholar.

125. "Ha-boqer 'or", I, 373-377.

126. Comp. above: Ch. 14, pp. 215-216.

127. The same argumentation in Peretz's Hebrew poem "The Fire" ("Ha-serefah"), preserved in the Unknown Manuscript (MS, 43).

128. On the influence of E. von Hartmann's "Die Philosophie des Unbewussten" on Peretz see above: Ch. 7, pp. 91-92 and p. 106, note 190.

129. "Sefat ha-'ibrim"2: in this case, no doubt, Yiddish (and comp. above: Ch. 15, note 7). ' p. 155,

130. Comp.: Peretz's opinion on Yiddish in MS, 6, ll. 10-14 (quoted above: Ch. 15, p. 233).

131. Paralleled by a similar attack in Peretz's unpublished poem "The Fire" ("Ha-serefah"; MS, 47-49).

132. "Safat'eber".

133. Peretz's negative attitude to commerce, as expressed in many of his works, was identical. Comp. e.g.: "Hayey meshorer 'ibri" ("Sipurim be-shir. . .", Warsaw, 1877, 96); "Be-beyt ha-shohet" (K, III, pt. 1, 55); "Leyl zewa'ah" (K, IV, pt. 1, 148-149); etc.

134. Comp. above: Ch. 11C, p. 155 and Ch. 15, p. 246.

135. See: YB, XII (1937), 17-18 (Peretz's letter to his fiancée of September, 1877). And comp. above: Ch. 12, p. 180.

136. MS, 98, l. 13.
137. "Qidush ha-shem", "Ha-boqer 'or", Vol. II, (1877), 173-175.
Reprinted in K, IX, [pt. 2], 17-20.
138. See e.g.: S. M. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland . . . translated . . . by I. Friedlaender, Vol. I, Philadelphia, 1916, 144-153 (and particularly: 147).
139. Comp.: Daniel 9, 25.
140. In the first edition the author is called rabbi Me'ir of Szczerbieszyn. Meisel (M, 56) mentions only the second edition (1656), attributed to rabbi Yehoshua of Lemberg. See: S. Dubnow, Dibreiy yemey 'am 'olam . . ., tr. by B. Krupnik, Vol. VII, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 24-25.
141. Shelomoh Mandelkern, Dibreiy yemey Rusiya, Vols. I-III, Warsaw, 1875.
142. Mandelkern, o.c., II, 57, note = "Soq ha-'itim", [Cracow], 1650 (editio princeps), fol. 2, p. 2, col. 2.
143. Niger in "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 453 and N, 94.
144. "Mi-pi ha-'am" (K, I); "Folkstimlekhe geshikhtn" (A, V).
145. The influence of "Die Teilung der Erde" has already been pointed out. The contents of another of Schiller's ballads, "Der Handschuh", is retold by Peretz in MS, 77, ll. 11-15.
146. Probably: Nemirov.
147. Another, from the end of the XVth century, served as a theme for Y. L. Gordon's beautiful poem "Into the Depth of the Sea" ("Bi-meṣulot yam"; comp.: Micah 7, 19).
148. The problem of the relations between Peretz and Gottlober has been dealt with above: Ch. 11C, pp. 155-156.
149. See below: the next chapter.
150. Comp. above: Ch. 11C, p. 148.
151. The "epigrams" ("mikhtamim") and poems mentioned by N. Sokolow ("Ishim", Vol. II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 48-49) were perhaps written mostly in Hebrew (Peretz sent them to Sokolow!) but we do not know exactly to what Sokolow referred. Neither do we know in what years after Peretz's return to Zamość they were written. It may well be that the "epigrams" which circulated among the population of Zamość and sometimes enraged the Russian officials were identical with some of Peretz's Yiddish songs, as e.g.: "The Kingdom of the Earth is like the Kingdom of the Heavens" (see above: Ch. 15, p. 239-240). - We do not here take into consideration the MS (see below: Ch. 19).
152. Y.Y. Peretz, Y. L. Peretz als kelal-tuer in Zamość eyder er iz gevorn a barimter shrayber, "Forverts", April 6th, 1930.
153. Comp. above: Ch. 7, p. 905.
154. Comp. above: Ch. 12, p. 165. See also: YB, XII (1937), 8-11 and 25.
155. M, 29; B. Glazman, Be-'iqbotaw shel Y. L. Peretz, "Zamość . . .", Tel-Aviv, 1953, 269.
156. B, 357.

17. "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems".

Peretz's statements about his first book, published jointly with G. Y. Lichtenfeld, do not excel in accuracy.

On July 4th, 1888, he wrote to Shalom-Aleykhem: "I am going to lay by the veil from my face ¹. I am one of the 'compilers' ² who wrote and published A Book of Diverse Poems [!] (I have not a single copy and I do not remember the year; it seems to me that they [i.e. the poems] were printed 15 years ago [!]). The second [of the "compilers"] was the late Lichtenfeld. To this collection I contributed The Life of the [!] Hebrew Poet, Hanah and also some of the small poems" ³.

Writing on December 3rd, 1911 to Y. Zinberg, Peretz supplied him with the following information: "Later [after the poem 'I am told . . ." ⁴, I published] - a book together with Lichtenfeld, who was my father-in-law, I think: Compilers ⁵ [!]. I have forgotten what the book was called" ⁶.

In "My Memoirs" (1913) Peretz says: "And later [after writing "The Order in Zamość" ⁷] in "Rhymed Stories" (printed jointly with my former father-in-law Lichtenfeld) [I published] a poem 'Hanah' . . ." ⁸.

And in the additional chapter of "My Memoirs" (1914) he mentions that with G. Y. Lichtenfeld he "published jointly a book of poems that make me blush whenever I remember them" ⁹.

The book was called "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems by Two

Compilers" ¹⁰. The small (5½ by 3½ in.) volume was published in 1877.

Neither Peretz nor anyone else before the 1930's had ever mentioned that this was not the first edition of the collected poems by Peretz and Lichtenfeld. However, in 1937 M. Wakser, in a detailed study on the "Rhymed Stories" ¹¹, communicated that he had found in the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem an older edition, differently named ¹². It is called, according to the first and by far the longest poem included: "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" ¹³. The title page of this edition bears no names or pseudonyms of the authors and the "Two compilers" are not mentioned.

As a matter of fact there are no differences between the two "editions" but for the title page which was simply removed for a new one to be glued in, thus producing the "new" edition: "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems" ¹⁴. Both "editions" were published in Warsaw in the same year (1877) and the reverses of their respective title pages bear the name of the same printing-house: N. Schriftgiesser's, at 2242 Nalewki St. There is, however, one remarkable difference ¹⁵. The censor's permission to print "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" was given on April 24th [Old Style] (May 5th) 1876, whereas the permission to print "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems" was issued more than a year later - on May 25th (June 6th), 1877.

The reason for the existence of two different "editions" has not so far been found. We believe that there may be a clue in the Russian translation of the Hebrew title page of the first "edition": "The

Life of a Hebrew Poet. A Poem"¹⁶. The added subtitle clearly indicates that initially only one poem (preceded by the poetical "Preface"¹⁷) was to be included. This plan was probably changed after the title page and the beginning of the book were already printed: it was decided to print several other, smaller poems also. A new permission was duly received from the censor (a procedure that took a long time!), the title of the book was changed and accordingly the old title page was replaced by the new one. There exists only one known copy of the book in which the old title page was, probably by mistake, preserved. This explains why neither Peretz nor his contemporaries or anybody else ever mentioned the first "edition"; a problem that puzzled Wakser¹⁸.

The rather rare volume of "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems" contains the following items:

1. "Haqdamah" ("Preface").
2. "Hayey meshorer 'ibri" ("The Life of a Hebrew Poet").
3. "Bayit shomem" ("A Deserted House").
4. "He-'asel. . ." ("The Idler. . .").
5. "Tamshilehu be-ma'asey yadekha. . ." ("Thou Madest Him to Have Dominion over the Works of Thy Hands. . .").
6. "Ha-shofet we-ha-melis" ("The Judge and the Advocate").
7. "Me-ha-nifla'ot. . ." ("On the Miracles. . .").

8. "Tabnit doresh ha-qadmoniyot. . ." ("An Image of an Investigator of the Antiquities. . .").
9. "Hanah. . .".
10. "Le-Hayim ha-hasid. . ." ("To Hayim the hasid. . .").
11. "Sihat ha-mityapeh. . ." ("The Dandy's Soliloquy. . .").

At the end is attached "Luah ha-tiqunim" - a long "List of Corrections".

According to the signatures at their end the poems included in the little collection may be divided into no less than five groups:

- a. Signed: "Y. L. P." (nos. 3, 4, 9).
- b. Signed: "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L. - Y. L. P." (nos. 2, 6).
- c. Signed: "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L." (nos. 5, 7).
- d. Signed: "P. L. Y. 'A. , G. L." (no. 8).
- e. Unsigned (nos. 1, 10, 11).

The opinion of the scholars is divided as to the meaning of the various signatures and as to the authorship of some of the poems.

Peretz himself stated that he was the author of the two largest poems of the collection: "The Life of a Hebrew Poet"¹⁹ (no. 2) and "Hanah" (no. 9), and also of some of the smaller poems²⁰. "Hanah" is signed "Y. L. P." - no doubt the initials of: Yishaq Leyb Peretz. The same signature appears also at the end of two small poems: "A Deserted House" (no. 3) and "The Idler. . ." (no. 4). We may safely attribute them to Peretz.

However, "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" is signed differently: "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L. - Y. L. P.".

Peretz's relative and friend, Mosheh Altberg, in his not always

reliable memoirs written as late as 1935, says that "Rhymed Stories" was composed before Peretz's marriage with Lichtenfeld's daughter (i.e. before 1870). This is, no doubt, a mistake. According to Altberg the poems included in the collection "were signed 'PL'AY', 'GYL' [!], 'Peretz Leybush Aryeh Yishag', Yishag Leybush Peretz, 'YLP' or Gabri'el Yehudah Lichtenfeld" ²¹.

There can be no doubt about the meaning of the signature: "Y. L. P.", as we have already stated. However, we must remark that the signature "GYL" for Gabri'el Yehudah Lichtenfeld does not appear at all in the "Rhymed Stories". Furthermore, Altberg's suggestion that the signature "P. L. 'A. Y." (which, as a matter of fact, appears in the book only together with additional initials) means Peretz, Leybush Aryeh Yishag raises several problems. We may ask: why should Peretz use two different sets of initials ("Y. L. P." and "P. L. 'A. Y.") not only in the same collection of poems explicitly attributed to no more than "two compilers" (the second, in this case, signing: "G. L."), but twice even at the end of the same poem (nos. 2, 6)? And why does the dash, obviously dividing the initials of Lichtenfeld ("G.L.") from those of Peretz ("Y. L. P.") not appear after the supposed first set of Peretz's initials ("P. L. 'A. Y.")? Altberg did not attempt to answer either these or two other questions which we cannot avoid: who is the author of each of the three unsigned poems? And why did Peretz attribute ^{a poem,} (signed "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L. - Y. L. P." to himself only?

Z. Reizen ²² and N. Meisel ²³ explain that "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L." stands for Gabri'el Yehudah Lichtenfeld and Y. L. P. for Yishag Leyb

Peretz. The signature "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L. - Y. L. P." appears at the end of the poems written jointly by the "two compilers". Neither Reisen nor Meisel tries to decipher the initials "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L.", nor do they explain the meaning of the signature "P. L. Y. 'A, G. L." As to the unsigned poems Reisen says that it is difficult to decide who wrote them²⁴. Meisel²⁵ thinks that the "Preface" (no. 1) belongs probably to both authors jointly. He does not mention at all the two other unsigned poems (nos. 10, 11).

M. Wakser does not agree with the interpretation put forward by Reisen (and Meisel). He decides that the anonymous poem "To Hayim the Hasid. . ." (no. 10) "is no doubt by Lichtenfeld"²⁶. Hence he jumps to the conclusion that Lichtenfeld did not sign the poems written by him alone, and asks: "If the unsigned anonym is Lichtenfeld, who is in this case P. L. 'A. Y. G. L.?"²⁷. "G. L." is, according to Wakser, one of the known signatures of Peretz's father-in-law and stands for Gabri'el Lichtenfeld. As to "P. L. 'A. Y."²⁸, Wakser draws our attention to the fact that Peretz used the same initials in the 1890's. Read from right to left they stand for: Yishaq' Aryeh Leybush Peretz²⁹. It follows, according to Wakser, that the poems signed "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L." belong to both, Peretz and Lichtenfeld. "All the poems in the book but the unsigned belong either to Peretz alone or to Peretz and his collaborator"³⁰.

To strengthen his thesis Wakser underlines the comma dividing the two parts of the signature at the end of the poem "An Image of an Investigator of the Antiquities. . ." (no. 8): "P. L. Y. 'A. , G. L."³¹. However, he does not try to explain why the first part of this signature

is not "P. L. 'A. Y." but "P. L. Y. 'A."

As to the question why did Peretz change his signature twice, or perhaps even three times, in the little book ("Y. L. P.", "P. L. 'A. Y." and "P. L. Y. 'A."), Wakser does not try to give any answer at all. Still he cannot very well evade another question: why did Peretz put in two cases his father-in-law's initials ("G. L.") between two different sets of his own initials ("P. L. 'A. Y." and "Y. L. P.")? ³² He believes that this was the result of a conflict between Peretz and Lichtenfeld. Peretz was angry because of Lichtenfeld's changes in his poems and to appease him Lichtenfeld agreed to the strange signature ³³ . It does not sound very convincing to us.

The quotation from Sh. L. Citron brought forward by Wakser ³⁴ , does not at all support his hypothesis. Citron relates that Peretz "Did not put his name on the title page of the little book. . . .; only in the text itself he signed some of his poems ³⁵ with the initials Y. L. P. to 'build a fence between himself and the mathematician [i.e. Lichtenfeld]' as he said once during a conversation" ³⁶ . It is clear that (but for Wakser's addition!) Citron witnesses for only one signature of Peretz in "Rhymed Stories": "Y. L. P."

S. Niger, both in his Hebrew article on Peretz's Hebrew writings ³⁷ and in his detailed Yiddish book on Peretz ³⁸ (in which the above article was practically incorporated), does not seem very much inclined to tackle the difficult problem we are dealing with. He is rather vague. He certainly agrees, as everybody does, that "Y. L. P." are the initials of Peretz ³⁹ . But he is not consistent about the initials "P. L. 'A. Y."

G. L.". In one place ⁴⁰ he says that they stand for Gabri'el Lichtenfeld (without trying to decipher the initials and to prove it). A little farther ⁴¹ he deciphers: "P. L. 'A. Y. - (Peretz Leybush 'Aryeh Yishaq) and G. L. (Gabri'el Lichtenfeld)".

As regards the three unsigned poems (nos. 1, 10, 11) Nizer seems on the whole to adopt, with certain modifications, Wakser's opinion that they were mainly written by Lichtenfeld ⁴².

On a close look the problems involved are, as we believe, less complicated than they were made by Altberg's inaccuracy and Wakser's sophistication.

Following our division into five groups we may state first of all that: -

- a. There is no doubt that "Y. L. P." stands for Yishaq Leybush Peretz.
- b. The signature "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L. - Y. L. P." contains, no doubt the initials of both Peretz and Lichtenfeld. The letters "Y. L. P.", separated as they are from the others by a dash, represent - as already stated - Peretz's initials.

As regards "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L.", if these letters again contain Peretz's initials ("P. L. 'A. Y."), as Altberg and Wakser believe, and then those of Lichtenfeld ("G. L."), we shall have to explain: 1) why did Peretz use two different sets of initials? 2) Why did he place these two different sets of initials on both sides of the initials of his father-in-law and why did the old scholar agree to such nonsense? No plausible explanations are provided either by Wakser or by anybody else. Moreover, if Peretz used in "Rhymed Stories" the initials "P. L. 'A. Y." (as he used them

much later, in the 1890's⁴³) why is there never a dash between "P. L. 'A. Y." and "Y. L. P." ?⁴⁴ . And why does neither "P. L. 'A. Y." nor "G. L." ever appear in the "Rhymed Stories" as the separate signature of Peretz and Lichtenfeld respectively?

We may assume, with Reisen and Meisel, that the letters "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L." are one signature and that they represent the initials of Peretz's father-in-law. In our opinion these are the first letters of the two parts of which his surname is composed and the first and the last letters of his first names. Thus: -

P. L. = Lichten - feld ("p" and "f" are represented in the Hebrew alphabet by the same letter).

'A. Y. = Yehuda' (written with an "' and not with an "h" at the end; this was and still is a very common way of writing this name).

G. L. = Gabri el.

c. The signature "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L." stands for Lichtenfeld (as explained above).

d. The unique signature "P. L. Y. 'A. G. L." is simply a misprint for "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L.". This is one of very many misprints in the little book⁴⁵ .

e. The three unsigned poems cannot be summarily ascribed to Lichtenfeld. As we shall see one of them belongs entirely and undoubtedly to Peretz⁴⁶ .

When "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems" was published Peretz

was twenty-five and Lichtenfeld sixty-six years old. In spite of the great difference in age and temperament between the old mathematician and the young poet, identification of each one's contribution is not as simple as some critics are inclined to believe.

Peres Smolenskin, in his criticism of the little book ⁴⁷, thinks that it is easy to recognize in it two authors. However, he attributes to one of them "the first poem, a rhymed story in ten parts. . .", i.e. "The Life of a Hebrew Poet". All the rest. "the little poems", he ascribes to the other one.

In M. Wakser's opinion ⁴⁸ it is surely hard to believe that an effective analysis could fail to distinguish between two collaborators so far apart in age.

Contrary to Wakser's optimism, B. Borokhov ⁴⁹, Z. Reisen ⁵⁰ and N. Meisel, in his first book on Peretz ⁵¹ are much more cautious.

We face two different problems. We have to try to decide who of the "two compilers" (or perhaps both together) was the author of the three anonymous poems included in the "Rhymed Stories". And we have to attempt to discover (if, and as far as possible) the share of each of the collaborators in the poems composed jointly. Moreover, we must remember that even in the case of poems signed either by Peretz or by Lichtenfeld, we cannot altogether exclude the possibility of mutual influences and particularly the influence of Lichtenfeld on the much younger and much more receptive Peretz.

Albeit it is not entirely impossible that there were misunderstandings between the two - as Wakser would have it - ⁵² they were of no

significance. Y. Y. Peretz, the poet's brother, emphasizes that Lichtenfeld and Peretz were on friendly terms in spite of the lack of understanding between Peretz and his wife, Lichtenfeld's daughter⁵³. And there are many proofs of the great and variegated (even if not lasting) influence exercised by Lichtenfeld on Peretz during the latter's stay in Warsaw⁵⁴.

The old maskil certainly kept an eye on the young poet's grammar and style (just as he had tried to do a few years earlier when Peretz wrote his Polish poems⁵⁵). It goes without saying that Peretz was swayed by some of his father-in-law's opinions and biases (we should bear in mind, for example, Peretz's first printed poem "The Bat and the Moon"⁵⁶). It is quite possible that Peretz embodied in his poems (or in his passages of the poems written jointly) also stories heard from the old maskil, and so on. All this is not at all easy to trace and often - just impossible.

Analysis of the style is rather a dangerous path to follow. The poems are written prevailingly in Biblical language and this contributes to a certain uniformity. Moreover, one of the "two compilers", Lichtenfeld, is very little known as a poet. True, Wakser⁵⁷ points out that in 1880 Lichtenfeld published a book of poetical translations from the greatest of Russian poets A. S. Pushkin. Wakser quotes the name of this book: "Disappointed Love, a drama, and attached to it a poem A Pitiful Mother, after. . ." ⁵⁸. Wakser himself remarks that the book is written in a way quite different from Lichtenfeld's manner.

According to Wakser (the writer of these lines, unfortunately, could not get hold of this book) Lichtenfeld published "Ahabah nikhzabah"
x

under the pseudonym "One of the Compilers" ("Ehad mi-ba'aley ha-'asupot")
As a source of this information Wakser quotes in a note ⁵⁹ : "Z.f.H.B.
IX (1905), p. 82". In the ninth volume of the "Zeitschrift für Hebraeische
Bibliographie" there is an article by W. Zeitlin: "Initialen und Pseudony-
ma neuhebräischer Schriftsteller und Publizisten", and here ⁶⁰ we find
the identification of "One of the Compilers" with G. Y. Lichtenfeld.
However, there is no hint to "Ahabah nikhzahah". On the other hand, the
same William Zeitlin, in his very important bibliography of Haskalah-
literature ⁶¹ , lists a book called: "Ahabah nikhzahah. Die hintergangene
Liebe. Dramatisches Gedicht von A. Pushkin, aus dem Russischen in hebr.
Versen bearbeitet. Warschau, 1879. 8° (48 p.)".

As its author Zeitlin mentions Hayim Lasar Muschkat who also
published two other books in the years 1884 and 1890 respectively.

This makes us doubt whether Lichtenfeld really did publish a
book also called "Ahabah nikhzahah", and also containing translation from
Pushkin's dramatical poem in 1880 (which is probably the Jewish date 5640
to which both the years 1879 and 1880 correspond). It seems that Zeitlin
simply deduced Lichtenfeld's pseudonym "One of the Compilers" from the
title page of the "Rhymed Stories", where he and Peretz were called "Two
Compilers".

Consequently we cannot draw any conclusions about Lichtenfeld
as a poet from a book which, in our opinion, was most probably not
written by him.

Lichtenfeld's surviving ⁶² authentic excursions into the field

of poetry are, as far as we know, few and unimportant. They are all included in his polemical writings against H. Z. Slonimski: "The Decipherer of Secrets" and "An Addition to the Deposit"⁶³.

Of three translations of a German epigram quoted in "The Decipherer of Secrets" the author of the second one⁶⁴ is not mentioned; it may have been made by Lichtenfeld himself. Three distichs are translations of proverbs⁶⁵. Two quatrains are epigrams directed against Lichtenfeld's adversary⁶⁶. All this is certainly of no importance. A translation of two short fragments from Racine⁶⁷ does not bear witness to Lichtenfeld's literary abilities. Neither does the only lengthy poem of Lichtenfeld~~X~~ known to us outside the "Rhymed Stories", a poem violently and rather abusively attacking Slonimski⁶⁸. Its short, mainly unrhymed and clipped lines do not make it more attractive. In a footnote Lichtenfeld apologizes for making poetry and explains that his aim was not poetry but the truth alone. It seems obvious that this scanty and dull material cannot, on the whole, be applied in a comparative analysis of poetical style.

Thus, neither content nor style can provide us with a completely safe means of distinguishing between Peretz's and Lichtenfeld's respective contributions to the "Rhymed Stories". Wakser's attempts in this direction remind one sometimes of the so-called "Higher Criticism" of the Old Testament⁶⁹. In the only case in which it is now possible to put his method to the test, he proves to be wrong.

The case in point is the first poem of the collection:

"Haqdamah" i.e. "Preface" ⁷⁰ .

The author asks the poets (or perhaps rather - the poetasters) how long they will continue to write again and again about the "devouring fire" ⁷¹ of the sun and swift lightning, blue skies with silver points - the stars, and the moon amidst clouds, and so on and so forth. All this is already well known. We know what will happen in "the time of the singing birds" ⁷² , we know already about the shepherd, etc.

"But the human soul is enveloped in mists,
In vain innumerable poets try to fathom it,
There is a deep pit ⁷³ , there is desert and drought. - ⁷⁴
In the human soul there are mysteries no end,
And hidden feelings, tossed like a ball ⁷⁵ ,
You will find there sapphires, you will find there treasures,
Carbuncles, but also - volcanoes -
Maybe I will retrieve sparks out of ashes,
All I will find - will be printed in the book" ⁷⁶ .

Wakser believes that only the end of the "Preface" (beginning with the words: "In the human soul. . .") was written by Peretz. All the rest was added by Lichtenfeld. He does not bother to explain why and how he reaches this conclusion ⁷⁷ . It probably follows from his hypothesis that all anonymous poems in the "Rhymed Stories" were written by Lichtenfeld ⁷⁸ .

Meisel ⁷⁹ , not entirely convinced, says only that the "Preface" "apparently" belongs to both, Peretz and Lichtenfeld.

Niger, in his Hebrew article published in 1946 ⁸⁰ , doubts whether the bulk of the "Haqdamah" was written by Lichtenfeld. He emphasizes that the literary credo expressed here is very much in accord with Peretz's views: not Nature but the human soul was always his main subject ⁸¹ .
The opposition to the poetasters, using the hackneyed phrases on Nature

over and over again, has - as Niger remarks - its parallel in Peretz's poem "Nagni'el", published only a year earlier ⁸². And we may add: such opposition is to be expected rather from the young poet than from the old maskil.

In two short, tentative articles about the Unknown Manuscript ⁸³ the writer of these lines has pointed out that the Manuscript contains inter alia also a poem on poetasters, which is identical with the "Haqdamah" ⁸⁴. The poem, which bears no title, is written in Peretz's own handwriting and the corrections are also made by himself. Thus there can be no doubt at all about the authorship of the "Preface". It is not complete in the Manuscript. Ironically enough the missing lines contain all that was ascribed by Wakser to Peretz. However, we do not at all suggest the opposite - that just those lines were not written by Peretz. The text preserved in the Manuscript is simply neither complete nor definite. We may be sure that the whole "Preface" was written by one man.

A collation with the printed text reveals unimportant orthographical, grammatical and stylistic improvements and changes which may be the work of Peretz's father-in-law.

In his book on Peretz published in 1952 Niger quotes the first of our articles to prove that the "Haqdamah" belongs solely to Peretz ⁸⁵. He believes that speaking about hidden treasures and turbulent feelings in the human soul Peretz has in mind himself ⁸⁶. Finally, he makes an interesting suggestion: "The 'Haqdamah' which seems to be an introduction to the whole collection, is a preface to 'The life of a Hebrew Poet'" ⁸⁷.

Niger is right there. The first "edition" of the little book, subtitled "A Poem" proves it. As a "Preface" to the large poem the "Haqdamah" was, naturally, not signed. The title of the poem does not appear above the "Preface" because it was printed on the original title page itself.

Together with the "Preface" "The Life of a Hebrew Poet"⁸⁸ constitutes nearly two-thirds of the "Rhymed Stories"⁸⁹. It contains the "Preface" ("Haqdamah"), ten "cantos"⁹⁰ ("shirim"; sing.: "shir") and a short epilogue, called "End" ("sof")⁹⁰.

1. Ya'aqob's father is a rich and influential man and the leader of the Jewish Community of his town. He is proud of his prodigal son whose profound learning destines him to be a great rabbi. However, latterly he is greatly disturbed by Ya'aqob's apparent sadness. The "saints (i.e. the hasidic rabbis), the witches and the doctors are approached but to no avail. Ya'aqob's disease is - the Haskalah. He secretly studies secular subjects, and under the influence of Enlightenment sees the darkness around. He sees the stupidity and obscurantism ruling over the Jews in the name of "Faith". This is the source of his sorrows:

"All the plagues of my Nation. . . ."

"Are nestling in my heart. . . ."

says Ya'aqob⁹¹.

A mighty power urges him to write, to enlighten his Nation, to mollify its wounds. Alas! -

"A living pain in my heart, and a dead pen in my hand"⁹².

Doubt overcomes him and he feels imprisoned in his father's house. Ya'aqob

believes that he can write only when free, in the big bright world.

One night Ya'aqob's father wakes up from his uneasy sleep. He goes to his son's room, only to find it empty.

2. Ya'aqob is in Warsaw. His money is gone and he lives and studies in appalling poverty. Nevertheless, he believes that now he is more successful in expressing his thoughts and feelings. Unfortunately "the Publisher"⁹³ is much less enthusiastic and treats the young poet rather harshly⁹⁴. He does not believe that the down-and-out poet who can hardly make a living for himself will save the Nation.

Deeply disappointed, Ya'aqob is back in his dull, dark room. Here he gets a message. His father has died of sorrow on learning that Ya'aqob has become a "heretic" and - "worse than that" - a writer⁹⁵. Hearing this the young poet faints.

3. Many years earlier a rich and pious man had twin sons, Re'uben and Daniel. Similar in appearance, they were quite different in character⁹⁶. Dani'el was eager to study Talmud and its commentaries. Re'uben, to the utter despair of his parents, had an outspoken aversion to the "heder" (religious school for beginners). Dani'el went to live in Warsaw as a rich merchant. He never even mentioned his brother who, to the shame of his family, had become a workman. After many years Re'uben built up a factory.

4. Ya'aqob's room is situated near Dani'el's house. Sarah, Dani'el's daughter, is in love with the poor poet. Hearing about his lamentable state she hurries to his room. Ya'aqob in his delirium reveals to Sarah not only the depth of his sorrow and despair but also his love for her.

5. Several months pass. Ya'aqob recovers. He and Sarah are happy. Still, he warns her of ties with a man cursed by his late father and hated by his own people as a "heretic", a man whose future has in store for him only loneliness, hunger and thirst.

"Life is not a song, nor a lovers' chat,
Life - is a potion of gall and wormwood ⁹⁷, bread of sorrows ⁹⁸.

- warns Ya'aqob ^{98a}. However, as one would expect, Sarah is willing to share his fate come what may. The lovers are interrupted by Sarah's brothers who break the sad news of their father's bankruptcy. Dani'el is one of the many victims of the great collapse of the Viennese stock-exchange (in May 1873 ^{98b}).

6. In his hour of distress Dani'el goes to see his "saint" - the hasidic rabbi to whose following he belongs.

This canto is the only one that has a title: "Order of the Holy [Things]" ("Seder qodashim") ⁹⁹. It deals with the "Holy Men" of the hasidim. The contemporary "sadiqim" are all described as impostors and charlatans whose only aim is to enrich themselves. Their followers are sinners who do not repent; they know that a fee paid to the "sadiq" will expurgate every crime. Not so were the "saints" of the days bygone and their pupils. The hasidim of olden days lived in true pioussness and fear of sin. And the rabbis spent their lives in endurance of all kinds of self-imposed privations and suffering, and in prayer ^{99a}.

7. One of the agents of the "Saint in Russia" ^{99b}, as Dani'el's "Holy Man" was called, confers with his rabbi. The "saint" is worried by the progress of Haskalah in Poland. Nevertheless, he hopes to defeat the

maskilim. He has already turned one of their writers into a fool. There follows ¹⁰⁰ the continuation of the polemics between Lichtenfeld and Slonimski in which, as we already know, Peretz also took an active part¹⁰¹.

Slonimski countered Lichtenfeld's "An Addition to the Deposit" (1875) - in which Peretz's fable "The Bat and the Moon" was printed - by publishing in his journal "Ha-sefirah" a "Great Announcement"¹⁰². Moreover, as a special addition¹⁰³ he also published a violent pamphlet against Lichtenfeld by Abraham Ha-Kohen Kaplan¹⁰⁴.

Lichtenfeld's answer was included in another polemical work: "A Godless Priest"¹⁰⁵. The attack in "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" was a further "addition" to Lichtenfeld's new pamphlet¹⁰⁶.

When the agent tells his rabbi about Dani'el's bankruptcy the "saint" is not at all distressed. He says that Dani'el is punished for the sins of one of his forefathers, and particularly, for those of his brother Re'uben.

Re'uben, as a maskil, has been chosen by the Governemnt to be "the Head of the Community"¹⁰⁷ of his town. He has founded a secular school, reorganized the "Burial Society", been influential in closing down of the separate "prayer-houses" of the hasidim, and so on. Therefore the "saint" has ordered his followers to persecute Re'uben. They falsely accuse him before the Government but cannot achieve anything. Thus, according to the "Saint of Russia", Dani'el suffers now for the sins of his enlightened brother.

8. A guest arrives at a Warsaw hotel. He has a long conversation with the hotel servant about Dani'el and his family. The servant, who was

previously for twenty years employed in Dani'el's house, is glad to answer all the questions he is asked. He tell the guest about Dani'el's bankruptcy and about Sarah and Ya'aqob. He even knows that Dani'el had a brother whom he sometimes calls in his sleep but who is probably dead. In the meantime Ya'aqob meditates alone in his room. Neither poetry nor tutoring have brought him satisfaction or money. True, his poems - in which he has exposed "the misleading benefactors"¹⁰⁸ of his Nation, the obscurantists, the appalling state of the religious schools for beginners¹⁰⁹ and other scourges of Jewish life - have earned him a name and have made him the leader of a group of young maskilim. Persecuted at first, these youngsters have grown stronger and have started even "to persecute their persecutors"¹¹⁰. And the author hopes that with the help of the Government they will ultimately put an end to the rule of Stupidity. In spite of all this, Ya'aqob has his "moments of doubt"¹¹¹ about his own future and the future of his love. While he reflects sadly, in comes a messenger with a letter from the guest.

In Dani'el's house everybody is in despair. The house is empty - everything has been sold to pay the debts. One of Daniel's sons has been conscripted; the other's money is lost with his father's. Only Sarah does not cry. She says her prayers. She is strong in her love and she knows that now Ya'aqob will not try to persuade her to leave him. While Sarah prays, enter Ya'aqob and the guest, who (as we are supposed to guess) is Dani'el's brother, Re'uben.

9. After a long journey Dani'el arrives at the seat of his "saint".

He looks forward to finding here sympathetic friends and hopes that the "holy" rabbi's blessing will restore his prosperity. But Dani'el is not even allowed to see his "saint" and all the hasidim turn their backs on him, allegedly because of his brother's sins. Dani'el's whole world falls to pieces. He starts to doubt whose is the right way, his brother the "heretic's", or the "saint's". Re'uben has done everything for the benefit of others, the "saint" - for the sake of money. If he must be despised for his brother's "sins" why was he received with honours as long as he was rich? Suddenly he remembers all the iniquities committed by the "saint" and his followers, to which he used to shut his eyes. He regrets his whole past and it even occurs to him that he should have given his sons a different, secular education to make them more fit for life.

10. Dani'el, deeply distressed and worried about what may have happened in the meantime at home, rushes back to Warsaw. At home, he meets Re'uben who is ready to pay all his brother's debts. Re'uben hopes that Dani'el will turn to Haskalah.

The "End" is a "happy end" with a question-mark. Of course, Ya'aqob and Sarah get married. They go to Germany where Sarah's younger brothers are studying. Dani'el and all his family will certainly be happy ever after. But. . . whether Ya'aqob as a happy and well-off family man is still a poet? Whether Dani'el's younger sons will succeed in harmonizing secular knowledge and orthodoxy, as they intend? - these are questions to which the author has no answer as yet ¹¹².

In the continuation of the passage from Peretz's letter to Shalom-Aleykhem of July 4th, 1888 quoted at the beginning of this chapter Peretz says¹¹³ :

"In Ha-shahar the poems [i.e. the "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems"] were highly praised; Gordon [!] (the critic of Ha-magid [!]) also expressed an opinion of which I can be proud, but the editor of Ha-sefirah (then Slonimski alone), being angry with Lichtenfeld because of his criticism¹¹⁴ and with me because of the little poem 'The Dog [!] and the Moon'¹¹⁵, answered to an imaginary [!]¹¹⁶ questioner: 'We will not criticize the book Diverse Poems [!] because it is below criticism'.

As so many of Peretz's statements about his literary career, this one is also not very accurate.

As a matter of fact, Peres Smolenskin in his "Ha-shahar" praises highly only one poem: "The Life of a Hebrew Poet". He ascribes all the others to a different author¹¹⁷ and does not think much of them. Of "the first poem. . . in ten parts" Smolenskin says that "it is the work of a skilled writer and a good poet in all its details. . .". It may be ranked with "all the. . . good and beautiful poems that have been written in these last years in the Hebrew language"¹¹⁸. Smolenskin once told Sh. L. Citron that Peretz "is growing to be another [Y. L.] Gordon"¹¹⁹. However, as, according to Citron, this happened in the middle of the 1870's, we must presume that Smolenskin did not yet know "The Life of a Hebrew Poet".

The second criticism mentioned by Peretz was not written by [David] Gordon, one of the two editors of "Ha-magid" but by Peretz's friend Re'uben 'Asher Braudes¹²⁰. It was called "Literary Letters."

(by 'Asher). Second Letter" ¹²¹ and was printed not in "Ha-magid" but in its literary companion-journal "Magid mishneh" ¹²². "Magid mishneh" was published in the years 1879-1881 by David Gordon ¹²³.

Like Smolenskin, Braudes also praises highly "The Life of a Hebrew Poet", emphasizing its author's talent and imagination. He seems even to think that as regards the psychology of the heroes this poem is deeper than Y. L. Gordon's epic poems. However, at the same time Braudes points out several weak spots in "The Life of a Hebrew Poet": the lack of a description of the inner struggle of Ya'aqob before he becomes a maskil; the omission of the circumstances in which Ya'aqob and Sarah fell in love; the sudden and unconvincing change in Daniel after his unsuccessful attempt to see the "saint"; etc. Braudes also believes that the poem is much too long and that the last five cantos prove that the poet has exhausted his inspiration; they all serve the one purpose only - to make Ya'aqob rich.

Wakser ¹²⁴, as already mentioned, tries to fix exactly what in "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" was written by Peretz and what was added or changed by Lichtenfeld. We cannot go into the details; the more so because Wakser himself usually does not explain how he reached his "exact" division of passages and even single lines between Peretz and Lichtenfeld.

Wakser is sure that Lichtenfeld made extensive changes in Peretz's "original" poem ¹²⁵. He attributes to Lichtenfeld practically every line he judges to be bad ¹²⁶, every typical "maskilic" utterance ¹²⁷, every passage void of individual touch ¹²⁸. Wakser attempts to reconstruct

Peretz's "original" poem ¹²⁹. He presumes that in the third canto Ya'aqob on his way to Warsaw meets Sarah. After hearing about his illness she runs away to him - to Warsaw ¹³⁰. The young couple are married. Dani'el is angry and rejects his daughter and her husband. Only after he fails in his business because of ignorance is he reconciled with Ya'aqob and Sarah. Now he realizes the importance of Knowledge.

We do not think it necessary to prove that Wakser is wrong for the reason that he himself did not really try to prove that he was right. His only arguments are: "As it seems. . ." and "as it appears after a superficial investigation. . ." ¹³¹. It is significant that nobody has accepted Wakser's theories without reservations.

N. Meisel, in a book published in 1945, eight years after Wakser's study, still maintains that "possibly it [i.e. "The Life of a Hebrew Poet"] is more Peretz's than Lichtenfeld's" ¹³².

Niger, although he follows Wakser to a certain degree also believes that most of the poem was written by Peretz ¹³³. He stresses the fact that typical "maskilic" passages could have been written not only by Lichtenfeld but also by Peretz who was himself in those days not only a maskil but even a fighter for Haskalah ¹³⁴.

Still, Wakser's theories have not yet been properly repudiated.

Let us start from the end: the signature "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L. - Y. L. P." stands for Lichtenfeld and Peretz. Yet we cannot conclude that the first had a bigger share in the poem than the second. This was a fixed signature for the joint poems; a signature with Peretz's initials in front of those of Lichtenfeld does not appear at all in the

"Rhymed Stories", probably out of sheer politeness of the youngster towards his old father-in-law and teacher.

It is most important to remember that only a little more than a year after Lichtenfeld's death (he died on March 22, 1887) Peretz, in a letter to Shalom-Alyekhem (of July 4th, 1888) ascribed "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" to himself only ¹³⁵. If, as Wakser insists, Lichtenfeld left so little of Peretz's "original" poem, we would expect Peretz at least to mention his collaborator ¹³⁶.

There can be no doubt that "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" is in a way an autobiographical poem based on the life and emotions of the young Peretz and not on those of Lichtenfeld ¹³⁷. It is even most probably not by chance that the heroes are called Ya'aqob and Sarah. Sarah was the name of Peretz's wife and Lichtenfeld's daughter and their first-born son, who died in infancy, was called Ya'aqob ¹³⁸.

The many parallels between "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" and other of Peretz's works - such as "Nagni'el", "Monish", etc. - are an additional proof that the poem was written mainly by Peretz ¹³⁹. This is supported by the fact that the "Preface" to "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" was written by him alone.

We can wholeheartedly accept Niger's assertion that in the late 1870's Peretz was a propagandist for Haskalah, and state that the "maskilic" passages of the poem are probably mostly his. It goes without saying that the young and inexperienced poet was able to produce bad poetry too. Even the prolixity of the poem should not necessarily be

assigned to the old maskil ¹⁴⁰. As mentioned above the young writer himself admitted this sin ¹⁴¹.— According to Wakser ¹⁴², for example "The Publisher's" words about "a lad" ("na'ar") that gains a wife with a dowry by making poetry ¹⁴³ are Lichtenfeld's. However, as we already know, identical utterances appear in the Unknown Manuscript (and also in "A Letter from Asmodeus") ¹⁴⁴.

Wakser ascribes most of the anti-hasidic passages to Lichtenfeld ¹⁴⁵. Could they really not have been written by Peretz? And what about "The Partnership"? ¹⁴⁶. Even the polemics against Slonimski and his followers, so artificially inserted into "The Life of a Hebrew Poet", need not absolutely necessarily have been contributed by Lichtenfeld. It could very well have been written under the old mathematician's influence by the author of "The Bat and the Moon".

Wakser does not pay any attention to the fact that the "sins" of Re'uben, as mentioned by the "saint" ¹⁴⁷, are nearly identical with those "committed" by the maskil Yehudah Leyb Liebermann of Radom. Around the achievements and the fate (he was less lucky than Re'uben!) of Liebermann there were lively polemics going on in "Ha-shahar" in the years 1875-1876 ¹⁴⁸. A letter signed by "The Lover of his Nation" ("Oheb 'amo") praised Liebermann ¹⁴⁹. Another correspondent, signing "My Mouth is Speaking in Justice" ("P. I. ha-medaber bi-sedaqah"), accused the "enlightener" of Radom of embezzlement, hypocrisy and betrayal of the cause of Haskalah ¹⁵⁰. To refute these accusations G. Y. Lichtenfeld published an article entitled "To Justify the Just" ¹⁵¹.

As in the case of the polemics against Slonimski, Lichtenfeld's influence is unquestionable. However, this does not necessarily mean that he and not Peretz was the author of the relevant passage¹⁵².

We do not attempt to prove that Lichtenfeld had no share at all in "The Life of a Hebrew Poet". This would be another extremity, perhaps as misleading as Wakser's theories. Our only aim is to show how difficult it is to state positively and convincingly that a certain part of the poem was written by Peretz or by Lichtenfeld. Nevertheless we are trying to prove that the main author of the poem was Peretz and not his father-in-law.

Lichtenfeld probably brushed up Peretz's orthography, grammar and style. To him, perhaps, belong most of the footnotes. When the text mentions "vanities, that are called religion"¹⁵³, it is probably the same Lichtenfeld whose first words to Peretz were: "Are you not praying?"¹⁵⁴ who rushed to "explain" in a footnote - "The poet has in mind the vain casuistries"¹⁵⁵.

Lichtenfeld's are probably several linguistic innovations, sometimes translated by him into German in footnotes¹⁵⁶ and also those footnotes in which are indicated books and articles hinted at in the text¹⁵⁷. We can find similar footnotes in the poems written by Lichtenfeld alone: "On the Miracles. . ."¹⁵⁸ and "An Image of the Investigator of Antiquities. . ."¹⁵⁹ but not in the poems written by Peretz alone. We are inclined to attribute to Lichtenfeld a short poetical footnote which "corrects" the text: the "saint" did not turn the writer (Slonimski) into a fool - he was a fool from the very day of his birth¹⁶⁰. Finally,

there is one passage in "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" printed in square brackets ¹⁶¹. These nine lines contain the most violent attack on Hasidism in the whole poem. In our opinion they are, most probably, Lichtenfeld's addition ¹⁶². We should not forget that Lichtenfeld's authorship of the attack on Slonimski and ~~the~~ of the list of Re'uben's "sins" is plausible.

All this perhaps does not exhaust Lichtenfeld's contribution to the poem. However, we do not believe that it is possible to attribute to him other passages with any degree of certainty.

The few contradictions indicated by Wakser ¹⁶³, can be explained not only by the changes made by Lichtenfeld but also simply by Peretz's inexperience and forgetfulness ¹⁶⁴. We must bear in mind all the mistakes we came across in various statements by Peretz quoted above ¹⁶⁵.

Sometimes Wakser discovers discrepancies where, in our opinion, they just do not exist. For example, we do not think it impossible that Dani'el, a conservative and orthodox Jew, could own foreign shares.

The literary value of "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" is not even Braudes, as we have seen, mentioned that the behavior of the heroes of the poem is sometimes not sufficiently motivated. As Niger puts it: Peretz does not "retrieve sparks" out of the depth of the human soul, as he promises in his "Preface" ^{165a}. Only Ya'aqob (no doubt because Peretz to some extent identified himself with his hero) and sometimes Sarah are living people, whose thoughts and feelings are more or less known to us and who act accordingly. All the others are merely puppets, acting according

to the author's wishes.

Description is certainly not the strongest point of the poem. There are hardly any colours or sounds impressed on the reader. The figures of the heroes, even of Ya'aqob, have very few individual traits.

There are in the poem only two descriptive passages worthy of note. The first is the description of Ya'aqob's dwelling in Warsaw 166, short but conveying the right idea. Most probably this was more or less what Peretz's own room in the capital looked like: a little, dark and dull room on top of a tall house. No furniture - only scattered book and papers everywhere, a stale slice of bread and a jug of water.

The second descriptive passage is quite different. It is a short description of a snowy way through the woods at night 167 - one of not very many descriptions of Nature in Peretz's writings. Albeit this is a "typical" and not an "individual" landscape, a landscape that cannot be localized, the description is, nevertheless, impressive. This is the result of childhood reminiscences, as may be seen from Peretz's "My Memoirs" 168.

The composition of "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" is somewhat primitive. The connection between Ya'aqob's and Dani'el's actions is rather loose. However, we do not think that this is another result of the changes introduced by Lichtenfeld, as Wakser would have it 169. Peretz's technique was on the whole still immature.

The turning points are much too often placed monotonously at the end of a canto: the door opens, and. . . 170. The sudden change in Dani'el's attitude towards Hasidism and Haskalah and the appearance at

the right moment, out of the blue, of Re'uben (as a veritable "Deus ex machina"), are a great help to the not very skilful author in resolving his difficulties.

Sentimentality, prolixity and unnecessary digression - these are some more of the author's faults.

On the other hand we must keep in mind that Ya'aqob's feelings are devoid of false notes. He is a living and suffering hero. Some of the lyric passages are successful. The invective against the hasidic rabbi's ^{is} ~~are~~ mostly tinted with true humour. Finally, the "End" reveals the young poet as being more than an average, shallow and optimistic maskil.

In spite of all its artistic shortcomings, "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" can be favorably compared with most of the contemporary Hebrew epic poems. In this Peretz's first critics, Smolenskin and Braudes, were right.

M. Altberg in his reminiscences ¹⁷¹ says that the "Rhymed Stories" were composed before Peretz's first marriage (which took place in 1870). As a matter of fact, it is very doubtful if even a single poem (and certainly not the whole collection) was written as early as that.

Yonah Yehoshua^c Peretz ¹⁷² states that his brother's poems were written while he lived in Opatów (i.e. in about 1873-1874). This is (as we shall see) probably partly true, but not so far as "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" is concerned.

According to Wakser ¹⁷³ Lichtenfeld completed his work on this

poem in the year [5] 635¹⁷⁴ i.e. 1874-1875. He believes that Peretz's "original" poem was written "much earlier, anyway not later than [5] 634". This is therefore, says Wakser, Peretz's first-fruits which were in Lichtenfeld's hands "three to four years, if not longer".

Niger¹⁷⁵, following Wakser, says that the whole collection, including the first "rhymed story" was written not later than 1874.

It is easy to prove that the last touches to "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" were later than 1874-1875. In footnotes (perhaps added by Lichtenfeld) there are mentioned 'A. Kaplan's polemic pamphlet¹⁷⁶ and Lichtenfeld's letter about Liebermann¹⁷⁷. Kaplan's name is obviously hinted at in the relevant text of the poem ("Kohen" ^{177a}). In the same way there is a hint in the poem itself of the letter against Liebermann to which Lichtenfeld's "To Justify the Just" was an answer.

Kaplan's pamphlet was published in the year [5] 636, i.e. 1875 (but not before September 30th of this year) - 1876. Lichtenfeld's letter was published in "Ha-shahar" in the same year.

Moreover, the autobiographical details (as, for instance, Ya'aqob's dissatisfaction with private lessons in Warsaw¹⁷⁸) indicate that the bulk, at least, of the poem was written after Peretz had already stayed for some time in the Polish capital. As we know, Peretz arrived in Warsaw in summer 1875. The long poem was certainly completed at least a few months before the censor's permission to print the first "edition" of the little book was issued, i.e. a few months before May 5th, 1876.

Perhaps it is not merely by chance that "The Life of a Hebrew Poet", written mainly by Peretz, is followed by two other poems signed by him: "Y. L. P."

"A Deserted House. A Tale of a Forester"¹⁷⁹ is based, according to Peretz's note, on an actual event. It is a sad story about a widow and her children turned out from their home on a stormy night by the cruel landlord. He builds a palace where the widow's poor dwelling stood. The gay life in the splendid new house is interrupted suddenly. Its owner is found hanging on a tree. Nobody knows how he died. Did his slave rebel? or were there robbers? Or perhaps his bad conscience drove him to commit suicide? From then on the palatial house is deserted and in ruins.

As in "The Life of a Hebrew Poet", "The Revenge"¹⁸⁰ and in some other of Peretz's writings of this period, there is in the little poem a characteristic mixture of romantic-sentimental and realistic elements.

On the face of it "A Deserted House" is a typical ballad in the best tradition of German romantic ballad-writers, in some details similar to Ludwig Uhland's (1787-1862) "Des Sängers Fluch" (1814)¹⁸¹. The alleged "ignorance" of the poet and his questions without answers at the end of the "tale of a forester" (just as those at the end of "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" and "Hanah") may be pointed as an example of the artistic means very often used by romantic poets.

However, "A Deserted House" is different from Peretz's other ballad "The Sanctification of the Name"¹⁸², and from romantic ballads

in general, in that it emphasizes social injustice. As in "A Sad Episode. . ." ¹⁸³, it is a woman's suffering that Peretz dwells on.

Wakser ¹⁸⁴ remarks that in "A Deserted House", as also in "The Idler. . ." and "Hanah", there are first signs of Peretz's later revolutionary (as a matter of fact much more, social) motives.

Social and also veiled political-revolutionary motives can be traced in "The Idler. On the Year 1863" ¹⁸⁵. This poem appears in the "Unknown Manuscript" under a shorter title: "The Idler" ¹⁸⁶. The differences between the two texts are of no importance but for a few lines added in the "Rhymed Stories" ¹⁸⁷.

It is long after sunrise and the world is full of busy noise. The Idler is still fast asleep. He prefers the quiet of the night to the turmoil of the day. The day brings with it noise, anger and weeping. Yet the poet wonders whether the Idler misses hearing at night the outcry of war and seeing the flames and the smoke of fires. When the victims called for help, when men were taken from the arms of their wives to be sent to places of darkness, the Idler did not hear the lamentations, did not see the blood. The poet urges him not to be afraid of Life, to open both eyes and to enter the "Struggle of Life". The Idler turns his face towards the wall to continue his slumber.

Wakser ¹⁸⁸ rightly points out the possibility of a connection between "The Idler. On the Year 1863" and the Second Polish Uprising, which took place in this year ¹⁸⁹. One of the reasons for defeat was the indifference of many who could have helped. These are still indifferent when the work of reconstruction has begun and the time of "breaking up

the fallow ground"¹⁹⁰ and of "Struggle for Life" has come.

In "My Memoirs" Peretz speaks about the sympathetic attitude of the Jews of Zamość to the Uprising. He was still a child in those days¹⁹¹. Out of these memories "The Idler" was written, most probably in 1873, when reconstruction work was going on, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Uprising.

There are two slight indications that "The Idler" is more or less an early poem. The fact that compared with nearly all other works included in the Unknown Manuscript, there are very few corrections in the text of "The Idler", shows that this text was certainly not the original draft of the poem. This is the first indication. The second is quite different. In "The Idler" appears one of the very expressions which Peretz brands in his "Preface" as empty, hackneyed phrases¹⁹². We may perhaps presume that "The Idler" was written before the "Preface".

If "The Idler" was written, as we believe, in 1873, it was probably one of the poems which, according to Y. Y. Peretz, his brother composed while living in Opatów.

Wakser¹⁹³ and Niger¹⁹⁴ think that the motives of "The Idler" can be traced in Peretz's later writings: in the last passage of "From Ezekiel Chapter 33"¹⁹⁵ (Wakser) and "The Night Watchmen"¹⁹⁶ (Niger), both published in 1894.

"Thou Madest Him to Have Dominion over the Works of Thy Hands
Thou Hast Put all Things under His Feet"¹⁹⁷

- is rather too long a title for a short poem¹⁹⁸.

In Wakser's opinion ¹⁹⁹, this poem and "On the Miracles. . .", written by Peretz, were utterly changed by his father-in-law so that "not a drop of Peretz" was left but the theme. Even the long titles of the two poems are typical of Lichtenfeld.

Niger ²⁰⁰, who in this particular case follows Wakser's interpretation of the signature ²⁰¹, obviously thinks that this poem was written mainly by Peretz. According to Niger not only the subject and the general idea but also the style bears Peretz's imprint.

As this little fable, apotheosizing Knowledge and Wisdom, is signed "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L." we do not hesitate to attribute it to the old maskil.

As to the poetical style of "Thou Madest Him. . .", we may again remind how little is known about Lichtenfeld's poetical style. It is also not impossible that the young poet improved the poetry of the old mathematician.

This was most probably the case as regards "The Judge and the Advocate" ²⁰², signed: "P. L. 'A. Y. G. L. - Y. L. P.".

The Judge is a young woman's conscience which reminds her that, enjoying life, she did not care to fulfill her duty and bear her husband a child. The advocate is the husband himself. He encourages his wife to go on for a while with her dancing and flirting.

It is difficult to understand why Braudes in his criticism ²⁰³ praises this poem as "sincere and lofty" and feels in it "the spirit of the modern poet". Perhaps, as Wakser says, he does this because the

topic was regarded as "daring" in the Hebrew literature of the 1870's ²⁰⁴. In spite of a certain melodiousness "The Judge and the Advocate" is anything but lofty and sincere.

To Wakser "it seems" that here again Lichtenfeld entirely spoiled Peretz's "original" poem. Still, Wakser ascribes the beginning of it to Peretz ²⁰⁵.

According to Niger ²⁰⁶ Peretz's is only the motive of inner struggle.

In the case of this little poem it is certainly much more difficult to point out the contribution of the two collaborators than in the case of the long "rhymed story". However, this time we are inclined to agree with Wakser and Niger that "The Judge and the Advocate" was written mainly by Lichtenfeld although we must admit that we can hardly prove it. The only indication is perhaps the fact that "The Judge and the Advocate" was preceded by Lichtenfeld's poem and followed by two other poems also written by Peretz's father-in-law. Both these poems are satires. Both have long titles, just like "Thou Madest Him. . .".

The first of the two is directed against the hasidic rabbis, as may be seen from its title: "On the Miracles and Signs and Wonders ²⁰⁷ of the Rabbis of the Hasidim, according to the Stories in their Books" ²⁰⁸.

Wakser's opinion is already known to us. We need only add that he thinks ²⁰⁹ that Peretz's "original" poem is incorporated in "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" ²¹⁰. No proofs are provided for this very dubious hypothesis.

Niger does not bother to decide who wrote the two satirical

poems ("On the Miracles. . ." and "An Image. . .", which follows it). They are, in his opinion, of no importance. ²¹¹

"On the Miracles. . ." is signed "P. L. ³A. Y. G. L.", and "An Image. . ." - "P. L. Y. ³A. , G. L." which is a misprint for the same signature. We believe that both were written by Lichtenfeld. "An Image of an Investigator of the Antiquities. . .", etc., has a very long "Lichtenfeldian" title ²¹² .

Wakser, forced by his interpretation of the signature, finds a short passage which he ascribes to Peretz: the first six lines. Even those, according to him, were perhaps "improved" by Lichtenfeld ²¹³ .

As the footnotes unmistakably indicate, the satire's main target is Ya^lacob Reifmann. Although we do not doubt that it was written by Lichtenfeld, it is remarkable how strongly Peretz was influenced by the old mathematician's dislike of this particular scholar and of "investigators of antiquity" in general ²¹⁴ .

The second largest poem in the "Rhymed Stories", after "The Life of a Hebrew Poet", is "Hanah - a Narrative Poem" ²¹⁵ .

In 1913, writing in "My Memoirs", Peretz did not think much of "Hanah" -
"where the heroine, called thus, is raped by the son of the 'Head of the Community' ²¹⁶ and the 'Head of the Community', the brute, etc. . . . This was only a poor imitation. . . as I imitated Heine but in even worse

taste. . . " 217 .

In those days Peretz had long ago left behind the Haskalah and his attitude to practically all he had written in the 1870's was negative. However, as late as 1888, when Peretz wrote to Shalom-Aleykhem summing up his literary achievements, he revealed his authorship of "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" and "Hānah" without any derogatory remarks and did not forget to mention that his poems were praised by the critics 218 .

Braudes 219 prefers "Hānah" to "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" because its language, structure and characterization excel those of the larger poem. He intended to dwell on Peretz's "Narrative Poem" in detail but his article was never finished.

Niger 220 agrees with Braudes and especially emphasizes the excellent lyric sections of the poem. On the other hand, he points out the rather primitive, melodramatic and sensational plot.

Wakser thinks that "Hānah" combines excellent pictures and expressions with the helpless stammerings of a beginner. Melodramatic and derivative it has, according to him, rather slight artistic merit 221 . Wakser says that in this single case Lichtenfeld did not change anything in Peretz's poem. He only added in two footnotes his own variants of four lines. This we can hardly doubt 222 . We presume that perhaps his are also the two short explanatory notes towards the end of the poem 223 .

"Hānah" is divided into seven short chapters of which the first is the poet's prologue and the last serves as an epilogue.

Hānah's fiancé Dan goes to study and she does not even receive an answer to her letters. Meanwhile, both her parents die, leaving their

daughter lonely and penniless. The landlord evicts Hanah and she spends the nights at her parents' grave. Here she is caught and raped by the drunken son of the "Head of the Community". She tries to drown herself in the river but a watchman saves her and, overcome by pity, brings her to the house of the "Head of the Community", rabbi Aharon. Rabbi Aharon, contrary to what Peretz himself says of him in "My Memoirs" and in spite of the tradition of Haskalah-literature ²²⁴, is not a "brute". Perhaps slightly influenced by the type of "Head of the Community" he knew in his native Zamosc ²²⁵, Peretz does not make rabbi Aharon a powerful rascal. Rabbi Aharon is a venerable, good and just man, perhaps rather weak. He and his wife have not paid enough attention to the education of their son. His misbehaviour causes great sorrow to rabbi Aharon. While the old father is waiting late at night for his unruly son, the watchman ushers in the delirious girl. Hanah tells her terrible tale. Suddenly the door opens and the drunken son appears. Hanah, seeing him, runs away in terror calling: "Help! - this is my 'murderer'! - . . . Help!" ²²⁶. Rabbi Aharon, realizing the truth, dies of a stroke. Hanah runs again to the river. This time there is nobody to save her.

As we can see the plot is melodramatic and even, in a way, cheap and vulgar. Something similar, but more elaborate, we shall meet in Peretz's first short-story preserved in the "Unknown Manuscript" and not yet printed: "The Revenge" ²²⁷. A suffering woman is the heroine in both "Hanah" and "The Revenge", as in so many other works of Peretz ²²⁸.

The social motive, prominent in "Hanah", is put on a background

of a "romantic" story. Perhaps, as Niger believes ²²⁹, there is in "Hanah" something of the cheap Yiddish novels by "Shomer" (pseudonym of N. M. Shaikevich; 1849-1906) ²³⁰ and perhaps also of the French novels of Paul de Kock (1793-1871) ²³¹ and Eugène Sue (1804-1857) ²³².

From an artistic point of view the plot of the poem is much less important than the lyric passages which to a certain degree vindicate it. Lyric digressions in a basically narrative work are one more tribute paid by the young poet to the passing romantic tradition.

Meditations on Happiness, on Death and on life beyond the grave ²³³ reflect Peretz's pessimism and doubts. The young poet is in quest of Happiness: -

"But where is the dwelling of Bliss? Where does he reside in splendour?
Some say: in Heaven, and some: - the grave is his abode. - "

Death is not an evil spirit of destruction, not Satan, no -

"He is the Saviour who relieves from grief and sorrow,
An Angel from Heaven, a brother of Sleep".

Yet there is no Happiness in the grave, nothing but forgetfulness.

"But do we walk through life, bent under the burden of sufferings,
In vain, to no purpose at all?
Do we live to die and to forget our life?"

Many believe in Happiness after death, in Heaven. These hopes only subdue one's life to Nothingness.

"No! - Here Happiness! Here Bliss!
Here, among the living, we shall seek for the Happy"

exclaims the poet.

It is very plausible that, as Wakser says, in all these contemplations there are echoes of a period of distress and pessimism in

Peretz's life, when he could not free himself of thoughts on problems of life and death and probably even reflected on committing suicide. One such period, pointed out by Wakser, occurred in Peretz's adolescence ²³⁴.

From Peretz's letters to Helena Ringelheim we learn that another period of depression and melancholy followed in the years immediately preceding his meeting with her. This was most probably soon after the sad events in Sandomierz: the lack of harmony in his family life, aggravated by the death of his first-born son, the financial ruin no doubt connected with persecution by the zealots. After that came a difficult time in Warsaw under conditions of extreme poverty. These were the days when - as Peretz says about himself: "I was as though dead. . .". This was a period of grave doubts and deep pessimism, "dark without a single ray of hope. . ." ²³⁵. We believe that this, and not the complexes of puberty, was the background of Peretz's meditations in "Hannah", meditations rooted in the young poet's acute longing for some happiness, but also - in his tiredness of life in sorrow and misery.

Very interesting is the first chapter of "Hannah" ²³⁶. It is a lyric "prologue" to the poem. As the "Preface" to the "Life of a Hebrew Poet" it also contains Peretz's literary programme. In the "Preface", as we know, he emphasizes that the main aim of poetry is to reveal the mysteries of the human soul, an aim which he achieves only partially in his long poem.

In the first chapter of "Hannah" Peretz apostrophizes the reader. He does not come to make him gay. The poet's soul is bitter, his spirit - depressed:

"All labours and sorrows ²³⁷ - are his labours and sorrows
If his are a feeling heart and an observing eye".

In his eye there is a tear for every suffering, in his heart - an echo
to every groaning. And -

"Nothing but compassion and pity to wake in the hearts of his readers
This is the only wish, the only aim of the poet".

However, Peretz concludes in a different tone and the "prologue" ends with
a violent invective against the hard-hearted rich.

This time Peretz keeps his promise and attempts in his poem
to raise feelings of pity for Hanah's suffering.

Niger ²³⁸ believes that this was also Peretz's aim in "The Life
of a Hebrew Poet" and in "Nagni'el". We doubt it. It was certainly not
the chief aim of Peretz's first "rhymed story". As to "Nagni'el", we shall
see that the original ending of this poem did not appeal to pity at all. ²³⁹

Peretz's rebellious temperament did not consort with sentiment-
tal, lachrymose poetry. Different, stronger notes appear already in
"The Idler. . .", in the original version of "Nagni'el" and even in the
diatribe against the wealthy immediately following his declaration of the
aims of poetry in "Hanah".

In the conditions prevailing in those days in Russia, under
the watchful eye of the censor, "Nagni'el" had to be mutilated and every
unorthodox thought disguised. There was hardly room for any other social
poetry except the kind represented by "Hanah".

The "compassionate" trend was prominent in Russian poetry of
the second half of the XIXth century. Many of the poems of N. A.

Nyekrasov (1821-1871), who was very popular with the Hebrew poets, can serve as an example.

We have only one piece of evidence as to the date of "Ḥanah". According to Peretz himself ²⁴⁰ this poem was written after "The Order in Zamość". If our conjectures are not wrong, the last-mentioned Yiddish poem was composed not earlier than the second half of 1876. In this case we must regard Peretz's statement, as so many others made by him about his early books, as incorrect. In our opinion "Ḥanah" could have been written between about 1873-1874 and the second half of 1876 (when Peretz returned to Zamość). Because of analogies with "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" and "The Revenge", the mixture of romantic-sentimental and realistic-social elements, and so on, we are inclined to attribute "Ḥanah" to Peretz's Warsaw period.

The last two poems included in the "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems", "To Ḥayim the Ḥasid. . ." and "The Dandy's Soliloquy. . ." are anonymous. Both are ascribed by Wakser to Lichtenfeld. Niger also believes that they were written by Peretz's father-in-law ²⁴¹ .

"To Ḥayim the Ḥasid when He Changed His Mind and His Clothes on the Third Day of the Month of October 1846" ²⁴² must have been, according to Wakser, written by Lichtenfeld because it is based on an event that took place before Peretz was born ²⁴³ . It is difficult to understand why Peretz, whose "Partnership", for example, was allegedly based on an

event which happened in 1860 ²⁴⁴ (when he was a boy of eight), could not base a poem on an event going back another thirteen years. And, according to Wakser, because "To Hayim the Hasid. . .", which bears no signature of its author, is Lichtenfeld's, it follows that all the anonymous poems in the "Rhymed Stories" are his ²⁴⁵. We already know that, if we regard (as Wakser does) the "Preface" as a separate poem, not all that is anonymous in the little collection can claim Lichtenfeld's authorship.

Nevertheless, even if Wakser's arguments are by no means convincing, his conjecture is probably sound.

The first of the two anonymous poems has one of those long titles obviously liked by the old maskil ²⁴⁶, but not by his young son-in-law.

This poem is a long and very violent and crude attack on the hasidim. The author wholeheartedly approves the dictum of the Russian Government which forces the orthodox Jews to abandon their traditional attire. This could hardly have been Peretz's attitude. Albeit in "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" a hope is expressed that ultimately the Government will help the young maskilim in their fight against the zealots ²⁴⁷, Peretz strongly protested against Russian legislation which limited the freedom of the Jews ²⁴⁸.

On the other hand Lichtenfeld, at the beginning of his pamphlet "A Godless Priest" ²⁴⁹, published a year before the "Rhymed Stories", mentions a law of the year [5]647 (i.e. 1846-1847) prohibiting the wearing of Jewish traditional dress. He expresses an attitude identical to the one we find in "To Hayim the Hasid. . ." - a sort of malicious joy.

Not only this: the title, the style and the general character of this satire points to Lichtenfeld as its author.

With Wakser ²⁵⁰ and Niger ²⁵¹ we think that "The Dandy's Soliloquy" ²⁵² was also written by Lichtenfeld. The translation of the title into German, the explanatory notes in French ²⁵³ and - last but not least - certain features of the language and style are, we believe, rather typical of Lichtenfeld ²⁵⁴.

The order in which the poems appear in the collection seems to strengthen this supposition. (We are following our list at the beginning of this chapter):-

- a) Nos. 1-2, 3 and 4 are by Peretz (nos. 1-2 are one poem; no. 2 is mainly by Peretz.)
- b) Nos. 5, 6, 7, and 8 are by Lichtenfeld (no. 6 is mainly by him.)
- c) No. 9 is by Peretz.

and most probably:

- d) Nos. 10 and 11 are by Lichtenfeld (the only anonymous poems in the collection).

The monologue of the boasting dandy lacks any artistic value or even humour. It reminds a little of "The Judge and the Advocate".

Probably influenced by Peretz's own severe opinion in his later years of the "Rhymed Stories" ²⁵⁵, for a long time the scholars dealing with his works did not pay much attention to the little book.

The first critic to encourage Peretz was Smolenskin ²⁵⁶ .
Braudes soon joined him. On the other hand, Slonimski, angry with Lichtenfeld and Peretz ²⁵⁷ , did not want to print a review of their jointly-published book of poems in which he was attacked.

Wakser proves that the questioner, to whom Slonimski replied about the review of the "Rhymed Stories" was not an "imaginary" one, as Peretz thought. The question was put forward by Abraham Ha-Kohen Kaplan of Vienna, who (as we know) was himself one of Lichtenfeld's adversaries on behalf of Slonimski. Slonimski's answer is directed: "To Abraham Kap. [lan] in Vienna" and runs as follows: "We cannot publish the criticism [undoubtedly sent by Kaplan] on the little book 'Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems' because it is not worth a criticism altogether" ²⁵⁸ .

"Rhymed Stories" was published in 1877. The few reviews appeared in 1878 (Smolenskin's article and Slonimski's remark) and 1880 (Braudes' unfinished second "Literary Letter"). After that, for nearly sixty years no one showed interest in the book of poems to which the young Peretz had contributed so much.

Only in 1937 Wakser published his detailed study. However, even later and to this very day not a single poem from the "Rhymed Stories" - not even those about the authorship of which there was never any doubt - has been included in the editions of Peretz's collected Hebrew works.

We should emphasize the fact that out of 158 pages of the book no fewer than 125(!!) were, as a matter of fact, written by Peretz ²⁵⁹ .
And this is more than all other of Peretz's literary works written up to

1878, that were known before the discovery of the Unknown Manuscript, put together.

Peretz's contribution to the "Rhymed Stories" was in those days no doubt an important literary achievement. Moreover, even now some of his poetry still has a not negligible artistic value. And finally, what is most important: it should be remembered that any real understanding of young Peretz's spiritual and artistic evolution is hardly conceivable if it does not take fully into account the "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems".

To such understanding the Unknown Manuscript contributes rich and important material.

NOTES

1. Comp. Genesis 38, 19.
2. "Ba'aley ha-'asupot" (comp.: Ecclesiastes 12, 11), translated in the Authorized Version: "masters of assemblies". The Russian translation of the title page of this book has: "Literatory" i.e. "writers", "literati".
3. Y. L. Peretz, Briv un redes, ed. by N. Meisel, [1st ed.], Wilno, 1929, 16.
4. Above: Ch. 16, pp. 275-279.
5. "Ba'aley 'asupot" (see note 2).
6. B, 322.
7. Above: Ch. 15, pp. 249-252.
8. Z, 76.
9. Z, 127.
10. "Sipurim be-shir we-shirim shonim me'et sheney ba'aley 'asupot", Warsaw, 1877, II+158 pp.
11. M. Wakser, Dos lebn fun a yiddishn dikhter, YB, XII (1937), 205-259.
12. Wakser, o.c., 208-211.
13. "Hayey meshorer 'ibri", Warsaw, 1877. A facsimile of the title page and its reverse is attached to Wakser's article (facing p. 209).
14. Wakser, o.c., 210.
15. Wakser, o.c., 208 (comp. above: Ch. 11C, pp. 158-159).

16. "Zhizn [with a "tvoyordy znak" at the end!] Yevreyskavo Poeta. Stikhotvoreniye".
17. "Hagdamah", "Sipurim be-shir. . .", 1-2 (and see below).
18. Wakser, o.c., 211 and 237.
19. He writes: "The Life of the [!] Hebrew Poet".
20. Comp. above.
21. M. Altberg in YB, XII (1937), 304-305.
22. Z. Reisen, Lexikon fun der yiddisher literatur. . ., Vol. II, Wilno, 1930³, 983.
23. Y. L. Peretz, Briv un redes, ed. by N. Meisel, [1st. ed.], 21, note 2 (= B, 142, note 2); M, 59-60.
24. Reisen, l.c.
25. M, 59.
26. Wakser, o.c., 210. His argument is by no means convincing (see below).
27. L.c. (underlined by Wakser). In spite of this hypothesis Wakser believes that the unsigned "Preface" is the work of Lichtenfeld and Peretz together (Wakser, o.c., 249-250); and see below.
28. It should be read, with the vowels "Pil'i" i.e. "Mysterious" (comp.: Judges 13, 18; in the Authorized Version: "Secret").
29. Wakser, o.c., 210 and 258, note 38 (in this he agrees with Altberg)
30. Wakser, o.c., 210.
31. Wakser, o.c., 210 and 248.
32. To the little difficulty of the dash (see above) he does not pay any attention.
33. Wakser, o.c., 210 and 237.
34. Wakser, o.c., 210.
35. Here Wakser inserts in square brackets: "[also. - M.W.]" (!)
36. Comp.: Sh. L. Citron, Peretz (erinerungen), "Di Yiddishe Velt", April-May 1915, 95. Reprinted in his book "Dray literarische doyres", Vol. I, Wilno, 1922, 130.
37. S. Niger, "Y. L. Peretz u-khetabow ha-'ibrim", "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI (1946), 439-502.
38. N.
39. "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 447; N, 85.
40. "Ha-tequfah", l.c.; N, l.c.
41. "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 467; comp.: N, 107.
42. "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 454-455; N, 66, 85 note 2, 96 (and see below). Wakser's opinions were uncritically taken over e.g. by M. Schweid in his "literary biography" of Peretz: "Treyst mayn folk. . .", New York, cop. 1955, 141, 142.
43. In those days Peretz used very many different pseudonyms. See e.g.: L. Wiener, The History of Yiddish Literature. . ., London, 1899, 383.
44. On the signature: "P. L. Y. 'A. , G. L." see below.
45. Comp. the long list of misprints at the end of "Rhymed Stories" (pp. 157-158). This one was overlooked.
46. On Peretz's attributing to himself only the authorship of the poem "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" see below.
47. "Ha-shahar", Vol. IX (1878), 463.

48. Wakser, o.c., 209.
49. B. Borokhov, Di Peretz-Bibliografiye, "Literatur un lebn", Vol. II, (1915), 105.
50. Reisen, o.c., II, 983.
51. N. Meisel, Y. L. Peretz (lebn un shafn), Vol. I, Wilno, 1931, 57.
52. As we already know Peretz did not agree with some of Lichtenfeld's remarks as regards his Polish poems (comp. above: Ch. 14, p. 201).
53. Y. Y. Peretz, in "Forverts", March 30th, 1930 (comp.: R, 113-114).
54. Comp. above: Ch. 11C, pp. 151-152.
55. N. Weinig in YB, XII (1937), 196 (and above: Ch. 14, p. 201).
56. Above: Ch. 16, pp. 269-272.
57. Wakser, o.c., 212-213.
58. "Ahabah nikhzahah, hizayon we-nilweh lo shir Em rahamaniyah, be-'iqbot. . .".
59. Wakser, o.c., 212 and 258, note 48.
60. P. 82, no. 43.
61. W. Zeitlin, Bibliotheca Hebraica Post-Mendelssohniana. . ., Leipzig, 1891-95², 248.
62. Comp.: H. Y. Bornstein, The late r[abbi] Gabri'el Yehudah Lichtenfeld, "Kenesset Yisra'el", Vol II, (1887), 356-358 and N. Sokolow, 'Ishim, Vol. II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 39.
63. G. Y. Lichtenfeld, Sofnat pa'neah, Warsaw, 1874; Tosefet le-ha-^cerabon, Warsaw, 1875 (comp. above: Ch. 16, pp. 270-271).
64. "Sofnat pa'neah", 16.
65. O.c., 17; "Tosefet le-ha-^cerabon", 6, 9.
66. "Sofnat pa'neah", 27; "Tosefet le-ha-^cerabon", 32.
67. "Sofnat pa'neah", 25.
68. O.c., 21-22.
69. See e.g.: Wakser, o.c., 220: "Peretz's original are in this [first] chapter [of "The Life of a Hebrew Poet"] the lines 5-9, 11-15, 20-21 on p. 4; 1-3 (without the question mark), 11-14, 17-20 on p. 5. . .", etc. Comp. also: 229 and 237.
70. "Rhymed Stories", 1-2.
71. Comp.: Isaiah 29, 6.
72. Comp.: The Song of Solomon 2, 12.
73. Comp.: Proverbs 22, 14.
74. Comp.: Jeremiah 2, 6.
75. Comp.: Isaiah 22, 18.
76. Comp.: Job 19, 23.
77. Wakser, o.c., 249-250.
78. Comp. above, and particularly: note 27.
79. M, 59.
80. "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 454-455.
81. Comp. above: Ch. 12, pp. 169-170.
82. On "Nagni'el" see below: Ch. 19C, no. 3.
83. Y. A. Klausner, Ketab-yad bilti-yadua^c shel Y. L. Peretz ("Gilyonot", Vol. XXV, 1951, 265-266) and: 'Al ketab-yad hadash shel Yishaq

Leybush Peretz ("The First] World Congress of Jewish Studies. Summer 1947", Vol. I, Jerusalem, 1952, 330).

84. MS, 195-196. Comp. below: Ch. 19C, no. 1.

85. N, 85, note 2, and 96.

86. N, 66. We can perhaps trace here some influence of the last of Adam Mickiewicz's "Crimean Sonnets" (1826): "Ajudah" (see e.g.: A. Mickiewicz, Poezje, t. 2, Lwów, 1882², 34-35). And compare also: Z, 33. - On Mickiewicz's influence on Peretz see below: Ch. 19E, no. 1.

87. N, 85, note 2.

88. "Hayev meshorer 'ibri".

89. "Sipurim be-shir." . . .", 1-97.

90. O.c., 96-97.

91. O.c., 11.

92. L.c.

93. O.c., 14. Literally: "The Printer" ("Ha-madpis").

94. The dialogue of Ya'aqob and The Publisher reminds of certain parts of Peretz's "Nagni 'el" written at approximately the same time (see below; and comp.: Niger in "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 458-459 and N, 99-100).

95. "Rhymed Stories", 18.

96. Very much as the two heroes of Y.L. Gordon's poem "Sheney Yosef ben Shim'on" ("Two Yosef ben Shim'on's"). The beginning of Gordon's poem (including the characterization of the heroes) was published in "Ha-shahar", Vol. X, (1880), 27-37.

97. Comp.: Deuteronomy 29, 17 (Authorized Version: 29, 18).

98. Comp.: Psalms 127, 2.

98a. "Rhymed Stories", 43.

98b. O.c., 41, note. See e.g.: a contemporary description: "Auch ein Wort über die Wiener Börsenkrisis" in the Viennese journal "Die Neuzeit", Vol. XII, no. 19 (May 16, 1873), 211-213. This catastrophe served as a background in P. Smolenski's book "Ga'on wa-sheber" (1874). Comp.: Y. A. Klausner, Ha-nobelah ba-sifrut ha-'ibrit. . . .", Tel-Aviv, 1947, 159-163.

99. "Rhymed Stories", 46 (this is the name of one of the "orders" of the Talmud). It may be of some interest that in the fragments of Peretz's poem "The Fire" ("Ha-serefah"), preserved in MS, also only one (the first) canto has a title (MS, 39, l. 4) but not the other three (MS, 46, l. 1; 123, l. 1; 141, l. 1).

99a. Similar ideas in: a) "Ha-dibug we-ha-meshuga" ("He-'asif", Vol. III, 1886, 630; not included in K); b) "Iqbtu' de-mehliha" (A, VIII, 135).

99b. "Qadosh be-Rusya" ("Rhymed Stories. . .", 54).

100. O.c., 59-61.

101. Above: Ch. 16, pp. 269-272.

102. "Moda'ah raba"; "Ha-sefirah", 1876, no. 9.

103. To "Ha-sefirah", 1876, no. 21.

104. A. Kaplan, Ha-maziq be-reshut ha-nizaq, Vienna, 1876 (4 pp.). Comp.: "Rhymed Stories", 61. On Kaplan see: Zeitlin, o.c., 167-168 and 210

105. G. Lichtenfeld, Ma'amar Kohen le-lo-'Elohim . . . , Warsaw, 1876 (8 pp.). - Both "(Ha-) Kohen" (in Hebrew) and "Kaplan" (in Polish: "kaplan" i.e. capellanus") mean "Priest".

106. Comp.: Wakser, o.c., 234; J. Klausner, Historiyah shel ha-sifrut ha-'ibrit he-hadashah, Vol. IV, Jerusalem, 1954², 131. - The later phases

of the Lichtenfeld versus Slonimski argument are beyond our scope; they are irrelevant to Peretz.

107. "Ro'sh ha-qahal" ("Rhymed Stories", 64).
108. "Me'ashrim mat'im" ("Rhymed Stories", 75).
109. "Hadarim" (sing.: "heder").
110. O.c., 78.
111. O.c., 79 (comp. also: 11, 43).
112. The "End" is in a way similar to the conclusion of Eliza Orzeszkowa's (comp. above: Ch. 14, p. 213) well-known "Jewish" novel "Meir Ezofowicz", first published in the journal "Kłosy" of January 1878 (i.e. after the publication of the "Rhymed Stories"). Comp. e.g.: I. Butkiewiczówna, Powiesci i nowele zydowskie Elizy Orzeszkowej, Lublin, 1937, 59.
113. "Briv un redes", [1st ed.], Wilno, 1929, 16-17.
114. Comp. above: Ch. 16, pp. 270-271.
115. Should be: "The Bat and the Moon", comp. above: Ch. 16, pp. 269-272 and particularly p. 289, note 67.
116. See below.
117. Comp. above.
118. "Ha-shahar", Vol. IX (1878), 463.
119. Sh. L. Citron, Dray literarishe doyres, Vol. I, Wilno, 1922, 131.
120. Comp. above: Ch. 11C, pp. 154-155.
121. "Mikhtabim sifrutim (me'et'A.She.R). Mikhtab sheni".
122. "Magid mishneh", Vol. II, 1880, 176, 178-180, 182-183, 186-187, 191, 195. Comp: Wakser, o.c., 252-256; J. Shatzky, Hoysofes tsu der Peretz-bibliografiye. . ., YB, XII (1937), 329.
123. On D. Gordon, "Ha-magid" and "Magid mishneh" see e.g.: J. Klausner, Historiyah shel ha-sifrut ha-'ibrit he-hadashah, Vol. IV, 1954², 111-115. - "Ha-magid" is mentioned twice more in Peretz's writings: a) "Az men zogt: meshuge, gleyb!" (A, IV, 33): b) "Ha-serefah" (MS, 49, l. 24).
124. Wakser, o.c., 213-237.
125. O.c., 217 passim.
126. O.c., 216, 219, etc.
127. O.c., 215, 217, 222, etc.
128. O.c., 217, 222, etc.
129. O.c., 223.
130. Wakser has obviously overlooked that Dani'el and his family were Ya'aqob's neighbours in Warsaw (see: "Rhymed Stories", 33 and comp. Wakser, o.c., 223 and particularly 227).
131. Wakser, o.c., 223.
132. M, 60, note.
133. "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 447. See also 459-460: Niger is not sure whether a passage of the poem ("Rhymed Stories", 38, ll. 10-18) attributed by Wakser (o.c., 229) to Lichtenfeld was really written by him or by Peretz; 436ⁿ note 38; N, 85-86.
134. N, 100, note.
135. Quoted above: at the beginning of this chapter.
136. Comp.: M, 60, note 1; "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 447; N, 85-86.

137. Comp. above: Ch. 11C, passim; Wakser, 217; "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 455-458, 462-463; N, 96-99, 102-104.
138. Above: Ch. 11B, p. 142.
139. Comp. e.g.: "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 456, 458-459; N, 97, 99-100. See also below.
140. So: Niger in "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 461 and in N, 102.
141. Above: Ch. 16, p. 283-284.
142. Wakser, o.c., 222.
143. "Rhymed Stories", 15.
144. Above: Ch. 16, p. 280 and p. 290, note ~~236~~ 143.
145. Wakser, o.c., 226 and 236.
146. Above: Ch. 16, pp. 272-273.
147. "Rhymed Stories", 64-67 (and comp. above).
148. Comp.: o.c., 66, note.
149. "Ha-shahar", Vol. VI (1875), 314-318.
150. O.c., Vol. VI, 485-488.
151. G. Y. Lichtenfeld, We-hisdiqu'et ha-sadiq, o.c., Vol. VII, 177-180.
152. Wakser (o.c., 236) ascribes summarily the whole seventh canto (of which this is the last passage) to Lichtenfeld.
153. "Rhymed Stories", 26.
154. Z, 126 (and comp. above: Ch. 7, p. 98).
155. Comp.: Wakser, o.c., 216.
156. "Rhymed Stories", 29, 31, 49 ("dilug-rab" for telegraph; comp. above: Ch. 3, p. 14 and p. 17, note 16), etc. Lichtenfeld's innovations are also mentioned by Wakser, o.c., 217.
157. "Rhymed Stories", 60, 61, 66.
158. "Me-ha-nifla'ot. . .", o.c., 109-112.
159. "Tabnit doresh ha-gadmoniyot. . .", o.c., 114-117.
160. O.c., 60-61.
161. O.c., 65.
162. Comp. his "On the Miracles. . .", o.c., 109-112.
163. Wakser, o.c., 226-227.
164. E.g.: on pp. 4 and 8 Ya'aqob is described as "an only son", but on p. 7 are mentioned "the rest of the sons".
165. In a little fragment without a title preserved in the MS (211-212) the hero is called sometimes Yisra'el" (211, ll. 2, 4, 13 and 16) and sometimes Ya'aqob (211, ll. 8 and 10)! See below: Ch. 19E, no. 3.
- 165a. "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 455; comp.: N, 96.
166. "Rhymed Stories", 13.
167. O.c., 93.
168. Z, 29.
169. Wakser, o.c., passim.
170. "Rhymed Stories", 13, 16-18, 38-40, 45-46, (79-80), 83, 96.
171. Quoted above, towards the beginning of this chapter.
172. Y. Y. Peretz in "Zamoschcher shtime", 1928, no. 8 (comp.: M, 59).
173. Wakser, o.c., 215.

174. This date is mentioned in the text of the poem ("Rhymed Stories", 84).
175. N, 66, 113, 158, 167.
176. "Rhymed Stories", 61 and note.
177. O.c., 66 and note.
- 177a. Comp. above: note 105.
178. Comp. above: Ch. 11C, pp. 149-150.
179. "Bayit shomen. Sipur shomer ha-ya'ar", "Rhymed Stories", 98-100.
180. "Ha-neqamah" (MS, 21-38; see below: Ch. 19E, no. 1).
181. See e.g.: Ludwig Uhlands sämtliche Werke, Stuttgart und Leipzig, n.d., 72.
182. Above: Ch. 16, pp. 284-285.
183. Above: Ch. 14, pp. 218-220.
184. Wakser, o.c., 257.
185. "He-^lasel. 'Al shenat [5]623", "Rhymed Stories", 100-103.
186. "He-^lasel" MS, 146-147. However, this title is followed not by a full stop but by a semicolon. Comp.: Y. A. Klausner, in "Gilyonot", Vol. XXV, 265 and in "[The First] World Congress of Jewish Studies. . .", Vol. I, 330.
187. "Rhymed Stories", 120, the last four lines.
188. Wakser, o.c., 243. Comp. also: Niger in "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 465 and N, 106.
189. Comp. above: Ch. 2, pp. 5-6. We do not think that this uprising is also reflected in "A Deserted House", as Wakser believes (l.c.).
190. "Rhymed Stories", 103 (comp.: Jeremiah 4, 3).
191. Z, 60.
192. "Ha-^lesh ha-^lokhelah" i.e. "Devouring fire" - of the sun (comp.: Isaiah 29, 6); see: "Rhymed Stories", 101 and 1 (and comp. above: p. 306).
193. Wakser, o.c., 244.
194. Niger in "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 466 and N, 106.
195. "Fun Yehezke'l. Kapitl 33" (A, I, 145).
196. "Di nakht-vekhter. . ." (A, I, 138-139). According to N. Meisel "Yishaq Leybush Peretz un zayn dor shrayber", New York, cop. 1951, 75-76) this last poem is a paraphrase of Adelbert von Chamisso's (1781-1838) "Nachtwächterlied" (1826). See e.g.: Adelbert von Chamisso, Werke, B. I., Berlin, 1874, 82-83.
197. "Tamshilehu be-ma^lasey yadekha kol shatah tahat raglaw" (Psalms, 8, 7; Authorized Version: 8, 6).
198. "Rhymed Stories", 103-106.
199. Wakser, o.c., 246.
200. Niger in "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 466-467 and N, 107.
201. Niger's inconsistency in this matter has been mentioned above.
202. "Ha-shofet we-ha-melis", "Rhymed Stories", 106-109.
203. See above: p. 314-315 (and comp.: Wakser, o.c., 256).
204. O.c., 247 and see also: 257.
205. Wakser, o.c., 247.
206. "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 467-468 and N, 107-108.
207. Comp.: Deuteronomy 4, 34.

208. "Me-ha-nifla'ot u-me-ha-'otot we-ha-moftim shel rabey ha-hasidim, ke-fi ha-sipurim be-sifreyhem", "Rhymed Stories", 109-112.
209. Wakser, o.c., 246 and comp.: 231-233 and 236.
210. "Rhymed Stories", 54, l. 15 to the end of p. 55 and 56 l. 7 to 57, l. 2.
211. "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 468 and N, 108.
212. "Tabnit doresh ha-qadmoniyot ha-mekhuneh me-baqer be-'eres Polin haqirotaw u-derishotaw-lematan yilmadu rabim hokhmah we-tirbeh ha-da'at bi-Yisra'el", "Rhymed Stories", 112-117.
213. Wakser, o.c., 247-248.
214. Comp. above: Ch. 6, p. 67.
215. "Hanah-shir sipurim", "Rhymed Stories", 117-138.
216. "Ro'sh-ha-qahal".
217. Z, 76.
218. "Briv un redes", [1st ed.], Wilno, 1929, 16 (quoted above).
219. In his criticism mentioned above (and comp.: Wakser, o.c., 256).
220. "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 468-469; N, 108 and note.
221. Wakser, o.c., 238.
222. "Rhymed Stories", 117 and 119. It is interesting that Lichtenfeld did not agree to introducing even a slight change in a Biblical expression. While Peretz has: "They are idle", Lichtenfeld changes a whole distich to keep the expression exactly as it appears in the Bible (Exodus 5, 17): "Ye are idle" (p. 119). His variants are definitely not an improvement.
223. "Rhymed Stories", 137.
224. Comp. the quotation above and Ch. 3, p. 17, note 13.
225. Z, 76 (and comp.: Wakser, o.c., 237; "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 471; N, 110). Peretz's attitude to the "heads of the community" is negative in his unpublished poem "The Fire" ("Ha-serefah"; MS, 53, ll. 16-17) and particularly in one of his articles preserved in the MS (MS, 163, 165 and 190, ll. 7-13), but also in "Nagni'el" ("Ha-boqer'or", Vol. I, 1876, 102-103 and MS, 71, l. 1-72, l. 3). And see also: "Shtetun shtetlekh. 28" (A, VIII, 358-360).
226. "Rhymed Stories", 135.
227. "Ha-neqamah" (MS, 21-38). See below: Ch. 19E, no. 1.
228. Comp. also "A Sad Episode. . ." (Ch. 14, pp. 218-220) and "The Sanctification of the Name" (Ch. 16, pp. 284-285).
229. "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 468 and N, 108.
230. On Shomer see e.g.: M. Waxman, A History of Jewish Literature. . ., Vol. IV, New York, 1947, 485-486, 1003. He "began his prolific career in 1876" (L. Wiener, The History of Yiddish Literature. . ., London, 1899, 172). However, Peretz did not know his works as late as 1888 ("Briv un redes", [1st. ed.], 16). - Peretz mentions Shomer several times, always with contempt: K, VII, 183, 339; A, I, 176; A, VII, 101-103, 202-204; A, VIII, 10; "Briv un redes", [1st. ed.], 16.
231. Mentioned by Peretz in a Hebrew short-story "The Revenge" ("Ha-neqamah"; MS, 26, l. 10) and in two of his Yiddish articles (A, VIII, 86 and 202).
232. Together with Paul de Kock mentioned in "The Revenge" (MS, 26,

1. 10). On Sue in Peretz's writings comp. above: Ch. 7, p. 89 and particularly, p. 106, note 173.
233. "Rhymed Stories", 126-128.
234. Wakser, o.c., 242. See: Z, 94, 100-108 and above: Ch. 7, pp. 85, 92 and 106, note 190. Comp. also: R, 90-91.
235. Comp. above: Ch. 11C, p. 150 and Ch. 12 pp. 164-165.
236. "Rhymed Stories", 117-119.
237. Comp.: Jeremiah 20, 18.
238. "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 469 and N, 109.
239. See below: Ch. 19C, no. 3.
240. Z, 76 (and comp. above: Ch. 15, p. 251).
241. "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 454.
242. "Le-Hayim he-hasid be-shanoto 'et-ta'amo u-malbushaw be-yom ha-sheloshah 'asar le-hodesh tishrey 5|647", "Rhymed Stories", 139-154.
243. Wakser, 209-210, 248-249 (and comp. above: p. 298 and p. 340, note 26).
244. Above: Ch. 16, p. 273.
245. Wakser, o.c., 210.
246. Comp. above: "Thou Madest Him. . .", "On the Miracles. . ." and "The Image. . .".
247. "Rhymed Stories", 79 (and comp. above: p. 312).
248. The original version of "Nagni'el" (MS, 73, l. 9-74, l. 9; and comp.: "[The First] World Congress of Jewish Studies. . . , Vol. I, 331), and (less emphasized) the printed version ("Ha-boqer 'or", Vol. I, 1876, 104) and the poem "The Fire" ("Ha-serefah", MS, 43, ll. 18-21). See also: "A Letter from Asmodeus to Baal-zebub" ("Ha-boqer 'or", Vol. I, 1876, 375; and comp. above: Ch. 16, p. 282). In a poem published in 1886, "To the Jewish Maiden Estranged from Us" ("Le-'almah 'ibriyah we-hi' mitnakerah"; K, IX, [pt. 2], 62) Peretz even ventures a word of defence for the orthodox Jews' dress.
249. G. Y. Lichtenfeld, Ma'amar Kohen le-lo'-'Elohim - , Warsaw, 1876, l.
250. Wakser, o.c., 210.
251. "Ha-tequfah", XXX-XXXI, 454.
252. "Sihat ha-mityapeh - (Monolog eines Stutzers)", "Rhymed Stories", 154-157.
253. Peretz did not know any French (comp.: Z, 111). Lichtenfeld knew French (comp.: H. Y. Bornstein in "Keneset Yisra'el", Vol. II, 1887, 357 and N. Sokolow in his book "'Ishim", Vol. II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 39) and liked to demonstrate his knowledge. We have already mentioned his translations from Racine. In his scholarly article "Heger din", published in "Ha-shahar", Vol. III, [not; "IV" as Wakser, o.c., 258, note 52 to p. 217], p. 216 he mentions Molière's "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" in French. However the French in the "soliloquy" is limited to two short notes only: "Blanche" and "Rendez-vous".
254. E.g.: the "ingenious" innovation "Bo' na' 'elay", duly translated in a footnote: "Rendez-vous", (p. 156).

255. Comp. above: at the beginning of this chapter.

256. In "Ha-shahar", Vol. IX (1878), 463 (partly quoted above).
Braudes (comp. above: Ch. 11C, p. 155) and N. Sokolow (comp.: "Ishim", Vol. II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 50) encouraged him even earlier, but not in print, as Niger rightly remarks (N, 111, note 1).

257. Most probably not, as Peretz says, because of the little poem printed in Lichtenfeld's book in 1875 but because of the attack on Slonimski in "The Life of a Hebrew Poet".

258. "Ha-sefirah", 1878, no. 14, p. 112 (and comp.: Wakser, o.c., 250).

259. "Rhymed Stories", 1-103 and 117-138. Peretz also participated in the writing of three more pages (106-109: "The Judge and the Advocate").

PART III

The Unknown Manuscript.

18. Preface.

In 1947, while reading the proofs of our book "The 'Novelle' in Hebrew Literature from its Beginning to the End of the Age of Enlightenment",¹ we requested to see one of ^{the} manuscripts of the Jewish National University Library in Jerusalem.

This manuscript (no. Heb 8° 575) was described in J. Joel's² "Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts. . ." of the above library as follows: "Copies of stories by Y. L. P. [eretz] and Re'uben 'Asher Braudes, also poems, articles, arithmetical exercises and drawings".

This did not sound very promising. One might expect to see one of those note-books in which youthful maskilim from small provincial towns used to copy diligently, out of various borrowed journals and books, literary pieces of which they were particularly fond. It would not have been surprising to find there also mathematical calculations, drawings, and all kinds of scribbling.

Thus we asked for the manuscript not before we had to read the proof-sheets of the pages in our book dealing with R. 'A. Braudes' short-stories. We did this solely to reassure ourselves of the obvious valuelessness of the manuscript. We were interested only in the "copies of stories by . . . Re'uben 'Asher Braudes". On page 163 there was the title: "Confession and Repentance. A Story by Braudes"³ . A copy of this story could hardly be of any interest: "Confession and Repentance" had

had already been printed more than once⁴ and is well-known.

However, the first words following the title indicated that this was not Braudes' story but a review of it written by somebody else:

"The author gives us the memoirs of a 'Head of the Community' in a small town - in Lithuania. . .", and so on.

Realizing that the information provided by the "Catalogue" could not be relied upon, we examined the manuscript from its beginning. On p. 21 we came across "The Revenge. 'Novelle' by Y. L. P."⁵. Various signatures in the manuscript ("Izaak Leon Peretz", "Leon Izaak Peretz", etc.⁶) proved beyond doubt that Joel was right in his interpretation of the initials "Y. L. P.". This time it was really a short-story. However, no such short-story by Peretz was known. And an unknown short-story by Peretz could not be simply a copy. It was natural to assume that the whole manuscript (or at least part of it) was written by Peretz and that it contained some of his hitherto unknown works. A connection between the mathematical exercises included in the manuscript and Peretz's father-in-law, the mathematician Gabri'el Yehudah Lichtenfeld, was highly probable.

The proofs could not wait and further investigation had to be postponed. The meagre results of our first, very short, encounter with the Unknown Manuscript were condensed in a dozen lines of an added note in our book⁷. The book appeared in June 1947. This was the first time the Unknown Manuscript had ever been mentioned (except in the "Catalogue").

In the meantime we were invited to deliver a lecture at the proceedings of the Section for Modern Hebrew Literature of "The First World Congress of Jewish Studies" to be held in Jerusalem in summer 1947.

As the subject we chose the Unknown Manuscript. In the very limited time at our disposal only preliminary studies could be made. The results were given in a lecture delivered on July 9th, 1947.

The report about a new manuscript from Peretz's early days aroused some interest. Hebrew and Yiddish journals in Israel and also in New York and Paris published short notices about the discovery.

The publication of the Proceedings of the Congress was delayed for five years. Meanwhile, in 1951, we wrote a very short article "An Unknown Manuscript of Y. L. Peretz"⁸. As a matter of fact this was only a list of the contents of the Manuscript, preceded by a few introductory lines and followed by two short fragments from the Manuscript. Here we did not hesitate any longer to attribute the whole MS to Peretz. In the introductory lines there is a short description of the MS and an attempt to fix its date. Several details, mostly in the list of contents, must be corrected.

The Proceedings of the Congress were published a year later. Our lecture "On a New Manuscript of Yishag Leybush Peretz"⁹, short and tentative, now also needs a few corrections. We try to prove that the MS was really written by Peretz, describe it and attempt to find out when, approximately, it was composed. The lecture, as we hope, gives some idea about the contents of the MS and its importance. Several quotations, mostly very short ones, illustrate the lecture.

The first two articles about Peretz's manuscript were mentioned in a few very short notices in journals in Israel and the United States.

Jacob Shatzky¹⁰ has published a short remarque about them and printed a facsimile of a page from the MS¹¹ .

In connection with the celebration of Peretz's centenary in 1952, the author of these lines was invited to lecture on the Unknown Manuscript twice - in Jerusalem (on April 26th) and in Tel-Aviv (on May 20th). Neither of the lectures was printed. However, a detailed report of the second one was published by D. Loebel in a Tel-Aviv journal^{11a} .

So far this is all that has been published about and from the Unknown Manuscript.

The manuscript no. Heb 8^o 575 of the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem is a thickish note-book in octavo. The binding is fairly new but the pages are much older and often look rather decrepit. It is easy to see that some of the pages did not belong to the original note-book but were glued in¹² . On the other hand, many pages were removed and, as can be seen from the little strips left, most of them were written on¹³ .

As it stands, the MS has 256 pages¹⁴ . Not all of them are filled with literary texts. Everything is mixed together in our manuscript: pages full of text and pages of which half, one-third, a quarter or even less is written on; pages filled out with mathematical exercises, primitive drawings, doodles and all kinds of scribbling and blank pages. The text is not always written across the width of the page but sometimes across

the length and even upside-down.

With a few exceptions the MS is written in ink ¹⁵. 49 pages of the MS are blank ¹⁶. Several pages are nearly empty and, as already mentioned, many are only partly written on. The mathematical exercises (mainly in algebra and geometry) are spread over 47 pages ¹⁷. A few more pages are filled out with signatures ¹⁸, drawings ¹⁹, etc. Quite often literary text, mathematical exercises, drawings and so on appear on the same page.

The state of the MS was probably typical of the young writer. Peretz's first biographer Y. H. Zagorodski, who knew him personally while in Zamość in the early 1880's ²⁰, writes ²¹: "His [i.e. Peretz's] poems [and] stories are a product of sudden exaltation; poetry touches him, inspires him, and then he writes a poem. More than once I have seen among his writings the beginning of a lofty poem, astonishing in its wealth of feeling and thought, interrupted suddenly in the middle, and after the poetical lines there would be a drawing of a cock or a devil, etc.; for he had no patience to sit and write, or perhaps the inspiration left him suddenly. . .".

About 150 (albeit not always complete) pages of the MS contain literary texts. The texts too are written in a kind of pell-mell: poetry and critical articles, stories, dramatical fragments and memoirs, all is mixed together. Moreover, parts of the same item appear in three and more different places, divided from each other by blank pages, mathematical exercises, other literary pieces, etc. And not always is the "instalment" placed first in the MS really the beginning of an item.

The literary texts to be found in the MS are mostly fragments and hardly ever more than first drafts. Deletions and changes are very numerous.

There is much evidence that the MS contains Peretz's works and that all of it is written in Peretz's own handwriting. Joel has already identified the initials "Y. L. P." as those of Peretz ²². These initials appear under the titles of the short-story "The Revenge" ²³ and the poem "The Fire" ²⁴. There can be no doubt about the authorship of the two works, both never published. And one of the articles is explicitly signed: "Yishag Peretz" ²⁵.

Peretz's signatures and initials can be found many times in the MS. They are written in Polish ²⁶ and in Hebrew ²⁷. Besides those of Peretz there are in the MS only very few other names or initials. One of the names scribbled in the MS is: "Altberg" ²⁸. As we know, the Altbergs were Peretz's relatives and friends ²⁹.

It has already been mentioned that we can find in the MS Peretz's unpublished works, often unfinished and nearly always abounding in corrections. The MS also contains a few works by Peretz that were already published but whose texts in the MS differ from the printed ones. These texts too are much corrected. As the whole MS - including the corrections - is written by the same hand, it is beyond any doubt that it contains Peretz's works in his own handwriting. The last fact can easily be

corroborated by comparison of the MS with any facsimile of Peretz's early works or letters ³⁰ .

The mathematical exercises demonstrate, as mentioned, the influence of Peretz's father-in-law.

As we shall see, there are very many parallels between the unknown works of Peretz from the MS and his published ones. They contain also, no doubt, some autobiographical elements. The memoirs, stories and poems included in the MS have as their settings mainly the well-known stations of young Peretz's life: Zamość ³¹ , which the author of the MS calls "my native town" ³² , the nearby Szczebrzeszyn ³³ , Sandomierz ³⁴ and Warsaw ³⁵ .

We could not trace at the Jewish National and University Library any suggestion as to the provenance of the MS and the way in which it came into the possession of the Library. We can only assume that perhaps this MS, like the one of Peretz's Polish poems ³⁶ and those of two of his Yiddish poems ³⁷ , was preserved by the Altberg family. It is possible that it was donated by them (in the 1920's or early 1930's?) to the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem. This may have been done through the Warsaw branch of "Friends of the Hebrew University", an organization that was very active in collecting books in Poland for the Jerusalem library.

The Unknown Manuscript comprises, as far as we can see, twenty literary items ³⁸ :-

1. "Meshorer be-^lolam ha-dimyon" ("A Poet in the World of Fantasy").
2. A Review of Braudes' story "Confession and Repentance. First (short) version. (comp.: no. 6).
3. "Ha-neqamah" ("The Revenge").
4. "Ha-serefah" ("The Fire").
5. ["Nagni' el"].
6. "Modeh we-^lozeb. Sipur me'et Braudes". ("Confession and Repentance. A Story by Braudes"). A Review. Second (long) version (comp.: no. 2).
7. An Article on Literary Criticism, or on the State of Hebrew Literature (against A. Zederbaum).
8. "Egel ha-zahab" ("The Golden Calf").
9. "Melekh Dawid" ("King David").
10. The Beginning of a Story (or a Plan of a Work?) in Yiddish.
11. Fragments of a Dramatic Work.
12. "He-^lasel" ("The Idler").
13. "Sheloshah Kokhabim" ("Three Asterisks").
14. Fragments of Memoirs (or of a Story?) on Zamość and Szczebrzeszyn.
15. ["Hagdamah"] ("Preface") to "The Life of a Hebrew Poet".
16. "Zvuki Poezi' Aleksandra Zeidlera. 1874". ("Strains of Poetry by Alexander Zeidler. 1874"). A Criticism.

17. The Beginning of a Story about an Orphan.
18. Fragment of an Historical (?) Narrative.
19. Review of "Mordkhai Kisowitz" by M. D. Brandstädter.
20. A Poem in Polish.

The whole MS is written in Hebrew except for little fragments in Yiddish (no. 10) and in Polish (no. 20) ³⁹ .

Only three of the twenty works preserved in the MS were known before its discovery (nos. 5, 12, and 15). Even in these cases the MS contributes something new.

It is obvious that for a certain period Peretz used the MS as a kind of scrap-book. The works included were not all written at the same time, and their chronological order cannot be deduced from the order (or rather, disorder) in which they are found in the MS. In spite of this it is possible to reach a conclusion as to the at least approximate dates when the works were written.

The last date specifically mentioned in the MS is the year [5]637⁴⁰ i.e. 1876-1877. However, as we shall see, "Three Asterisks" (no. 13) ⁴¹ was most probably influenced by a poem published in 1877-1878 . Thus the latest parts of the MS were written in the years 1877-1878 when Peretz was back in Zamość.

The bulk of the MS was written earlier. "The Idler" (no. 12) and ["Preface"] (no. 15), both published in the "Rhymed Stories and Diverse

Poems", must have been written at least a few months before May 25th, 1877 and May 5th, 1876, respectively—the dates of the censors permissions to print the two "editions" of the little collection ⁴². As for "The Idler", we have already expressed our opinion that its text preserved in the MS is probably a copy of an original written, as we believe, in 1873, while Peretz lived in Opatów ⁴³.

"Nagni'el" was printed in 1876. Its first version (no. 5) was written probably in 1875.

Peretz reviews in the MS works published in the years 1869 (no. 19), 1874 (no. 16) and 1875 (nos. 2 and 6). These reviews could hardly have been written many years after the works with which they dealt were printed.

Two of the largest literary items in the MS are set in Sandomierz (no. 4) and Warsaw (no. 3) respectively. As we know, Peretz lived in Sandomierz in 1874-1875. From there he went in summer 1875 to Warsaw. And he left the Polish capital for Zamość most probably in the second half of 1876.

In those days he certainly was no longer interested in mathematics. The numerous mathematical exercises indicate a close connection with Lichtenfeld maintained during Peretz's stay in Warsaw and before the divorce.

Summing up it is possible to state: -

a) The oldest of Peretz's writings included in the MS whose date can be fixed with a certain degree of probability is "The Idler". It was written in our opinion, in 1873. This date, however, does not indicate the "terminus a quo" of the MS because "The Idler" was probably copied into

MS from the original draft.

b) Most of the MS was certainly written during Peretz's sojourn in Warsaw (summer 1875 - second half of 1876). This was a period of great literary activity in Peretz's life.

c) Some of the items in the MS were written after Peretz returned to Zamość (between the second half of 1876 and - most probably - the beginning of 1878). This is the "terminus ad quem" of the MS.

Although most of the literary works preserved in the Unknown Manuscript are not complete and very far from being given "the last polish", nevertheless (and in a way sometimes - because of this) its importance for the understanding of the young Peretz's literary evolution is undeniable.

Very few of Peretz's manuscripts from this period survived. What was printed nearly always ⁴⁴ suffered from the editors and the censors ⁴⁵. The works in the MS are genuinely Peretz's and his only, untouched by anybody's hand.

In 1937 N. Weinig expressed his sorrow that a little piece of the manuscript of Peretz's Polish poems, containing a second version of a few lines, was lost. These lines would have given us, according to Weinig an idea how Peretz worked ⁴⁶.

Now, the MS provides scholars with very rich material for studying the way Peretz created his first literary works. The innumerable deletions, improvements, changes and variants are of great interest ⁴⁷.

We can follow, for example, Peretz's attempts to make his style as simple and natural as possible. Not being able to enlarge on this topic, we may perhaps quote at least one example. In "The Revenge" (no. 3) Peretz says ⁴⁸:

". . .and her friend who is serving in one of them [of the shops] will be freed" ("yehupash"). Instead of the archaic "yehupash", which he crosses through, Peretz first writes: "leave will be given unto him" ("hufshah yutan lo"), and finally chooses the simplest possible expression: "will be free" ("yehiyeh hofshi").

The striving for simplicity is only one facet of the picture of Peretz's struggles and experiments which emerges from a detailed study of the MS.

Permanent experimenting was, no doubt, one of the characteristic trends of the young writer. To a certain degree it persisted through all his life. He was never satisfied with one literary form, ever seeking after new ways, very seldom concentrating long enough to produce a major work. His writing was always rather rhapsodic, fragmentary. Nowhere is all this as conspicuous as in the Unknown Manuscript.

Although practically all of it is written in Hebrew, there are here some attempts to write in Polish (no. 20) and in Yiddish (no. 10). As we know Peretz wrote Polish poems already in 1873-1874 ⁴⁹. On the other hand, the tiny fragment of Yiddish prose preserved in the MS, is the oldest known.

Hebrew poetry is represented both by Peretz's first known translations and original poems. The original ones are narrative, lyric,

and humorous.

In the MS Peretz put down some dramatic fragments many years before his first essay in dramatic poetry (so far as was known) was written.

For the first time we encounter Peretz's prose works in Hebrew, and - in abundance. In the MS is to be found the first short-story of one of the greatest masters of this literary form both in Hebrew and Yiddish. Interesting are fragments of memoirs tinged with humour. Peretz's articles, which take up a great deal of the MS, are very important because here, for the first time, the young writer expresses directly his views and opinions on life and letters.

The works preserved in the MS also add something to our very limited knowledge of Peretz's life in the 1870's, albeit these are mainly scattered hints (as can be seen from this study).

Finally, in trying to assess the importance of the Unknown Manuscript we must remember that, among the so various works included in it, there are at least a few whose artistic value still appeals to the reader.

NOTES

1. Y. A. Klausner, Ha-nobelah be-sifrut ha-'ibrit me-re'shitah 'ad sof tequmat-ha-Haskalah, Tel-Aviv, 1947.
2. J. Joel, Reshimat kitbey-ha-yad ha-'abrim ha-nimsa'im be-beyt-ha-sefarim ha-le'umi we-ha-unibersita'i bi-Yirushalayim. . .", Jerusalem, 1934, 59, no. 592.
3. "Modeh we-'ozeb. Sipur me'et Braudes" (MS, 163, ll. 1-2).
4. Separately: Warsaw, 1875 (42 pp.). It was also included in the collection of Braudes' short-stories "Zekenim 'im ne'arim", Vienna, 1886, 31-62.

5. "Ha-neqamah. Novelle me'et Y. L. P." (MS, 21-38).
6. MS, 184, 185, etc.
7. Y. A. Klausner, o.c., 171, note 97a.
8. Y. A. Klausner, Ketab-yad bilti-yadua shel Y. L. Peretz, "Gilyonot", Vol. XXV (1951), 265-267. Quoted by Niger in his comprehensive book on Peretz (N, 85, 96, 181, 219) and by N. Sheman in his book "Lublin . . .", Toronto, 1951, 200.
9. Y. A. Klausner, Al Ketab-yad hadash shel Yishaq Leybush Peretz, "Ha-kinus ha-'olami [ha-ri'shon] le-mada'ey ha-yahadut. . ." ([The First] World Congress of Jewish Studies. . .), Vol. I, Jerusalem, 1952, 328-333.
10. J [acob] Sh [atzky], An umbakanter ketab-yad fun Peretz, YB, XXXVI (1952), 259-260.
11. MS, 21 = YB, XXXVI (1952), 260.
- 11a. D. [aniel] L [oebel], A nayer ketab-yad fun Y. L. Peretz, "Nayvelt", no. 61 (May 29th, 1952). Not always reliable.
12. E.g.: MS, 39-56 are longer than all the other pages and are folded to fit the size of the note-book. They are glued in instead of pages that contained some text and were removed, albeit not without leaving recognizable traces. The leaf 55-56 is glued on leaf 55a-56a; thus pp. 56 and 55a partly cover each other (leaf 55-56 is one of the long leaves) but are legible (p. 55a is blank).
13. E.g.: before p. 1 there are traces of 26 pages, mostly containing text. And comp. the previous note.
14. There are pp. 1-254 and 55a, 56a (comp. above, note 12). The pagination was added by us.
15. In pencil are written only: MS 1-2; 95, l. 14; and some corrections on pp. 21 ff. and elsewhere.
16. MS, 8-10, 12-18, 55a, 83-84, 100, 104-120, 140, 143, 158-161, 180, 186, 197-204, 243, 250.
17. MS, 19-20, 148, 150-157, 162, 184 (contains also signatures), 193-194, 213-242, 245 (partly). Comp. above: Ch. 11C, p. 152.
18. E.g.: MS, 184 (partly), 185, 253, etc.
19. E.g.: MS, 208: a space (most of the page), left in the middle of the text for a quotation was filled out by a drawing of a human face. Comp. also: 210, etc.
20. B, 357.
21. Y. H. Zagorodski, Yishaq Leybush Peretz, "Ahi'asaf. Luah. . .", Vol. IX, for the year 1901/2, Warsaw, 1901, 357-358.
22. Comp. above.
23. "Ha-neqamah" (MS, 21, l. 2).
24. "Ha-serefah" (MS, 39, l. 2).
25. A review of Braudes' story "Modeh we'ozeb". First (short) version. (MS, 11, l. 12). Comp. below: Ch. 19G, no. 4.
26. MS, 1, 142, 184, 185, 192, 253, etc.
27. MS, 11, l. 12; 21, l. 2; 39, l. 2.
28. MS, 142.
29. Comp. above: Ch. 5, p. 53, etc.

30. List of the published facsimiles from the 1870's see above:
Ch. 15, p. 258, note 83.
31. MS, 181-183 and 188, ll. 11-13 (= "Gilyonot", Vol. XXV, 266-267);
211-212 (?).
32. MS, 188, ll. 12-13.
33. MS, 181, ll. 1-3 and 187-188 (= "Gilyonot", l.c.).
34. MS, 39-56, 123-128, 130-142, 246.
35. MS, 21-38; mentioned also in MS, 212, etc.
36. N. Weinig in YB, XII (1937), 191 (and comp. above: Ch. 14, p. 200).
37. One of them in his own handwriting ("Di geshmisene'emes") and one in a copy (the first version of "Monish"). See: Paulina Altberg (in YB, XII, 1937, 307) and Z. Reisen (in the same volume of YB, 261). Comp. above: Ch. 15, pp. 236, 240 and 257, note 45.
38. Comp.: "Gilyonot", Vol. XXV, 265-266 (the few changes will be explained in the next chapter). The list is arranged in the order in which the works appear in the manuscript. In case of more than one "instalment", only the first appearance in the manuscript (even when it is not the beginning of the work) is taken under consideration in fixing the position of the work in the list.
39. Some of Peretz's signatures and other scribblings are also in Polish.
40. MS, 187, l. 5 (= "Gilyonot", Vol. XXV, 267).
41. MS, 149. Reprinted in "World Congress. . .", Vol. I, 331-332.
42. Comp. above: Ch. 17, p. 294.
43. Above: Ch. 17, pp. 325-326.
44. With probably the exception only of the poem "I am told" (comp. above: Ch. 16, p. 278).
45. What the editor and the censor could do to the young writer's works is best exemplified by comparison of the printed version of "Nagni'el" with the original one preserved in the MS (no. 5). See below: Ch. 19C, no. 3.
46. N. Weinig, Poylishe lider fun Y. L. Peretz. . ., YB, XII (1937), 204.
47. Comp. the facsimile of p. 21 of the MS printed in YB, XXXVI (1952), 260. This page has relatively very few corrections.
48. MS, 23, l. 12.
49. Above: Ch. 14.
50. Comp.: N, 181, note 1 and 219, note 1.

19. The Manuscript.

Introductory Remarks

This chapter comprises a detailed survey of the literary contents of the Unknown Manuscript. Parts of the MS are rendered into English and explanatory notes added ¹. *Variae lectiones* are taken into consideration only when they are of special interest. The rest of the MS is summed-up. Sometimes a complete translation of an item is given. Sometimes there is only a partial translation complemented by a summary. Finally, some items are only summarized. In each case a discussion on the item is attached.

The state of the MS ² makes it useless to deal with the works included in the order in which they appear ³. On the other hand it is impossible to fix their strict chronological order. The only possible arrangement is rather a mechanical one. The works are divided according to the languages in which they are written, starting with the less important in this period of Peretz's literary activity: Polish, Yiddish and Hebrew ⁴. In each of the first two languages there is in the MS only one item. The eighteen Hebrew works are arranged according to their literary forms: poetry, dramatic fragments, stories and memoirs, and articles. ⁵

NOTES

1. Where necessary we silently complement and adjust the marks of interpunction.

2. Comp. above: Ch. 18.
3. See list in Ch. 18.
4. Parallel to Ch.Ch. 14, 15 and 16-17.
5. The numbers in brackets following the titles refer to the list in previous chapter.

A. A Polish Poem (no. 20) ¹.

There are only seven lines of the MS written in Polish - the beginning of a poem. It deals with the tragic fate of the Jews in the diaspora, just as another of Peretz's Polish poems "Elul", written in 1873-1874 ². We cannot tell whether the fragment preserved in the MS was written at the same time or not. Its literary value is negligible. It is only interesting as an additional manifestation of Peretz's national feeling in the 1870's ³.

. . .

"Israel lives without Fatherland,
Confused is her way.
Where there is a strip of land,
Where there is a patch of sky,
Water, a slice of bread,
She comes like a migrating bird -

"Israel lives without Temple and Sacrifices. . ."

NOTES

1. MS, 254.
2. Comp. above: Ch. 14, pp. 211-214.
3. Comp. above: Ch. 14, p. 199.

B. A Prose Fragment in Yiddish (no. 10) ¹ .

It seems that in the 1870's Peretz was not used to write in Yiddish ² . His attitude to this language in one of the articles in the MS is negative. No Yiddish literary work in prose earlier than the tiny fragment with which we are dealing now is known ³ .

This fragment consists of only three crossed but readable lines. It is difficult to say what these lines were intended to be. Perhaps they are the beginning of a story or just a plan of some work. A connection can perhaps be traced between this fragment and Peretz's Hebrew poem "The Sanctification of the Name", published in 1877 ⁴ .

It may have been Braudes again who induced Peretz to write a literary work in Yiddish, just as he encouraged him to write the lost Yiddish poem "A Letter of the Polish Females" ⁵ .

Because of the possible similarity with "The Sanctification of the Name" and probable influence of Braudes we are inclined to attribute the little Yiddish fragment to Peretz's Warsaw period.

. . .

"Cossacks with whips ⁶ come in. - In the room there is very little to loot - A girl sits aside, head on her hands".

NOTES

1. MS, 129.

2. Perhaps the queer spelling of the word "der" ("dr" - as if it were Hebrew, and not "d^lr" as should be in Yiddish) on all three occasions when this word appears in the little fragment indicates that Peretz was more used to write in Hebrew than in Yiddish.

3. Comp. above: Ch. 15, (and the quotation on p. 233 from the MS)

4. See above: Ch. 16, pp. 284-285. And comp.: ["The First] World Congress of Jewish Studies. . .", Vol. I, Jerusalem, 1952, 330 and D. L[oebe] in "Nayvelt", no. 61 (May 29th, 1952).

5. Above: Ch. 15, pp. 246-247.

6. In original: "malakhaykes". This is a Yiddish diminutive plural form of the Ukrainian word "malakhay", which may mean both a whip and a type of fur hat. Comp.: B. G. Grinchenko, Slovar ukrainskavo yazyka. . ., T. II, Kiev, 1908, 400. - According to V. Dal ("Tolkoviy slovar. . .", T. II, Moscow, 1955, 292) it may also mean a kind of long coat.

C. Hebrew Poetry.

The only three works that were known before the discovery of the MS were all poems in Hebrew: The "Preface", "The Idler" and "Nagni'el".

1) The "Preface" to "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" (no. 15) ¹ .

The "Hagdamah", which bears no title and is incomplete in the MS, has already been dealt with ² . The main importance of the text preserved in the MS is that it proves beyond doubt Peretz's exclusive authorship of this poem.

NOTES

1. MS, 195-196. "Gilyonot", Vol. XXV (1951), 265-266, no. 16.
 2. Above: Ch. 17, pp. 305-308.
-

2) "The Idler" (no. 12) ¹ .

"The Idler" or, as the poem is called in the "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems", "The Idler. On the Year 1863" has also been dealt with ² . The text in the MS is of importance only insofar as it strengthens the supposition that "The Idler" was written comparatively early (in 1873).

NOTES

1. "He-Asel" (MS, 146-147).
 2. Above: Ch. 17, pp. 325-326.
-

3) "Nagni'el" (no. 5) ¹ .

"Nagni'el" was printed in A. B. Gottlober's monthly "The Morning Light" in 1876 ² . However, there are many important differences between the original text and the published one. And the conclusion of the poem in the MS is quite dissimilar to the known version.

In the MS the poem bears no title at all. In the printed text it is called: "Nagni'el". An explanatory note is added: "He is the Angel of Poetry and Song, as explained in the books of the qabalists" ³ . In spite of this Nagni'el is not mentioned in books on Jewish angelology ⁴ . This name, formed on the usual pattern of the names of angels (comp.: Refa'el, Gabri'el, etc.), is theophoric. It is composed from the root "nagen" (to play an instrument) and the word "'el" (God) and is very proper for a Hebrew Apollo. We presume that the name "Nagni'el" was invented by Peretz by slightly changing a known name of an angel (the meaning of which is obscure) : "Nagarni'el". Nagarni'el, mentioned for instance in the ancient qabalistic book "Heykhalot rabati" ⁵ , was the Angel of Fantasy ⁶ .

The MS has at the beginning of the poem three lines which do not appear in the printed text and which perhaps serve instead of a title:

"On the abundance of poems
And essays I have written
For whom do I labour?" ⁷ .

The last line is repeated in the following one which is the first in the printed text.

This tragic question of the last generation of maskilim ⁸ : "For whom do I labour?" was first asked by the greatest poet of the Haskalah

Y. L. Gordon in a poem for which it serves as a title ⁹.

Like Gordon Peretz asks himself from whom he writes. Most of the Nation does not understand any Hebrew and nobody cares for a Hebrew poet. To the maskilim are open the doors of all that is written in foreign languages and the obscurantists do not read at all. The printed text enlarges on this topic very much in the line of Gordon's poem. The MS, instead, has a little personal touch: not only do these sad thoughts make the poet feel tired but also his hard "daily work, many efforts and much trouble to earn wages to put it in a bag with holes. . .". These lines probably reflect something of Peretz's sufferings while he lived in Warsaw ¹⁰.

Sad and tired the poet falls asleep, The ceiling opens and he sees the skies. The skies are divided and Nagni'el "the Lord of Poetry" descends and comes into the poet's dwelling. Full of joy he tries to speak to the angel but Nagni'el gives ^{him} a sign to be silent.

Suddenly the doors of the poets room open and a noisy crowd rushes in.

"Who are you? What are you doing?" - asks Nagni'el. These are Hebrew poets. They come to express their admiration for "The Lord of Poetry" and to ask him "to give unto them of his spirit" ¹¹.

In the printed text ¹² there follows "The Poets' Prayer", which does not appear in the MS. Nagni'el is compared to Apollo and old and new poetasters ridiculed ¹³.

Nagni'el invites the poets to tell each in his turn what is his aim in writing poetry.

The first to speak is a beggar-poet. He never worked because he (in the MS: his parents ¹⁴) despised work and never learnt anything useful. Like a pedlar he goes round selling his poems at "the gates of the nobles"¹⁵ This hardly provides him with bread for his wife and children. Now, when he is old, he finds it very difficult to write poems glorifying the wealthy and therefore he asks Nagni'el:

"Give unto me of your spirit so that I won't die from starvation. . ." ¹⁶

Both Nagni'el and the author pity the old beggar. Yet the Angel cannot help him; this would be profanation and degradation of poetry. Nagni'el advises the beggar-poet to go to Palestine and sell the dust of its holy soil to fools, or become a "saint" (i.e. a hasidic rabbi) and cheat people of their money. God will forgive the hungry one.

Nagni'el, who has at least compassion for the beggar-poet, angrily turns out the poet who comes forward after him. This one is not at all poor. Still his verses, written to please important people, are but insincere flattery. Nagni'el abhors the sycophant.

The next speaker is a romantic poet. He sings about Love and Nature: -

"The moon, the wood, the brook and the nightingale too. . ." ¹⁷

Nagni'el interrupts him:

"Enough! Called Nagni'el. . .

"True, I am the Angel of Poetry
But this is no time to sing love-songs to the Jews. . ." ¹⁸

Love-songs become a free nation that lives safely and happily in its country and does not perpetually wander. Here follows in the MS an idyllic

description of the work and leisure of free peasants ¹⁹, omitted in the printed text. The life of the Jews is full of bitterness and suffering. Love poetry is not for them and they have no time to daydream among the beauties of Nature.

Niger ²⁰ has drawn attention to the similarity of Nagni'el's refutation to a passage in Mendele Mokher-Sefarim's (i.e. Sh. Y. Abramowitz's) play "Di takse" ("The Tax"; 1869). We may doubt whether Peretz knew Mendele's works in those days. His knowledge of Yiddish literature was very limited. As late as 1888 he had read but a few Yiddish works and these only in Polish translations. He could not even distinguish between Abramowitz and Rabinowitz ²¹.

On the other hand very similar opinions were common property in Polish post-romantic ("positivist") literature that developed after the disaster of 1863.

The romantic poet gives place to a lover of the Holy Tongue. This one complains bitterly that the Hebrew language is neglected by all and swears to be always faithful to it:

"Until my strength perishes
I will write in a 'Hebrew Hebrew'. . ."

In the printed text Peretz remarks in a note ²²: "Not a German Hebrew, not a French Hebrew, not an Italian Hebrew, not a Russian Hebrew but Hebrew Hebrew [i.e. a "pure", Biblical Hebrew]" (is the saying of one of the poets). The same "saying" is quoted again in the short version of the review of Braudes' "Modeh we-Lozeb" (no. 2) ²³. Here it is ascribed to "R. Y. R." i.e. rabbi Ya'aqob Reifmann. And indeed this is a quotation (with very

slight changes) from the introduction to Reifmann's book "A Bird's Nest."²⁴
Thus, here again the old scholar from Szczebrzeszyn serves as a target
for Peretz's sarcasm²⁵.

Nagni'el interrupts angrily. He knows these poetasters very
well. The love of the Hebrew language alone is nothing to be proud of
since in their poetry there are only empty phrases but no ideas at all.
Hence their labours are in vain²⁶. - Similar views, as we know, were
expressed by Peretz more than once²⁷.

The fifth poet²⁸ to explain his aims to the Angel of Poetry
is a maskil of the younger generation, one of the "realistic" maskilim²⁹.
Very much like Ya'aqob (the hero of "The Life of a Hebrew Poet") he is
fighting against his Nation's "misleading benefactors"³⁰: against the
rabbis who take bribes, against the "sadiqim" who exploit their ignorant
admirers, against the "Heads of the Community" who steal public money, and
so on. And like Ya'aqob he also has his terrible "moments of doubt"³¹
when he is no more sure whether all his struggle is of any value. He
implores:

"Give me the strength, Nagni'el, so that I may know no fear
And fight the War of Light until my last day. . ." ³².

Nagni'el blesses the poet-fighter whom he calls "my son", and
promises to help him. In the printed text he also assures him that the
victory is not far ahead.

No doubt Peretz's sympathies too are with this poet who fights
against "all the plagues of his Nation" (to quote Ya'aqob's words³³).
However, he does not identify himself with him³⁴. As in the "End" of

"The Life of a Hebrew Poet" but even more so - at the end of "Nagni'el" Peretz is already looking beyond the limited ideas of the Haskalah.

The dreaming poet himself is the last to speak. Yes, he too knows about all the faults of his Nation and its "benefactors". Yet he does not blame the Jews. It is against their will that they have been thrown into Darkness, deprived of Human Rights ³⁵, expelled from their country, excluded from general schools and from possessing landed property. At the same time they are requested to be patriots, to study secular subjects, not to live on usury but to work in the sweat of their face ³⁶.

As mentioned, there is a great divergence between the text of the last lines of the poem, comprising the continuation of the dreamer's speech, in the MS and in Gottlober's journal "The Morning Light" ³⁷. In the printed text the dreamer concludes ³⁸:

"My arm is not stretched out for a battle against my Nation,
I will not kindle my wrath cruelly against her sins.
My heart is hot - and there is no outlet for anger. . .
I will pour out my soul ³⁹, water her with my tears.
The tears are helpful too,
They are like dew
To the poor, withering Rose. . . ⁴⁰
But, O Messenger sent from the Heights!
For whom do we labour? - We call for Liberty and Freedom,
And no one listens. . . But the Angel from Heaven
Suddenly disappeared - I woke up, opened my eyes
And it was already The Morning Light!" ⁴¹.

The MS has preserved what is no doubt the authentic version of the conclusion (unfortunately left unfinished) ⁴²:

"I will not fight my Nation with a stretched out arm,
I will cruelly kindle my wrath against her enemies.
Wrest a judgement over those seated upon their thrones:
They wrote grievousness ⁴³, false are their laws and ordinances.

"I will reveal their designs, for they are perverse and
frightening. . .

But suddenly I heard a terrifying laughter.
My face waxed pale as a dead man's. I turned round -
And I beheld a strange, malevolent beast,
A strange, four-legged beast. . . . "

.

The printed version is sentimental and lachrymose. We can hardly doubt that it was changed by the old, cautious maskil Gottlober, to whose journal the last words so flatteringly allude. Gottlober was afraid of the rebellious young poet who raised his voice against the Russian Government and its oppressive anti-Jewish laws. He changed, or forced Peretz to change, the end of "Nagni'el" to be safe from the heavy hand of the censor. This mutilation may have enraged Peretz and prompted him to alter his attitude towards Gottlober ⁴⁴.

The original version is interrupted in the middle of a sentence and the meaning of the "malevolent beast" is not explained. The solution can be found in Peretz's other works. Peretz saw a "malevolent beast" in intolerance, religious fanaticism and anti-semitism which turn a human being into a beast. As he says in his Hebrew short-story "Our Torquemada": ⁴⁵
"Intolerance. . . is a beast of prey, a malevolent and terrible beast. . ."
It may well be that the beast in "Nagni'el" symbolizes anti-semitism which, with the Government's blessing, grew stronger and stronger in the 1870's. As mentioned, the first major pogrom in Russia took place in 1871, only a few years before Peretz wrote his poem ⁴⁶.

The original ending of "Nagni'el" is much more in line with Peretz's character and with his opinions in those days as expressed, for

instance, in his favourite poem "I am told"⁴⁷, than the printed one with its shallow optimism. Peretz believed that the way to a better future would lead through fight and blood. "I am told" was published a short time after the mutilated version of "Nagni'el".

We cannot agree with M. Wakser's opinion⁴⁸ that "Nagni'el" is no more than a version of Peretz's poetical "credo" removed from the second canto of "The Life of a Hebrew Poet". Neither is it only an answer to Gordon's question: "For whom do I labour?" - as Niger thinks⁴⁹.

"Nagni'el" is more than that. It contains, no doubt, Peretz's poetical "credo". Yet, in spite of some parallels pointed out above, this "credo" is quite different from the programme expounded by the "Hebrew Poet" Ya'aqob. In "Nagni'el" Peretz reviews the literary programmes of no fewer than five different groups of poets before revealing his own way.

The original version of "Nagni'el" was written most probably in 1875 or in the beginning of 1876⁵⁰, possibly simultaneously with parts of "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" which was printed later (in 1877). In spite of this, its hero's programme does not any longer satisfy Peretz in the original version of "Nagni'el". Although the fight against the sins of the Nation should be continued, it must be realized that the root of the wrong is in the abnormal conditions in which the Jews are put by those who rule over them. Therefore the main struggle should be against unjust laws, tyranny, intolerance and anti-semitism.

It seems that in "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" Peretz tried to re-create a phase of his life and thought which, at least to a certain

degree, already belonged to the past. "Nagni'el", as it was originally conceived, represents Peretz's further development towards deeper understanding of the real causes of all that was rotten in Jewish life under the Tsars.

NOTES

1. MS, 56a-74.
2. "Ha-boqer 'or", Vol. I (1876) no. 1, 31-37 and no. 2, 99-105. Nos. 1-2 are dated "nisan" and "'iyar" respectively; hence the poem was published between April and June. - "Nagni'el" is not included in K. Peretz mentions this poem in a letter to Shalom-Aleykhem of July 4th, 1888 ("Briv un redes", [1st ed.], 17). Comp. above: Ch. 11C, p. 156 and Ch. 16, p. 279.
3. "Ha-boqer 'or", I, 31.
4. M. Schwab, Vocabulaire de l'Angélologie. . ., Paris, 1897; R. Margaliot, Mal'akhey Celyon. . ., Jerusalem, 1945.
5. "Heykhalot rabati", Ch. 22. Ed. by A. Jellinek in his "Beyt ha-midrash", Vol. III, Jerusalem, 1938², 99.
6. Schwab, o.c., 182 ("ange de la fantaisie"). Comp.: Margaliot, o.c., 138.
7. MS, 56a, ll. 1-3. Comp. above: Ch. 13, p. 195.
8. Comp. above: Ch. 3, pp. 14-15.
9. "Le mi'ani camel?" (comp.: Ecclesiastes 4, 8). First printed in "Ha-shahar", Vol. II (1871), 353-354. See e.g.: "Kol shirey Y. L. Gordon", Vol. I, Wilno, 1898, 102-104. - On Gordon in Peretz's writings comp. above: Ch. 15, p. 260, note 136.
10. MS, 57, ll. 1-2. Comp. above: Ch. 11C, p. 150.
11. Comp.: Numbers 11, 25.
12. "Ha-boqer 'or", I, 33.
13. Explicitly mentioned is solely 'El 'azar ha-Qalir, a great religious poet of the VIIth century A.D., who served as a permanent target for maskilic irony. - "Neta'im" is perhaps one of the two books of poetry called "Nit'ey na'amanim" by Gabri'el Berger (1814) or by Mosheh Chaschkes (1869); "Resisey melisah" is probably a book of poetry edited by David Zamosc in two volumes in 1820 and 1822. Comp.: e.g. W. Zeitlin, Bibliotheca Hebraica Post-Mendelssohniana. . ., Leipzig, 1891-95², 28, 55, and 330.
14. MS, 59, l. 15.
15. MS, 59, l. 19 (comp.: Isaiah 13, 2).
16. "Ha-boqer 'or", I, 34.
17. O.c., I, 100 (comp.: MS, 64, l. 8).
18. L.c.

19. MS, 65, l. 16-66, l. 13.
 20. S. Niger, Y. L. Peretz u-khetavaw ha-'ibrim, "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI (1946), 451-452, and N, 92-93.
 21. See above: Ch. 15, p. 231.
 22. "Ha-boqer 'or", I, 102.
 23. MS, 3, ll. 5-9.
 24. Y. Reifmann, Qan-sipor. . ., Berlin, 1870, 5-6.
 25. Comp. above: Ch. 6, p. 67 and p. 72, note 98.
 26. Nagni'el's rebuke is longer in the MS (partly in two versions) than in the printed text. Comp.: MS, 68, l. 13 - 70, l. 1 and "Ha-boqer 'or", I, 102.
 27. Above: Ch. 16, p. 264.
 28. Curiously enough both in the MS (MS, 71, l. 1) and in the printed text ("Ha-boqer 'or", I, 102) he is mentioned as the fourth and not the fifth poet.
 29. Comp. above: Ch. 3, pp. 12-14.
 30. Comp. above: Ch. 17, p. 312.
 31. Comp: MS, 72 l. 9 (= "Ha-boqer 'or", I, 103) and "Rhymed Stories", 79 (and also: 11 and 43).
 32. "Ha-boqer 'or", I, 103 (= MS, 72, ll. 13-14).
 33. "Rhymed Stories. . .", 11.
 34. Contrary to Niger's opinion in "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 452-453 and N, 93-94.
 35. The cautious editor of "Ha-boqer 'or" adds in a note (p. 104): "In the Middle Ages"(!)
 36. Similar ideas in "The Fire" (MS, 43, ll. 3-10 and 18-21) and partly also in "A Letter from Asmodeus to Baal-zebub" (comp. above: Ch. 16, p. 282).
 37. Both versions are reprinted in "[The First] World Congress of Jewish Studies. . .", Vol. I, Jerusalem, 1952, 330-331.
 38. "Ha-boqer 'or", I, 104-105.
 39. Comp.: I Samuel, 1, 15.
 40. The Rose is one of the common symbols for the Jewish Nation (comp. e.g.: the song for "Purim": "Shoshanat Ya'aqob. . .").
 41. I.e.: "Ha-boqer 'or". The last words are underlined in the printed text.
 42. MS, 74, ll. 5-13.
 43. Comp.: Isaiah, 10, 1.
 44. Comp. above: Ch. 11C, p. 156.
 45. "Torquemada shelenu" (K, III, pt. I, 206).
 46. Comp.:above: Ch. 10, p. 119.
 47. Above: Ch. 16, pp. 276-277.
 48. M. Wakser, Dos lebn fun a yiddishn dikhter, YB, XII (1937), 253.
 49. "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI, 451 and N, 90.
 50. See above: note 2.
-

4) "The Golden Calf" (no. 8) ¹

and

5) "King David" (no. 9) ²

We have already had the opportunity more than once of pointing out Heine's influence on Peretz ³ .

It is to be traced even in one of Peretz's earliest poems "You complain I've kissed you. . ." ⁴ . Some of Peretz's Polish poems, written in 1873-1874, undoubtedly show Heine's influence ⁵ .

In the 1870's, 1880's and later Peretz was often under the charm of the complicated, tragic, sentimental-ironical Jewish-German poet ⁶ .

There was something in Peretz's soul that responded to Heine's poetry. The poet of the dying Romanticism looked with sorrow and mockery at once at the vanishing old ideals and dreams and at the emerging new world which could not please him. Peretz also was a child of a transitional period. He witnessed the bankruptcy of the realistic, utilitarian and cosmopolitan tendencies of the late Jewish Haskalah and the revival of Romanticism in the so-called "Neo-romanticism", and of nationalism. In the 1870's, 1880's and 1890's he was often prone to assume an ironical attitude towards both the old and the new. Some of this irony, and with it some of Heine's influence, persisted even beyond these years.

In spite of severe accusations, Peretz was by no means a plagiarist or a simple imitator of the greatest poet the Jewry ever contributed to European literature. These accusations, launched by the famous Hebrew writer David Frishman (1860-1922) in 1895 ⁷ , may have had

some impact on Peretz's later utterances about "the splendid jester", as he calls Heine ⁸, and his influence on him.

Both in his autobiographical letter to Y. Zinberg (dated: December 3rd, 1911) and in "My Memoirs" (1913) Peretz admits that he was "a certain time under the influence of Heine. . ." ⁹, whom he "imitated" ¹⁰.

In a letter to Yeho'ash (pseudonym of the well-known Yiddish poet Shelomoh Blumgarten or Bloomgarten; 1871-1927), written in 1907, Peretz speaks about a period "in which all Jewish poets and writers imitated Heine" and adds that he himself also "danced round this calf like all the others if not before all the others" ¹¹.

In another letter to the same writer (also of 1907) Peretz says: "Heine. . .I curse the days in which I read him and the works in which I imitated him. The mockery of a 'genius' is nothing but - impotence. . .In the best case: self-contempt" ¹².

Still, only a year before these letters were written Peretz published an important article which owes much to Heine ¹³.

In the 1870's Heine's influence on Peretz was strong and lasting and therefore it is not surprising that the only unoriginal items in the MS are translations of two short poems by "the splendid jester". Both are from Heine's "Romancero" where they follow each other just as Peretz's translations do in the MS.

"The Golden Calf" is a translation of "Das goldne Kalb" ¹⁴ and "King David" of "König David" ¹⁵. Both are based on Biblical motives treated in the ironical vein so typical of Heine.

Peretz's translation of "The Golden Calf" lacks the astonishing

lightness of the original. The basically Biblical language used by the translator, his longer lines, etc., make the poem in a way somehow more "dignified" without, however, altogether spoiling Heine's irony. Peretz translated rather freely. He does not hesitate to change and to add, not only for the sake of rhymes. Thus, for instance, translating Heine's description of Aaron's dance around the calf, Peretz adds that he does it -

"Whilst his brother receives the Law from Heaven" ¹⁶.

This detail contributes a touch of contrast.

Under the title of his first translation Peretz mentions the name of the author, "King David"'s author is not mentioned ¹⁷. The translation of this poem is much less successful and very far from the playful elegance of the original.

NOTES

1. "Egel ha-zahab" (MS, 121).
2. "Melekh Dawid" (MS, 122).
3. See particularly: N. Meisel, Yishaq Leybush Peretz un zayn dor shrayber, New York, 1951, 68-72. And comp. above: Ch. 14.
4. See above: Ch. 8, p. 111.
5. Comp. above: Ch. 14 and also Peretz's poem "To the Birthday of X" - in Hebrew (Ch. 16, p. 266-267).
6. E.g.: "Monish" (1888; A, I, 3-27); "Er un zi (an althishpanishe fabl" (1891; A, I, 77-85); "An'Edom" - a paraphrase of Heine's poem (1891; A, I, 89); "A scene (ovs Heine)" (1894; A, I, 127-129); "Romancero" (1890-1895; A, I, 183-212); "Ha-Cugab" (1894; K, IX, [pt. 2], 63-81); "Hofenung un shrek" (1906; A, IX, 101-103). See: M. Erik, Tsu der Kharakteristik fun der Peretz-geshtalt, "Shtern", April, 1953, 73; and comp.: N, 470); etc.
7. See particularly: "Y. L. Peretz un David Frishman", Meisel, o.c., 305-308.
8. "Be-Colam ha'otiyot ha-mahkimot" (K, VII, 246 and 264).
9. The letter to Zinberg (B, 322).
10. Z, 76 (comp. also: Z, 110).
11. B, 243. Is there not an allusion to his translation of "The Golden Calf"?
12. B, 241. Comp. also a letter to another Yiddish writer, David

Pinski of the same year (B, 237).

13. "Hofenung un shrek" (comp. above: note 6).
14. See e.g.: Heinrich Heines sämtliche Werke, B, III, Berlin, n.d., 35-36.
15. O.c., III, 36.
16. MS, 121, l. 18.
17. In "Gilyonot" (Vol. XXVA, 1951, 265, no. 9) we erroneously wrote: "King David". A fragment of a poem", not realizing that this is a complete poem translated from Heine.

6) "Three Asterisks" (no. 13) ¹

"Beams of light from a narrow window
Have fallen on the dirty puddles.
The poet sits in his little room
And his heart is bitter -
It's already midnight, the roads are empty,
Desolate the streets.
It's already midnight; the poet still sits
And his soul is perplexed.
In his hand a writer's pen, on the desk a sheet of paper,
And he is like a statue. Is there no life in him? ²
Only three stars are drawn on his sheet -
Three ink asterisks - ". ³

.

The little poem perhaps reflects some of Peretz's own difficulties: the lack of inspiration of which the young poet sometimes complained ⁴

The light, humorous vein in which "Three Asterisks" is written bears some resemblance to the style of Peretz's master in those days - Heine. Although not influenced by Heine himself, "Three Asterisks" is influenced by a poem of one of Heine's admirers (who was also his very

successful translator into Hebrew) Shelomoh Zalman Lurie⁵ : "The Poet and his Three Asterisks", published in 1877 or in the beginning of 1878⁶. Thus Peretz's "Three Asterisks" is probably one of the latest items included in the MS, written after his return to Zamosc'⁷.

Lurie's poem also describes a poet sitting alone at night in his dull room and waiting in vain for inspiration. It begins:

"The pen has already drawn three asterisks
And the poet's soul is sunk in deep thoughts. . ."

NOTES

1. "Sheloshah kokhabim" (MS, 149). Printed in "Congress. . .", I, 331-332.
2. "We-hu' fesel [ha-ruah]'eyn bo?". The word in square brackets is crossed out in the MS but not replaced by another one. We have restored it.
3. "Stars" and "asterisks" are both "kokhabim" in Hebrew.
4. Comp. above, particularly Ch. 11C, pp. 157-158 ("Inspiration from Nectar" and "The Life of a Hebrew Poet"). Similar complaints also in "A yungn shraybers hanukah" (A, III, 336).
5. On Lurie see e.g.: W. Zeitlin, Bibliotheca Hebraica Post-Mendelssohniana, Leipzig, 1891-95², 221; J. Klausner, Historiyah shel ha-sifrut ha-'ibrit he-hadashah, Vol. V, Jerusalem, 1949, 146, 294 and Vol. VI, Jerusalem, 1950, 172.
6. Sh. Z. Lurie, Ha-meshorer u-sheloshet kokhabaw, "Ha-shahar", Vol. IX, ([5]678), 168-169.
7. Comp. above: Ch. 18, p. 358.

7) "A Poet in the World of Fantasy" (no. 1)¹

This is the first item in the MS. The poem is written carelessly in pencil. The title is followed by the words: "In three cantos. The first canto". It seems that Peretz never wrote more than a tiny fragment

- eighteen first lines, and even these only in first, unpolished draft.

.

"In a small and narrow room
Unregarded died a poet.
Nobody bemoaned him,
Nobody cried, nor shed tears.
The poet died at ease and quiet ² ,
His eyes turned towards the Heavens.

—————

Is his wife dead, or is she alive?
She has not been seen here as yet,
And no one knows where she is.
When he died there came his son,
Looked round, here and there,
Scrutinized everything with a vulture's eye³ -
And found: three pairs of trousers,
A big and torn ⁴ hat,
And quite a lot of dye
For hair and whiskers,
And also a little of black
For the moustaches. . ."

.

There are no parallels to this fragment in Peretz's known works and it is very difficult to say what could have been the content of the lengthy poem he intended to write. Obviously the main plot would have taken place "in the World of Fantasy" where the poet was transferred after his death. Many of Peretz's later works were also placed in the Next World. An ironical tone is discernible in the preserved lines.

It is not excluded that the description of the appalling

poverty of the deceased poet and the hints of sad family relations are in a way autobiographical and reflect Peretz's condition and mood in the worst of his Warsaw days ⁵ .

NOTES

1. "Meshorer be-Colam ha-dimyon" (MS, 1-2).
 2. Comp.: Job 21, 23.
 3. Comp.: Job 28, 7.
 4. The reading of the Hebrew word translated "torn" is doubtful.
 5. Comp. above: Ch. 11C, p. 150.
-

8) "The Fire. Story by Y. L. P." (no. 4) ¹

The "rhymed story" "The Fire", although fragmentary and unfinished, is by far the largest poem in the MS. Parts of it are dispersed all over Peretz's note-book, showing perhaps that he returned to the poem again and again. Artistically it is more mature than all other poems of the MS and even than the "Rhymed Stories and Diverse Poems". "The Fire" is written in melodious lines and its strophic composition is quite unusual for Peretz: strophes of ten lines each, rhyming aabccbdee ² .

Although the descriptions of Sandomierz at the beginning of the poem have a distinctly romantic air, the contents of "The Fire" are typical of Hebrew Haskalah-literature: a fight of the zealots against a maskil. As befits the last years of the Haskalah, one of the hero's enemies is an anti-semite.

Complete or incomplete, there are altogether four cantos of

the poem. They probably constitute not much more than the first stages of the plot.

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"The First Canto. The Usurer and the Borrower"³. The city of Sandomierz⁴ is placed beautifully on high hills, washed by the waters of the Vistula and surrounded by a fertile plain. Here a new life is blossoming: the harvesters sing while their scythes glimmer in the sun. However, over the Vistula a lonely mighty tower spreads its fearful shadow. This is the sad ruin of the bygone glory of a town that was -

"In the past - seat of kings, today - city of destruction"⁵.
Now the tower serves as a prison for criminals.

Two people are descending the mountain of Sandomierz, both in long robes. One of them is a Polish Catholic priest from the nobility "-ki"⁶ (or "-cki"⁷). His very appearance frightens the poet who cannot forget all the suffering and humiliation imposed by the clergy and the nobility of Poland on the Jews in the past. The poet is glad that their power is broken. Yet their hatred of the Jews persists. Instead of blaming himself and all the Polish nobles for their defeat and poverty, caused by inability, laziness and spendthrift, "-ki" accuses the Jews.

It seems possible that when speaking about the anti-semitic Polish priest from Sandomierz Peretz recollected a figure well-known in the history of this town: the priest Stefan Żuchowski⁸. Żuchowski was the instigator of two false accusations against the Jews of Sandomierz

of ritual murders (in 1698 and in 1710) ⁹ . Peretz mentioned these tragic events of Sandomierz's past in one of his later articles¹⁰ .

The priest is talking to the Jew Shema'yahu, who accompanies him. Living an immoral and luxurious life the priest is in urgent need of money. Concealing his hatred of Jews, he flatters the Jewish money-lender Shema'yahu. The usurer exploits the situation, demanding a most exaggerated interest. The priest is forced to agree. After they part " -ki" curses the Jew and Shema'yahu calls the priest a fool.

There follows a long invective against those who blame all Jews for the few usurers among them. Every Nation is composed of good and bad people. Kings and judges, leaders and squires, are often tyrants, prone to bribery, oppressors and rascals. It is only natural that there are swindlers and bloodsuckers among merchants and money-lenders. In their own country the Jews were peasants and not merchants. Only in the diaspora, driven from place to place, not allowed to own landed property, barred from general education and - in spite of their glorious past - not even allowed to defend the country they lived in, the Jews were compelled to take to commerce. And only persecution and limitation forced some of them to cheat ^{10a}.

The priest walks on the shore of the Vistula still pouring out curses. He approaches the harvesters. The clean, nice houses of the peasants, their well-being and happiness, do not please him. All this only increases " -ki's" anger because he knows that the owner of the land is a Jew from Prussia.

The peasants, seeing the priest, take off their hats and ask for his blessing. He has no blessings but only reproaches for the peasants who harvest the fields of "one who shed the blood of God" ¹¹. The peasants are perplexed, afraid of God's and priest's anger.

"The Second Canto" ¹². The Rabbi of Sandomierz is trying hard, by means of qabalistic speculations, to foretell the date of the coming of Messiah. He is most zealous and imposes on his flock innumerable petty and ridiculous innovations to make the observance of various minor religious precepts and customs more and more rigorous. Great is his hatred of "heretics", of Haskalah and of Poetry.

The ironical description of the views, the habits, and especially the "innovations" of the rabbi is given in great detail. When F. Lachower, not knowing "The Fire", wrote in his essay on Peretz ¹³, that "the 'maskil' Peretz did not quarrel with the rabbis about religious laws. . ." and about their petty "innovations", he was wrong, as we can see. It is most probable that here Peretz took revenge on the zealots of Sandomierz who persecuted, financially ruined him and forced him to leave the town ¹⁴.

All is quiet and orthodox under the rule of the Rabbi of Sandomierz. Alas! "Destruction comes from the Almighty" ¹⁵. A Jew from Prussia buys an estate near the town. Very soon the rabbi is told that this Jew is an "heretic". The rabbi sends his beadle ¹⁶ to bring "the stranger". If he refuses the beadle should threaten him with excommunication. The beadle returns alone; "the stranger" is not at all impressed

by the invitation and the rabbi's reprimand makes him angry. And when the beadle quotes the rabbi's "wisdom" he starts to laugh, saying that the rabbi has forgotten what he learned in the Talmud. This enrages the rabbi, who is, in fact, not much of a scholar and prefers sophistry to solid knowledge. He orders the beadle to call a meeting to excommunicate the "heretic" and to interdict any relations with him.

True, says the author, there is a proven way to appease enraged rabbis - bribery. Unfortunately the Jew from Prussia does not know that in this country bribes are taken by everybody: rabbi and hasidic leader, policeman and all.

The meeting is held in the synagogue. The rabbi delivers a sermon ¹⁷ full of sophistries and nonsense against the "heretic" and his family, against Haskalah and against Poetry. The assembly unanimously agrees with their spiritual leader ¹⁸ .

"The Third Canto" ¹⁹ . 'Efraim, the Jew from Prussia, is at ease and quiet ²⁰ . He does not realize that a storm, called upon him by his enemies the rabbi and the priest, is approaching. He is busy looking after his prospering estate. The rafts are ready to be floated to Warsaw and to Danzig with the produce of his land ²¹ . 'Efraim looks forward to a good profit and intends to improve the lot of his peasants.

Here, at the end of the page, Peretz writes in Russian: "Supplement no. 1" ²² . For this supplement we have to look near the end of the MS ²³ . It consists of eight lines only and has several variae lectiones. This little, unfinished fragment introduces the old,

venerable peasant Mikhal who has known everybody in the village from his birth and who is held in great esteem. The fragment begins:

"And he (i.e. 'Efraim) said to Mikhal, the oldest of the village. . ." 24 .

It goes on to describe just who Mikhal was. However, we do not know what 'Efraim said to him. Perhaps it was something about his plans for the benefit of the peasants.

After the "supplement" we return to the main text of the canto²⁵ Winter comes, the Vistula freezes and 'Efraim's rafts are buried by snow. The products of his estate "have not seen either Danzig or Warsaw"²⁶ . For a long time both the labourers and the Jewish merchants cease to come to 'Efraim's estate.

We may guess that these are the results of the intrigues of 'Efraim's enemies - the priest and the rabbi.

The canto is interrupted by a page containing the short Yiddish Fragment (no. 10)²⁷ after which comes the continuation²⁸ .

Everything decays in the stores. The peasants ask for bread and money and the Government is prompt in sending the tax-collectors. 'Efraim is depressed as every minute brings new proofs of disintegration all over the estate. Yet he does not confess his worries to his beautiful and sensitive daughter 'Elisheba^c. While with his beloved daughter 'Efraim attempts to hide his sorrows and smile. In spite of this, she understands that her father is worried, although she does not know the source of the trouble: why the peasants and the merchants do not come any longer. 'Elisheba^c does not ask her father; she does not want him to realize that

she too is worried. She decides to go and ask the old Mikhal. She approaches Mikhal's little house and opens the door. The grim emptiness of the room frightens her.

Only two small fragments from "The Fourth Canto"²⁹ exist and, curiously enough, the second appears in the MS before the first³⁰.

In the dull, empty room³ Elisheba⁶ sees Mikhal lying on the ground. He is ver ill. His wife sits near him and cries. At the fire rests the money-lender Shema⁶yahu. A bailiff³¹ is making a list of all Mikhal's belongings which are to be confiscated for his debts to Shema⁶yahu and for the interest.

Seeing³ Elisheba⁶ Mikhal cheers up. He greets her with joy. His wife gets up [from the earthen floor she is sitting on, for there is no chair for her to sit on³²].

After that something is obviously missing. We may presume that Mikhal's wife too greets³ Elisheba⁶ and complains about Shema⁶yahu's cruelty. It seems that³ Elisheba⁶ tries to mollify the usurer.

The last surviving fragment of the poem³³ contains Mikhal's words to³ Elisheba⁶:

"Leave it,³ Elisheba⁶, do not try to persuade him,
Do not try to wake pity with your tears. . . ."

According to Mikhal all that has happened is a punishment for his own sins. And he tells his story:

"The father of this Jew"³⁴ - most probably of Shema⁶yahu (?) - had an inn here fifty years ago. His name was Zekharyahu. He was a rich and honest man. Whenever a peasant was in trouble he went to Zekharyahu. The

Jewish innkeeper was always ready to lend money without any interest to the needy and to help with good advice. But he had no pity for idlers and drunkards. Mikhal interrupts to say to Zerah that he has probably forgotten all this because in those days he was merely a young boy. However, does he not remember the panic when he was once waked at midnight?
. . . .The old man pauses for a minute and then continues:

"Then, I was still a young man of twenty
In the house of the owner of the village. . . ." 35 .

.

Here, in the middle of a line, the poem ends. We are left in uncertainty about Efraim's fate. Was he, like Peretz himself a stranger in Sandomierz, also ruined by his enemies and forced to leave the town? Or perhaps the poet intended - in a way usual in Haskalah-literature - to let the maskil triumph over the zealots (and the anti-semites)?

Who do not know who Zerah is. We do not know what Mikhal's sin was and what happened to Zekharyahu, and so on. We do not even know why the poem is called "The Fire".

We propose the following reconstruction of the missing parts of the plot:

Fifty years before, when Mikhal was only twenty years old, he was a drunkard. Offended by Zekharyahu's refusal to serve him with spirits on credit he set the inn on fire ³⁶ . Now, when Zekharyahu's son Shema'yahu deprives him of all his possessions, Mikhal sees in it a punishment for the crime

committed by him against Zekharyahu. And when Efraim's enemies set his house on fire, the old Mikhal - who recovers with Elisheba's and Efraim's help - finds a way to save the Jew and his family. The Good ultimately triumphs.

Of course we do not claim that this is really how Peretz intended to complete his poem. Obviously there can be no certainty at all in this matter.

"The Fire" was most probably written in Warsaw, a short time after Peretz had to leave Sandomierz (in summer 1875) ³⁷.

NOTES

1. "Ha-serefah, Sipur me'et Y. L. P." (MS, 39-56, 123-126, 246, 127-128, 130-136, 141-142, 137-139).
2. It hardly reveals great similarity with "Monish" as impressed D. Loebel when we read during a public lecture the beginning of the poem. See: "Naywelt", no. 61 (May 29th, 1952).
3. MS, 39-45. This is the only canto that has a separate title (comp. above: Ch. 17, p. 310). - The beginning of the first canto has been quoted (with some omissions) above (Ch. 11B, p. 141) in an English rendering.
4. Where Peretz lived in 1874-1875 (comp. above: Ch. 11B, pp. 141-144).
5. MS, 39, l. 8.
6. MS, 40, l. 6.
7. MS, 41, l. 7.
8. Pronounced: Zhookhovski.
9. See e.g.: S. M. Dubnow, History of the Jews in Russia and Poland . . ., tr. by I. Friedlaender, Vol. I, Philadelphia, 1916, 172-174; S. Dubnow, Dibre yemey'am 'olam. . ., tr. by B. Krupnik, Vol. VII, Tel-Aviv, cop. 1934, 72-76.
10. "Di fakt un di prese" (A, IX, 50).
- 10a. More or less the same ideas in: "A Letter from Asmodeus. . ." (Ch. 16, p. 282; "Nagni'el", "I should cease to exist" (comp. above: Ch. 10, pp. 120-121) and "Dos vig-lid" (A, I, 341-343).
11. MS, 45, l. 19.
12. MS, 46-56.
13. F. Lachower, "Ri'shonim we-'aharonim. . .", Vol. I, Tel-Aviv, 1934, 101.

14. Comp. above: Ch. 11B, pp. 143-144.
15. MS, 50, l. 3. Comp. Isaiah 13, 6 and Joel 1, 15.
- é 16. "Shamash".
17. Preserved in several versions (with very numerous *variae lectiones*)
18. We cannot be sure if this is the end of the canto. Perhaps it was never finished or the end did not survive.
19. MS, 123-126, 246, 127-128, 130-136.
20. MS, 124, l. 4. Comp.: Job 21, 23.
21. Floating rafts to Danzig (for a time the occupation of his father) is mentioned in Peretz's writings more than once (comp. above: Ch. 5, p. 50 and p. 55, note 19). On grain sent on rafts, floated on the Vistula from Sandomierz see e.g.: "Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego . . .", T. X, Warszawa, 1889, 268.
22. "Dobavok N: 1" (MS, 126, l. 12).
23. MS, 246.
24. MS, 246, l. 2.
25. MS, 127-128.
26. MS, 128, l. 14.
27. MS, 129.
28. MS, 130-136.
29. MS, 141-142, 137-139.
30. The first fragment: MS, 141-142.
31. "Shoter".
32. Completed according to a crossed-out line (MS, 142, l. 13).
33. MS, 137-139 (MS, 140 is a blank page).
34. MS, 137, l. 8.
35. MS, 139, ll. 3-4.
36. It was then that the little Zerah was awakened at midnight. Perhaps he was a son of one of the Jewish servants in Zekharyahu's inn, of whom Mikhal later took care.
37. Comp. above: Ch. 11B, pp. 143-144.

D. Hebrew Fragments of a Dramatic Work (no. 11) ¹

Peretz's particular inclination towards the dramatic dialogue is well known. When, as a youth, he spent his days reading in the loft where a whole library was stored, the dialogues interested him most. They opened to him the mysteries of human souls. And, as Peretz himself says, this was of the greatest importance for his later literary work ².

Peretz's contribution to the Yiddish and (although much less) to the Hebrew drama is of great importance even if not always of great artistic value ³. Niger ⁴ says that Peretz started to use dialogue very early. However, the earliest work written in this form by Peretz that was known to Niger was a short dialogue between a young couple called "He and She" of 1894 ⁵. In the same year Peretz also published "A Scene (from Heine)" ⁶.

The MS contains two fragments of a dramatic work in Hebrew written not later than 1877-1878, i.e. about 16 or 17 years earlier than "He and She" and "A Scene (from Heine)". These fragments, without a title, are written in verse and not in prose, as Niger erroneously states ⁷.

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The first fragment ⁸ is a short dialogue between two women, Sarah and Tamar.

Sarah tries to persuade Tamar to stop crying. She has sinned but Merciful God will forgive her. She has only to pray and to repent.

Sarah promises that she too will pray and fast.

Tamar

"Great like the sea is my breach,⁹
And my heart is too small to be my grave,
And everybody stops his ear¹⁰, nobody listens. . .
Thus my son will also say. OH! it breaks my heart.
O, my son, my son, why did you come into this world?

(The child cries)

Sarah

"I do not understand you. But give me the child
He is crying, I will go and quiet him
And you quiet down. . .

(Goes to¹¹ the child)"¹².

There is some incoherence between the first and the second fragment¹³. We would expect Sarah and not Tamar to sing to the child. Instead, although neither is named, it is obvious that the child's mother, Tamar, and not Sarah, sings the sorrowful lullaby which constitutes the second fragment. Either a link is missing or Peretz wrote the second fragment later without re-reading the first one and did not reconcile them.

[Tamar]

"Rest my son and sleep,
Far from mischief and spite¹⁴
What is in your mother's heart
You do not know at all.
Your mother did not rejoice
When to this world you came. . .
You heard but lamentations and wailing
When you were born. . .
Your mother will languish
Because of her sorrow, her breach.

"She will go down to the grave
Even before you are weaned.
You will ask for your father,
But you will not find him.
He will not recognize you,
You will not recognize him.
Brought up in darkness
You will know no love,
You will call it crime,
Nothing but vile lust. . .
And when you grow up
You will curse the day you were born
And the grave of your mother
You will stone with stones. . .¹⁵
Brought up in darkness
You will execrate your father,
You will curse your mother. . .".

.

The lullaby Tamar sings to her illegitimate child is not devoid of real compassion. We may mention that an unmarried mother appears also in one of Peretz's Polish renderings from Goethe: "Before the Court"¹⁶.

NOTES

1. MS, 144-145. In "Gilyonot" (Vol. XXV, 1951, 265) it is described not entirely correctly as two items: "11. A Dialogue. A fragment of a play? and 12. Er un zi. Connected with the previous?" (comp. also o.c., 266 and "Congress. . .", I, 331).
2. Z, 112 (and comp. above: Ch. 7, pp. 89-90).
3. See: A Mukdoni, Yisḥaq Leybush Peretz un dos Yiddishe teater, New York, 1949; N, 420; R, 245-251; etc.
4. N, 422.
5. "Er un zi" (A, VI, 33-35). Hebrew version (slightly different): "Hu' we-hi'" (K, V, pt. 1, 64-66).
6. A, I, 127-129.
7. N, 181, note. Niger quotes our article in "Gilyonot" where, however, we do not say whether the fragments are in prose or in verse.
8. MS, 144.
9. Comp.: Lamentations 2, 13.
10. Comp. e.g.: Proverbs 21, 13.
11. MS, 144, l. 10: "'et" i.e. "with". It is perhaps a mistake for "el" i.e. "to".

12. MS, 144, ll. 9-20.
13. MS, 145.
14. Comp.: Psalms 10, 14.
15. Comp. e.g.: Deuteronomy 13, 11 (Authorized Version: 13, 10).
16. Above: Ch. 14, p. 211.

E. Hebrew Short-Stories.

1) "The Revenge. 'Novelle' by Y. L. P." (no. 3) ¹

"The Revenge" is the only lengthy item in the MS preserved complete. The pages on which this story is written are glued in. The corrections show that this is not an ultimate copy ².

Based on life in the slums of the Polish capital, "The Revenge" was most probably written towards the end of Peretz's stay in Warsaw or a short time after he returned to Zamość (i.e. in about 1876-1877). The intimate knowledge of Warsaw shown in this story makes impossible ascribing it to an earlier stage of Peretz's Warsaw period. The fact that he calls a monstrous woman by the name of his wife (Sarah) may also point to the fact that "The Revenge" was written when Peretz had already severed his connections with her father, no doubt a short time before the divorce, which took place in the second half of 1876.

Thus, "The Revenge" is Peretz's first short-story and, as such, of very great importance. It even precedes "A Sad Episode. . ." included in Peretz's Polish letter to his bride of September (?) 1877 ³. As mentioned ⁴ this refutes Niger's statement ⁵ that Peretz did not write any short-stories in the 1870's.

"The Revenge"

'Novelle' by Y. L. P.

I

Poverty and Want are to be found even in "The New World"⁶ and in the rest of the elegant streets of Warsaw. However, here Poverty and Want look respectable; they are dressed in silks and embroideries, and it is not easy to realize that their ornaments are but bronze. Sometimes their table is even full of excellent food⁷.

And to forget⁸ their sorrow Poverty and Want, that dwell in beautiful houses, drink wine. They strangle themselves with silken threads and die young⁹ while eating roast meat and dainties.

You would not immediately recognize [here] either Sin or Lewdness. They dress up and walk freely in the streets, looking like daughters of the nobility. Here Lewdness and Sin even speak English and French -

Poverty, Want, Sin and Lewdness - the whole earth is full of their glory. Yet over there, there on the "Bugaj"¹⁰ - the snake that encircles half of Warsaw, whose beginning is "The Stone Steps"¹¹ and which from there slopes down to the Vistula - here in the depth, Poverty and Want, Sin and Lewdness appear naked and unashamed¹².

The abode of Poverty is a little room with walls threatening to fall down every minute and a ceiling that is like a lattice and a tiny window through which not a single sun-ray can penetrate even at noon. Want is hungry and its face is greenish, its eyes are consumed away in their sockets¹³ and the expression on its face announces to everybody that it is

Want and its share is hunger.

Sin and Lewdness too wallow promiscuously in the streets and open their feet to every one that passes by ¹⁴.

At the hour when Napoleon leaves his grave to review his army - as tells or sings Zedlitz ¹⁵ - , or when Lilit ^{15a} and Sama'el ¹⁶ go out with their Evil Ones to play on the earth (as the eyes of my own nannie and no stranger's have seen ¹⁷), at this hour the prostitutes hunt straying souls for crumbs of bread and a glass of spirit.

Night has not yet fallen. The bats and the moles do not stay in their holes, only occasionally peeping out through the key-hole or ambushing behind the gate, for fear of the light of the sun but for fear of the glittering of the policeman's helmet. And there is not a single house where you cannot see eyes in the gates but for the one little house whose eyes are in his head: the two windows in the roof.

A girl gazes through the window, a young and pretty girl.

- Does she live here?

- Yes, dear reader, she lives here.

- Alone? Or has she father and mother?

- She has no father.

- And her mother?

- Her mother found another husband but the orphan girl did not find another father.

Her lot is sad and bitter because her mother too turned her back on her. She bore other children to her husband. "She ~~shall~~ not stay

here even one minute after her marriage" - that was their decision as regards Miryam (that is the orphan's name): "She will devour us with open mouth" ¹⁸ . And they waited eagerly for the day of relief. . .

- And Miryam?

- She gazes now through the little window and greet with her eyes her fiancé. Behold the pink flush of her face and the two stars - her eyes. She is full of joy because the clock has struck eight, the hour when shops are closing and her friend, who is serving in one of them, will be free ¹⁹ from his work and will tryst until night falls.

- And who is the young man who has won her heart?

- Do you see the two youngsters at the end of the street? There they go down the steps. On the right goes Miryam's boy-friend Lewi and the other one is 'Amnon, his comrade.

II

"And where are you going?" Lewi asked 'Amnon.

"To my dear only one", answered 'Amnon.

"But you are not her only one" - jeered Lewi.

"Still, I am better off than you are", retorted his friend, "because you deprive yourself of every pleasure and your imagination is like a snake trying to bite a saw ²⁰ . And what is it that you see in Miryam? True, she is pretty but she is obstinate, a fortress you will never take. She will not even kiss you before the wedding-canopy is put up, and even then she will cover up her face so that you may not return her kiss".

"She will never see the wedding-canopy! Am I crazy? Her parents will give her nothing because they themselves haven't got a penny²¹ and I earn twelve roubles²² a month at the shop and that is all I possess. She is pretty. . . Such a girl is a treasure, but this treasure is straitly shut up²³, lock and gate. And when married she will continue to be as virtuous as she is now. And how will I provide bread for the family? Will we cook her beauty in a saucepan, or shall I drink her kisses and not be hungry or thirsty? Moreover, I like the girl - but for how long? All the 'virgins' from Bugaj can testify that my love passes, like a bee from rose to rose to suck their honey and honeycomb²⁴. This is the last time I am going to see her and I will reproach her for not letting me [even] touch her. If the fortress will surrender - good and fine. . . If not - I will choose Sarah, who is extremely rich".

"And how will you live with this monster" - interrupted 'Ammon. "If I were to wake up at midnight and [see] beside me such a terrifying monster, by my soul! I would die of fright. . ."

"But who ever told you", answered Lewi laughing, "that I would wake up at midnight in her room? Is it to this that I am used? Have these ever been my habits? Perhaps when I am old and my feet are swollen. Yet before my hair turns grey the devil will take her. Her money will relieve me from military service, as the doctor promised me²⁵. I will open a shop in one of the main streets of Warsaw; I will make a fortune. . ."

Lewi did not finish what he had to say because he had reached [in the meantime] the little house.

"Lewi!" called Miryam with joy.

"I'm coming, my soul!" he answered gaily and whispered to his friend:
"See you in your sweetheart's house".

And he went up the stairs.

"Yes", said 'Amnon, walking on, "we shall see each other in my sweetheart's house but then you will have to congratulate me. Sarah will be my wife; I will be relieved from military service; I will open a shop on "The New World"²⁶. Until now I have been afraid, full of horror of this monster. Thank you, Lewi! I will never wake up in her room! Long live the monster with her money, Lewi with his cleverness and my sweetheart with her beautiful eyes! - Still, I am sorry for Lewi whose hope will be in vain, and Miryam is a bruised reed²⁷ to him. I was right when I said that she is a firm fortress and her prudence keeps guard, neither slumbering nor sleeping!²⁸ - "

III

A whole year passed. It is evening. A multitude of people is still strolling in the Krasin'skis' Park²⁹.

Who will give a mouth to one of the trees so that it can tell us all that has happened under its shadow since it became a tree! Naught is Eugène Sue, naught Paul de Kock³⁰, naught the tellers of all visions and stories on earth.

Yet the trees are silent. They are taciturn witnesses, and they

only wave their tops to say: the spirit within us constrains us ³¹ but we are dumb! -

And why is there a guardian standing at the gate of the Park?

To prevent the man whose hat is not decent, whose toes peep through the holes in his shoes and whose clothes are not according to the vogue, or the woman whose head does not blossom a flower-garden and whose dress has no train, from daring to enter ³². This is because apparent Want is disgusting and the ramblers despise Poverty. However, if one steals and is not caught and buys clothes and on his head there is a hat that pleases the guardian and his shoes shine like the glimmer of the sword which turns every way ³³, or if a woman practises prostitution and opens her feet to every one that passes by ³⁴ for some rags of vogue, and a basket - an unambiguous sign of "the daughters of Rahab" ³⁵ - in her hands, then both the thief and the prostitute are not like pricks and thorns in the eyes ³⁶ of the strolling public and the guardian will let them in with reverence.

Outside the Park walks a poor girl. Her torn clothes are truthful witnesses to her want. The green colour of her face bears witness to illness and hunger. She is famished, dead tired and also ill. She looks through the iron bars into the Park where there are elegant women dressed in fine linen and in silks and [adorned] with exquisite ornaments.

One trinket could extinguish her hunger, one jewel could provide clothes to protect her from cold, fire-wood for the oven and some money to

save for a rainy day.

However she is not interested in fine linen, or in silk, or in exquisite ornaments but in one of her friends from old days whom she recognizes in the Park; she has not seen her for three years. In those days (three [years]^{36a} ago), thinks the poor girl, she too was clothed in filthy rags like myself. Now she has embroideries and silks! I used always to comfort her: Do not complain, God will help you. - I was happy then because I loved³⁷ and I thought that my love was returned. I encouraged her, strengthened her spirit³⁸. Merciful God helped her, and I. . . I am starving. . . Shall I approach her?

Thus thinks the wretched girl, forgetting the guardian and her patched clothes and torn shoes. Perhaps she will despise me now? - she reflects in her grief. But no, she will not despise me, she will not utterly contemn me. . . She will remember our friendship. . . She always bemoaned my misery. When my father died she partook in my mourning and comforted me: Do not fear, my friend, your father went to Heaven where nothing will annoy him. And you have a mother who loves you boundlessly and will be to you both mother and father. . . If she knew that my mother too cast me out. . . that Lewi betrayed me and has hid a snare for me³⁹, and also that I was dismissed from the seamstresses' work-shop because I dared to reprimand a youth who lurked for my innocence. . . Ah, she is coming nearer. . . she recognizes me. . . I will run towards her. . .

And she intends to enter the Park. Yet suddenly the guardian

turns and pushes her back violently. . . The wretched girl falls down and faints. She faints because of hunger, because of humiliation and because she recognizes the guardian. . .

Miryam recognized Lewi. . .

"Help!" cried her friend, and a group of people surrounded the fainted girl and tried to revive her.

"She is very pretty", said one of the bystanders, as if he were ~~astonished~~ astonished that a beautiful girl did not wear expensive dresses and fainted from hunger.

"If I were a surgeon I would order her to be brought into my house and here I would cure all her sufferings", said another.

"I would very much like to know ⁴⁰ whose is this girl", asked the third one ⁴¹ .

"She is my friend", answered the woman who ran towards her from the Park. "I will take her to my house. . ."

"She has already opened her eyes", said the first [bystander], "but she is not yet fully conscious. . ."

Miryam opened her eyes, recognized her friend and stretched out her hand to her.

"I will take you to my house, Miryam, will you go with me?" she asked, lifting her up. "There is a carriage. Come. . ."

But Miryam was not strong enough to go. Her eyes met Lewi's again and she again fainted. . .

Two young men from among the bystanders had pity on her and brought her to the carriage. The coachman [raised ⁴²] his hand. . .

"If only she has gone to Hawah's house and if she is her friend" - whispered the bystanders into each others' ears - "we shall see more of her".

IV 43

"Revenge! Revenge!" - called Miryam when she awoke in Hawah's house.
- "Revenge! A bloody revenge! He. . ."

But how frightened she was when she heard gay music, noise of dances and of drums mingled with loud kisses and calls of joy that burst from the next room.

"The Merciful God will help" Miryam had comforted her friend in days of misery but she had thought it fair to help herself without the support of the Almighty. An angel from Heaven did not drop treasure, as children are told, neither did she ever find anything of value that did not belong to anybody, nor did she work, and still. . .

V

The sword at Lewi's side was not to defend the Fatherland but to defend Krasinski's Park and to harass the poor and the dogs so that they would not dare to enter ⁴⁴.

Ammon was redeemed from military service and married Sarah. From the wounds and sores [with which she was covered] he gathered gold ⁴⁵. He opened a shop and started to make a fortune. However, for ten days he did not stick to his word and Lewi's cleverness was of no use to him: for

ten days every night he woke up in his wife's room because he was ill. And his disease was as terrifying and horrid as his wife who left him now to go to the shop.

And Lewi, who had a few hours off duty, was keeping him company and nursing him. He did not bear any grudge against him and did not hate him even in his heart: "In my place" - Amnon excused himself before him - "You would also have behaved as I did". Lewi did not deny this truth, and thus they were reconciled.

"You will die" - said Lewi to his sick [friend] - "The doctors do not admit their despair: what do they care if for vain hopes you pay them good money. However, I know that you will die. . ."

"I also can see it", answered Amnon with the laughter of one who is weary of his life, because he was overflowing with lewdness like a Turkish pasha.

"And if you die I will replace you. Your wife already winks at me and shows me her favours".

"Very well", answered Amnon, "but before I die I still desire to leave a souvenir to one of Eve's daughters who are guilty of my death. Let her follow me to the depth of Hell and we shall make love there. Yet for my companion in the Underworld I want an exceptionally beautiful one, so that I will not be quickly fed up with her".

"In that case", answered Lewi, "take Miryam. She will not even realize that you are ill. But for this ignorance you will have to pay a lot!"

"Well, it will be with your money ⁴⁶ that I shall pay. I am going

to die and leave the place free for you" - answered the sick man laughing. He cheered up and called in his servant.

"Tell him", he turned to Lewi, "where her place is and let her come. And you [yourself] go away because she would not like to see you".

Lewi and the servant left and the sick man waited eagerly for his prey.

VI

Here is St. Lazar's Hospital ⁴⁷. It is bigger than all the houses of ill fame put together. None that go unto this place return again ⁴⁸. The healthy ones here are the angels of death called doctors. And their prey whom they send to Hell are men and women who were too faint to follow the army of Lust and fell struck.

"Do you see", whispered a doctor in his colleague's ear. "There are many of them we see only here, feeling as Hamlet did when he exclaimed:

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy" ⁴⁹. "

"That's true", answered the other, "but I am sorry we are unable to help her [and] to rescue such a spoil from the mouth of the King of Terrors ⁵⁰; this is a nice bit!"

"Yet, how strange, from the sole of the foot even unto the throat ⁵¹rot and putrifying sores, but there are no deadly signs in her face and she charms even in her illness".

"Doctor", called the patient from her bed.

"I am coming". And the doctor approached the bed where we might

recognize Miryam.

"Dear doctor", Miryam implored, "allow me to leave for a few minutes".

"When you recover you will leave", answered the doctor gently.

"Do not give me vain hopes" - cried the patient angrily - "I will not recover in spite of all the drugs and medicines. Let me die, as die all those whom you do not like, but allow me to go out before I die, so I can take my revenge!"

"I cannot do that"- answered the doctor. "Whoever touches you will die. . ."

"So?" - cried the patient, suddenly gleeful - "Out of my way, or I will touch you!"

The doctor ran for fear. "She is mad", he told his friend.

"I will take revenge, I will take revenge!" - called the patient to him with joy. "Thank you, dear doctor" ⁵² .

When the night was over the gates of the hospital were found open and one of the beds empty.

VII

The guardian Lewi stood at the gates of Krasin'skis' Park.

"Amnon is dead", he said angrily to himself, "that is his own fault, and I cannot leave this place to go and console the widow. . . Maybe someone will again forestall me. I cannot bear it any more. The minutes are like hours, the hours like days. If [at least] one of 'the keepers of the vineyard' ⁵³ would pass here to cheer me up. . . But, bad luck,

there is not a single one. . . Is it "teshubah-saturday" ⁵⁴ today? Yet, who is there? Miryam! By my soul! Miryam! Ah! Already left the hospital and who would have believed that possible?!

"Blessed by the One Who Cures the Ill" ⁵⁵ , said he when she approached the Park.

"Will you let me in now?" she asked him with a bitter irony which he thought to be a joke.

"With my whole heart; but I will not let you move from here until you forgive me all my sins". And he grasped her hand.

"What do I care about sin?" - asked Miryam. "You have betrayed me. Yet if I were your wife I would be dressed in filthy rags and would have scarcely enough bread to eat. And if you had let me into the Park I would not have fainted and would not have gone to Hawah's house, and perhaps would now be starving. . ."

Miryam's voice trembled as she spoke and her hand shook in Lewi's.

"She still loves me", thought Lewi, and for a while he pitied her. However he immediately changed his mood: "Kiss me", he said, "to prove that you have forgiven me".

Their lips joined in a fiery kiss as the lips of a bridegroom and his bride. Lewi again felt some pity but his desire was stronger. And he said:

"Will you come with me tonight?".

"And when ⁵⁶ are you going home?" - she asked him trembling.

"In a minute. It is already ten o'clock".

"Very well - "

Five weeks later two coffins are carried out from the hospital for the Sons of Lust to be buried in the Jewish cemetery⁵⁷ outside the fence⁵⁸. In one of the coffins is Lewi's and in the other Miryam's body.

I imagine that even the worms will not touch their corpses.

.

Peretz's first short-story is not a masterpiece. There is a great deal of naiveté in his dialogue, in his over-lengthy moralizing passages, in his descriptions of "Poverty, "Want", "Sin", and "Lewdness", and so on.

There is something in it of the attitude of a provincial young man towards the social "depths" of a big town, suddenly revealed to his astonished eyes. The language, mainly Biblical (but not entirely; Peretz is not afraid of using even foreign words⁵⁹), heightens the - sometimes ridiculous - pathos and the artificiality. To ~~make~~^{make} it worse, pathos is followed occasionally by coarseness. As to the heroes of the story, they are hardly more than shadows; in spite of the exposition of their thoughts Peretz fails to make them really alive or their actions psychologically

convincing.

Still, the story is, on the whole, well told. The author reveals a true interest in and compassion for the poor suffering woman, just as he does in "A Sad Episode. . .", "A Deserted House", "Hanah", "Fragments of a Dramatic Work" and in so many of his later works.

Like "Hanah", "The Revenge" bears the marks of a transition period. Romantic-sentimental elements are matched by realistic description of life in the slums and by emphasis of social problems. It is not merely chance that speaking about "tellers of. . .visions and stories" Peretz mentions the two French writers, tremendously popular in those days, Eugène Sue and Paul de Kock⁶⁰. In choosing his topic, and in his moralizing, in his dialogues, and even in his style Peretz was influenced by the two writers, and particularly by Qalman Schulmann's Hebrew version of Sue's "Les Mystères de Paris"⁶¹.

However, and this is not without significance, the central idea for Peretz's story is borrowed from a romantic poet. As we have already indicated elsewhere⁶², the motive of revenge through kisses poisoned by terrible disease is not Peretz's original invention. The greatest Polish poet Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855) inserted into his "Konrad Wallenrod" (1828) an historical poem entitled "A Ballad, Alpuhara"⁶³: The Spaniards conquer the last stronghold of the Moors - Las Alpujarras. The leader of the besieged, Almanzor (al-Mansur), escapes. The Spaniards are celebrating their victory among ruins and corpses. Almanzor appears at the banquet. Of his own will he surrenders to his enemies, ready to

adopt their faith and to serve their king. The Spaniards are glad and Almanzor embraces and kisses them all. While kissing their commander he suddenly falls down dragging the Spaniard with him. The Moor's face turns pale and blue. He laughs a dreadful laughter, telling the Spaniards that his kisses have infected them with a deadly plague. They hastily leave the place but the plague follows them and all die.

The transposition of a romantic-chivaleresque ballad originating in medieval traditions into a naive "naturalistic" story, based on the contemporary life of the lowest layers of urban society, is remarkable.

We may mention that Peretz was influenced by Mickiewicz also in a few of his other writings. While a lawyer in Zamość he asked N. Sokolow to send him Mickiewicz's works⁶⁴. Echoes of one of Mickiewicz's "Crimean Sonnets" resound probably in Peretz's "Preface" to "The Life of a Hebrew Poet" and in "My Memoirs"⁶⁵. His "Farys" influenced Peretz's Hebrew poem "Evening and Morning" (1894)⁶⁶, etc.⁶⁷.

Some motives of Peretz's first short-story were used by him again later. Of singular interest from this point of view is his Yiddish short-story, one of the last he ever published (in 1914), "Sinful Blood"⁶⁸. Because of many common features it is most interesting to see how much the two stories differ from each other.

NOTES

1. "Ha-negamah. Novelle me'et Y. L. P." (MS, 21-38). A photostatic copy of the beginning: YB, XXXVI (1952), 260. See: "Congress. . .", I, 332.

2. After careful re-examination we are convinced that the corrections made (obviously later) in pencil are also by Peretz and not by somebody else, as was our first impression (see: "Congress. . .", l.c.)

3. Comp. above: Ch. 14, pp. 218-220.
4. Above: Ch. 16, pp. 275-276.
5. N, 76.
6. "Ha-tehel he-hadashah" (MS, 24, l. 4) i.e. "Nowy Świat", one of the main streets of Warsaw.
7. Literally: "fatness" (MS, 21, l. 8). Comp.: Job 36, 16.
8. MS, 21, l. 10: "And to forget" is crossed out, but must be restored.
9. MS, 21, l. 11: "yashhitu 'es"; translated in the Authorized Version (Jeremiah 11, 19): "destroy the tree". We translate according to the meaning of the whole sentence.
10. "Ha-bogi" (MS, 21, l. 18) and "Ha-bogyi" (MS, 24, l. 14) i.e. "Bugaj" was one of the streets in the poor district of Warsaw. See e.g.: [Dr. Gregorowicz], Warszawa pod względem Topograficznym, Hygienicznym i Geologicznym. . ., Warszawa, 1862, 95 and the plan of Warsaw attached to this book.
11. "Ma'alot 'eben" (MS, 21, l. 19) i.e. "Kamienne Schodki" - a small street in Warsaw. See e.g.: Gregorowicz, l.c.
12. Literally: "with their buttocks uncovered" (MS, 21, l. 21; comp.: Isaiah 20, 4).
13. MS, 21, l. 25- 22, l. 1 (Comp.: Zachariah 14, 12).
14. MS, 22, l. 4. Comp.: Ezekiel 16, 25. - Prostitutes were very numerous in Warsaw in the 1870's. See: M. M-V, Putevoditel po Varshave. ., Warsaw, 1873, 11.
15. Alludes to Joseph Christian Freiherr von Zedlitz's (1790-1862) poem "Die nächtliche Heerschau" See e.g.: in his "Gedichte", Stuttgart und Tübingen, 1832, 16-18.
- 15a. MS, 22, l. 6. Comp.: Isaiah, 34, 14; the Authorized Version translates: "the screech-owl". - Lilit was regarded as the queen of the devils. (Comp. e.g.: Babylonian Talmud, Baba'batra, 73a).
16. MS, 22, l. 7. Sama'el is one of the names of Satan (comp. e.g.: Babylonian Talmud, Soṭah, 10b).
17. Probably autobiographical. See: Z, 26-27 and above: Ch. 6, p. 69, note 32. Lilit and Sama'el play a very important rôle in "Monish" (A, I, 3-27).
18. MS, 23, l. 5. Comp.: Isaiah 9, 11 (Authorized Version: 9, 12).
19. MS, 23, l. 12. On the variae lectiones see above: Ch. 18, p. 361.
20. A proverb. See: "Dil'ranke neryn" (A, VIII, 66). Comp. also: Y. L. Gordon's fable "Ha-naḥash we-ha-mazleḡ", "Kol shirey. . .", Vol. II, Wilno, 1898, 3.
21. "Agorah" (MS, 24, l. 5).
22. "Sheqel" (MS, 24, l. 6).
23. MS, 24, l. 8. Comp.: Joshua, 6, 1.
24. MS, 24, l. 16. Comp.: Psalms 19, 11 (Authorized Version: 19, 10).
25. The doctor agreed to be bribed.
26. See above: note 6.
27. MS, 26, l. 2. (Comp.: II Kings, 18, 21).

28. MS, 26, l. 4. Comp.: Psalms, 121, 4.
29. "Gran Krasinski" (MS, 26, l. 7) i.e. "Ogród Krasin'skich": "serves mainly as a promenade for the Jewish population of the city because it is placed in a district inhabited practically only by Jews" (M. M-v, o.c., 28). Comp. also above: Ch. 11C, p. 153.
30. On the influence of these two French writers on Peretz see above: Ch. 7, p. 89 and p. 106, note 173 and Ch. 17, p. 332.
31. MS, 26, l. 13. Comp.: Job 32, 18.
32. "Entrance into the Parks Saski and Krasin'skis' is forbidden to people whose dress is neglected or who carry a heavy burden; to these parks it is forbidden to bring dogs except for pet dogs that should be leashed" (M. M-v, l.c.; and comp. below).
33. MS, 27, ll. 3-4. Comp.: Genesis 3, 24.
34. Comp. above: note 14.
35. I.e. prostitutes. According to Joshua 2, 1 Rahab (Hebrew: Raḥab) was "an harlot".
36. MS, 27, l. 8. Comp.: Numbers 33, 55.
- 36a. MS, 27, l. 22: the last word is cut off the page.
37. MS, 28, l. 4: underlined in the MS.
38. MS, 28, l. 4 is translated freely.
39. MS, 28, l. 19. Comp.: Psalms 140, 6 (Authorized Version: 140, 5).
40. Literally: "[My soul] longeth, yea, even fainteth" to know (MS, 29, l. 14). Comp.: Psalms 84, 3 (Authorized Version: 84, 2).
41. MS, 29, l. 15: erroneously: "fourth one".
42. MS, 30, l. 5: one word is obviously omitted by mistake.
43. We do not translate MS, 30, l. 10-31, l. 22. This is a long digression on the decline of morals which is rather irrelevant.
44. Comp. above: note 32.
45. MS, 32, ll. 15-16 are translated freely.
46. MS, 34, l. 1: underlined in the MS.
47. This big hospital (400 beds), specially designed for syphilitic patients, was placed at 2, Książęca St. (M. M-v, o.c., 122 and Gregorowicz, o.c., 71).
48. MS, 34, l. 12. Comp.: Proverbs 2, 19.
49. "Hamlet", Act I, Sc. 5. Peretz's translation (MS, 34, ll. 19-20) is very free and certainly not made from the original: "There are secrets and mysteries in Nature not imagined by the wise men of all ages". - It is curious to see that the name "Hamlet" replaces in the MS another, crossed out: "Macbeth".
50. "Melekh balahot" (MS, 35, l. 1). Comp.: Job 18, 14.
51. MS, 35, l. 3. Comp.: Isaiah 1, 6.
52. MS, 36, l. 1 has "qore'" (i.e. reader) but this is an obvious mistake for "rofe'" (i.e. doctor).
53. MS, 36, ll. 11-12. Ironically for a prostitute. Alludes to The Song of Solomon 1, 6: "mine own vineyard have I not kept".
54. MS, 36, ll. 13-14. Thus is called the Saturday between the Jewish New Year and the Day of Atonement.

55. I.e. God.
56. MS, 37, l. 19 has: "u-mi" ("and who") which is no doubt a mistake for "u-matay" ("and when"). This was caused by the omission of only one letter in the Hebrew text which has no vowels; should be "u-mti" and not "u-mi".
57. Literally: "on Israel's soil" (MS, 38, l. 4). The Jewish cemetery of Warsaw was on Młynarska St. (M. M-v, o.c., 190).
58. Heretics, sinners, etc. were buried not in the cemetery proper but outside the cemetery's fence.
59. E.g.: "Revierman" (i.e. policeman; MS, 22, l. 12 - an explanation of the Hebrew word "shoter") "mode" (MS, 27, l. 6), etc.
60. MS, 26, l. 10 (comp. above).
61. Comp. above: Ch. 4, p. 38.
62. "Congress. . .", I, 332.
63. See e.g.: W. Bruchnalski's edition of "Konrad Wallenrod", Lwow. . . , 1922, 53-57 (there are several English translations of Mickiewicz's work).
64. N. Sokolow, 'Ishim, Vol. II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 48.
65. Comp. above: Ch. 17, p. 342, note 86.
66. "Ereb wə-boger" (K, IX, [pt. 2], 68-69).
67. We doubt whether there is any influence of Mickiewicz's ballad "Switezianka" on Peretz's Yiddish story "Dos vaserl" (A, II, 192-203), as Meisel would have it (N. Meisel, Yisḥaq Leybush Peretz un zayn dor shrayber, New York, 1951, 87). - Peretz mentions the great Polish poet several times (K, VII, 196; A, VIII, 233; A, IX, 129, 134, 137, 290, 305).
68. "Zindik blut" (A, III, 539-550).

2) Fragment of an Historical (?) Narrative (no. 18) ¹

"The [clock-] tower high up does not strike hours but minutes - with a thundering voice. And the minutes become hours, the hours days, and the days years.

'The day is short and the task is great' ² - and the streets are full of people running to and fro, smiting one against another ³, pushing each other: Jews ⁴, Egyptians, Turks ⁵ and pagans ⁶, mingling together, hastening. . .".

.

This little fragment, consisting of no more than five lines written upside down, and bearing no title, is not devoid of interest.

If instead of Egyptians, Turks and pagans, Peretz had mentioned Poles, Russians, and, say, Germans, we would have a picture of the busy Market Place in Zamość with its imposing clock-tower dominating the whole town ⁷. As it is, this is one of several cases in which Peretz transferred the setting of his native town to a distant place and a distant time ⁸.

The fragment is probably set in a town in Egypt under the Turkish rule, that is, after 1517. This may be deduced from the mention of "Egyptians" (i.e. Egyptian Arabs) and Turks at the same time. A considerable Jewish population existed in Egypt under the Turks.

There are, as far as we can see, two possibilities as to the character of the work Peretz started to write. Either this was intended to be an allegorical or an historical narrative.

In the first case it is impossible to guess anything about its contents. It could have been similar to two other allegorical stories by Peretz set in the Orient: "Three Calls" ⁹ and "The Idea and the Violin (an Arab Legend)" ¹⁰.

If it was to be an historical narrative we can try to guess with a certain degree of plausibility what would have been the content of the story.

There can be no doubt that the plot would have been connected with the Jewish past. There was in those days (and is even now!) hardly a single Hebrew literary work whose main heroes were not Jews. And in this case it is near to certain that Peretz would dwell on the exploits of the greatest Jewish pseudo-Messiah Shabtay Sewi (1626-1675). His dramatic marriage took place in Cairo probably in about 1662¹¹. No other event in the history of the Jews in Turkish Egypt was either of at least some importance to the Jewry as a whole, or even known to European Jews, apart from a few specialists. On the other hand the strange appearance of Shabtay Sewi was one of the most astonishing and most influential events in the history of the Jews in modern times. Its echoes resounded even in Zamość¹².

True, a clock-tower in Cairo of the XVIIth century is perhaps out of place¹³ but for this matter Peretz's knowledge of the conditions was no better than Shakespeare's in "Julius Caesar"¹⁴.

Fragments of an unfinished novel on Shabtay Sewi, "The Seer of Visions"¹⁵ by the first important modern Hebrew novelist Abraham Mapu were published posthumously in 1869. This may have aroused Peretz's interest in the false Messiah in the 1870's.

Thus, the little fragment was, perhaps, besides the ballad "The Sanctification of the Name"¹⁶ and probably also the Yiddish Fragment in the MS¹⁷, one of the few of Peretz's excursions in the past of his Nation.

NOTES

1. MS, 244. In "Gilyonot" (Vol. XXV, 1951, 266) described as:
"19. A Story (?). A little fragment".

2. Mishnah, 'Abot, II, 15.
3. MS, 244, l. 4. Comp.: Daniel 5, 6.
4. "Ibrim" i.e. Hebrews.
5. "Togarmiim". "Togarmah" (in Genesis 10, 3) is usually identified with Turks.
6. "A. K. U. M.", an abbreviation of "Oḥdey Kokhabin u-mazalot" (i.e. "Worshippers of stars and planets") usually applied to all pagans.
7. Comp. above: Ch. 4, p. 23.
8. Comp. e.g.: "Three Calls" (in Hebrew: "Shalosh geri'ot", K, V, pt. 1, 40-51; in Yiddish: "Dray mol gerufn", A, III, 19-31) set in "Baghdad". And see: Z, 98.
9. Mentioned in the previous note.
10. "Ha-mahashabah we-ha-kinor" (K, V, pt. 1, 30-39).
11. See now: G. Scholem, Shabtay Sewi. . . , Vol. I-II, Tel-Aviv, 1957 (particularly: Vol. I, 150).
12. Y. Lewin, Le-toldot ha-Yehudim be-Zamosc, "Zamosc bi-ge'onah u-be-shibrah", ed. M. Tamari, Tel-Aviv, 1953, 38, 47-49, 52.
13. Such was also the opinion of my friend Prof. D. Ayalon.
14. See: Julius Caesar", Act II, Sc. 1.
15. "Hoze hezyonot".
16. Above: Ch. 16, pp. 284-285.
17. Above: B, pp. 368-369.

3) The Beginning of a Story about an Orphan (no. 17) ¹

I ²

"Yisra'el ³ is an orphan; he has neither father nor mother. I can see a tear of compassion in your eyes, dear reader. Do not worry! Although an orphan, Yisra'el is not forsaken or lonely. He has innumerable uncles and aunts and other relatives ⁴ . All of them, both small and great ⁵ , look after him and permanently take care of his well-being, all love him with a love strong as death ⁶ , take counsel ⁷ [and] think about his future. Moreover, Yisra'el has inherited a hundred thousand sheqels -

On the night when Yisra'el reaches his thirteenth year ⁸ , his whole

family, the close and the distant [relatives], gather together round a big, wide table and discuss Yisra'el's future.

Rabbi Aharon the boy's uncle, in whose house he has been brought up until now, expresses his opinion saying:

"Let Yisra'el stay here, with me. Here in Z. ⁹, although there is no school, he feels very well and he is successful in his studies. He has already read many books in Hebrew, Polish and German, and indeed he has read a lot of them because he does not withdraw his hands from them ¹⁰ from morning until evening. And why should he be a doctor? or even a poet? Neither our fathers nor our forefathers were doctors or poets, and still they lived and were successful and enriched themselves. The more so he who. . ." ¹¹ .

"But", interrupted a second uncle, "what is the good in much money? Money is robbery ¹², riches are the sweat of the poor and needy. We want work; to be useful for the Fatherland. Let him go with me to Warsaw. There he will attend the University ¹³. . ."

"To Warsaw!" - exclaims one of the aunts - "and to the University. . ."

.

Here the fragment (which, like many others in the MS, has no title) comes to a sudden end. It is a pity because the scene is lively and, as already indicated ¹⁴, contains some autobiographical details.

In this it approaches the Fragments of Memoirs, which will be

dealt with next.

NOTES

1. MS, 211-212. Described in "Gilyonot" (Vol. XXV, 1951, 266) as "18. A Story (autobiographical?) or Memoirs. Only the beginning".
2. Not even this first chapter is complete.
3. He is called sometimes Yisra'el (MS, 211, ll. 2, 4, 13 and 16) and sometimes Ya'acob (MS, 211, ll. 8 and 10). We have kept the first name all through the translation.
4. Just like Peretz himself (comp. above: Ch. 5, p. 52).
5. MS, 211, ll. 5-6. Comp.: Genesis 19, 11.
6. MS, 211, l. 7. Comp.: The Song of Solomon 8, 6.
7. MS, 211, l. 7. Comp.: Psalms 13, 3 (Authorized Version: 13, 2).
8. And became "Bar Miswah" (comp. above: Ch. 7, p. 73 and p. 99 note 1).
9. Zamosc?
10. MS, 211, l. 20. Comp.: Ecclesiastes 7, 18.
11. This word appears erroneously twice (MS, 211, l. 24 and 212, l. 1).
12. "La propriété, c'est le vol" is the answer given by Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809-1865) to the question he uses as the title of his book: "Qu'est-ce que la propriété?...", Paris, 1840 (on p. 2).
13. MS, 212, ll. 6-7: "Beyt midrash he-hokhmah".
14. Above: Ch. 7, p. 79.

F. Fragments of Hebrew Memoirs [or of a Story?] on Zamość
and Szczebrzeszyn (no. 14) ¹

I²

Zamość and Szczebrzeszyn ³ are two towns placed at a distance of two "parsah"⁴ from each other. In spite of that, the ways of the inhabitants of Zamość are as far from the ways of the inhabitants of Szczebrzeszyn as Heaven is from Earth.

In those days, when I was six years old, there were already in Zamość people who kept upright and were not ashamed to look at a woman's face; people who were not pedantic about [ritual] washing of hands before and after the meal ⁵ - when they were alone ⁶ . To cut a long story short:

the light already shone upon Zamość, the sun of Haskalah had already risen -

True, [no]⁷ one among us understood any other language but Hebrew ⁸ . For that, we knew the latter to perfection and wrote many [Hebrew] poems in different ways. One wrote the Italian way because he knew by heart the two books by Luzzato "Tower of Strength" and "Praise unto the Righteous" ⁹ . Another imitated Weisel, remembering all his "Songs of Glory"¹⁰ . And still others split into two more factions: 'A. Da. M. ists and Letterists ¹¹ . The first ones wrote long lines and cumbersome phrases ¹² and all their poems were full of bitter weeping ¹³ , and the latter - short lines and light phrases, and their poems were full of love.

I was six years old when the bitter war broke out between the four

factions of Poetry. "The jealousy of scribes increaseth wisdom" ¹⁴. I was jealous of the scribes, I was jealous of the poets, and I was devoured by my jealousy as by fire.

"I will also write poems", I said to myself. And first of all I looked for an idea. However, in spite of all my salvation and all my desire ¹⁵ and all my labours by day and lack of rest at night, I had no ideas. I sought in books, I sought in the streets, I sought in the writings of my friends. . . and I did not find! ¹⁶

"Where do you take ideas from?" I once asked Y. Z. Sh. ¹⁷, the leader of the poets, and I intreated his favour ¹⁸ not to conceal from me the root of the matter ¹⁹.

I still remember that suddenly the brightness left the face of the poet. He looked at me astonished and confused.

"An idea!" he exclaimed - "And for what do you need an idea?"

"What for?" I asked - and I was devoured by jealousy - "I want to write like you do, but I have no ideas. . . "

I shall not weary you, dear reader, with questions and answers [we exchanged]. I do not know whether I did not understand the poet or the poet did not understand me. Be it as it was, to my rescue ²⁰ [came] one of my friends who had also studied the Bible ²¹ and was not able to write poetry.

"What is a poem?" he asked Y. Z. Sh.

"A poem, " answered the poet glad to get rid of me for a moment, "a poem is a re-arrangement of words. For instance: 'I am going home' is prose. 'Home I am going' - a poem. The taste of the phrase 'I am eating

bread today' is like the taste of the white of an egg ²² but 'Bread I will be today eating' has the taste of poetry".

"But give me an idea!" I requested.

"Write a poem in praise of the Hebrew language ²³, or about death ²⁴" he answered with understanding and knowledge.

"And after that?" I inquired.

"After that?" ²⁵ - he answered bursting out laughing - "And when after that?".

[II] ²⁶

Szczebrzeszyn is a town of miracles!

There is a secret passage - a three days walk - from Szczebrzeszyn to Jerusalem.

At the cemetery is buried a *sadiq* ²⁷ who protects the town so that more than three houses will [never] burn up [at once]. And if in the year [5] 677 [i.e. 1876-1877] there burnt up more than fifty houses, that is to say the whole town of Szczebrzeszyn - this is not an argument. Why, even Nahardea^(c) fell into ruins ²⁸, although the roof of its synagogue was higher than the roofs of all other houses ²⁹.

When the synagogue of Szczebrzeszyn was burning, doves brought water to extinguish the fire, like the ravens who brought food for 'Eliyahu [i.e. Elijah] ³⁰ . . .

On the way to Szczebrzeszyn there is a wood growing trees. Through this wood the Sons of Israel came to Poland. And on the trees are still

carved the names of the [Talmudic] tractats which the Community finished studying on its way. . .

The Ba^la. Sh. T^l ³¹ visited Szczebrzeszyn, prayed in the synagogue and blessed it.

There is in Szczebrzeszyn a tremendously big library where the great scholar r. [abbi] Y. [a^laqob] Reifmann found that Swedenborg ³², like Raba^l ³³, created a man. . . ³⁴

Still, more wonderful than all this are the two madmen ³⁵ and the coachman, and I am going to tell about them.

However, [my] new reader, do not imagine that I am telling you here vain things ³⁶. No, [I am telling only] what I have seen with my own eyes and heard with my own ears while I was in Szczebrzeszyn.

It happened in the year ---- and, being a bookseller, I went to Szczebrzeszyn to buy rabbi Y. Reifmann's works from him: ³⁷

whose names and contents he publicized in his [already]printed . . . ³⁸ books ³⁹. And particularly I desired to ask his advice about [inscriptions on] three tomb-stones which I found at the cemetery of my native town, Zamość. About the tomb-stones and my transactions with the venerable rabbi Y. Reifmann I will speak somewhere else and, if God will help me to fulfill my wish, they [i.e. the inscriptions on the tomb-stones] will be deposited in the treasury of Mr. Shapira^l ⁴⁰. Because this thing is also a treasure to be desired ⁴¹ by every investigator of antiquities ⁴². And why should copies of [inscriptions on] tomb-stones be regarded as less valuable than

other copies?

.

The two fragments seem to be connected with each other. They are no doubt autobiographical and are used in this study as a source of Peretz's life and views. They are probably parts of memoirs, although it is not excluded that both fragments, or the second only, were intended to serve as an introduction to a story about "the two madmen and the coachman" of Szczebrzeszyn.

The delicate humour with which Peretz seasons his narrative on Zamość and Szczebrzeszyn makes it akin to "My Memoirs", written so much later (1913-1914) and also to a little anecdote on Zamość and Szczebrzeszyn told in "Towns and Villages" (1902) ⁴³ .

The ironical attitude towards Haskalah (whose enthusiastic champion Peretz still is in many itmes preserved in the MS) as expressed in the first fragment, and the date "[5]637" (i.e. 1876-1877) mentioned in the second one, prove that both were written later than most parts of the MS ⁴⁴ .

NOTES

1. MS, 181-183, 187-188. Printed (with a short omission) in "Gilyonot", Vol. XXV (1951), 266-267 and partly also in "Congress. . .", I, 1952, 333. - Described in "Gilyonot" (Vol. XXV, 265) as: "Memoirs or Stories. Interesting fragments".

2. MS, 181-183.

3. Where Peretz studied a short time in his childhood (comp. above: Ch. 6, pp. 63-68). Peretz uses the Jewish form of this town's name: "Shebrshin".

4. "Parsa'ot" (MS, 181, l. 2) is the plural of "parsah" (from the Old Persian "parasang") which was about $3\frac{1}{4}$ miles. Peretz intended only to use a Hebrew word meaning generally a short distance (in Z, 17, 20 and 39 this distance is stated to be "three 'mayl'", i.e. miles). As a matter of fact the distance between Zamość and Szczebrzeszyn is 22 kilometres, i.e. about $13\frac{3}{4}$ miles. See M. M. Pieszko, Przewodnik po Zamościu i okolicy, Zamość, 1934, 74 (and comp. also: "Słownik Geograficzny. . .", T. XI, Warszawa, 1890, 827: "20 viorsts", i.e. about $13\frac{1}{4}$ miles; M. Altberg in YB, XII, 1937, 304: "20 kilometres", i.e. about $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles).

5. MS, 181, l. 7. Comp.: Babylonian Talmud, Berakhot, 46b.

6. Peretz's irony about the "daring" heretics" of Zamość is reminiscent of what he had to say about F. G[eliebter] in Z, 37 (and comp. above: Ch. 4, p. 31).

7. MS, 181, l. 10: this word is omitted by mistake.

8. MS, 181, ll. 10-11. Yiddish was, obviously, not regarded as a literary language.

9. "Migdal 'oz" and "Li-yesharim tehilah" (MS, 181, ll. 14-15) are two allegorical dramas by Mosheh Hayim Luzzato of Padua (1707-1747).

10. "Shirey tif'eret" (MS, 181, l. 15-16) is an epic poem by N. H. Weisel (1725-1805). Comp. above: Ch. 3, p. 10.

11. MS, 181, l. 17. I.e. the followers of two Hebrew Haskalah poets A. D[a]. M. Ha-Kohen Lebensohn and Me'ir ha-Lewi Letteris respectively. Comp.: Z, 80 and 93 (and above: Ch. 7, p. 83).

12. "Melisot": sing.: "meliṣah" (MS, 181, ll. 18 and 20).

13. MS, 181, l. 19. Comp.: Jeremiah 31, 14 (Authorized Version: 31, 15).

14. MS, 182, ll. 3-4 = Babylonian Talmud, Baba' batra', 21a.

15. MS, 182, l. 8. Comp.: II Samuel 23, 5.

16. MS, 182, ll. 7 ff. Similar ironical utterances about the troubles caused by the necessity for ideas in literary works: a) "Dodi Shakna' we-dodati Yahna'" (K, IV, pt. 1, 74); b) "Der les" (A, VIII, 34); see also: c) The Short Version of the Review of Braudes' "Modeh we-'ozeb" (MS, 3, ll. 11-13).

17. See above: Ch. 4, pp. 33-34 and p. 46, note 125.

18. MS, 182, l. 13. Comp.: Psalms, 119, 58.

19. MS, 182, l. 14. Comp.: Job 19, 28.

20. MS, 183, l. 3. Perhaps should be "his" (i.e. the poet's).

21. The main source of "poetical phrases" ("Melṣot") used by the poetasters.

22. MS, 183, l. 11. Comp.: Job 6, 6.

23. MS, 183, ll. 14-15. Comp. above: "Nagni'el" (C, 3).

24. MS, 183, ll. 14-15 has "write about death or a poem in praise of the Hebrew language". This is probably a mistake which spoils the point.

25. Meaning: after death.

26. MS, 187-188 (pp. 184-185 include only mathematical exercises, signatures and initials; p. 186 is blank). - The beginning of this fragment is in part nearly identical with the beginning of the 16th "Picture from a Journey. . .": "Be-'aharavut shel 'esh" (K, III, pt. i, 60). Some

motives of this "Picture" were in turn used by the well-known contemporary Hebrew writer Sh. Y. Agnon (born in 1888) in his "Polin". See: "Kol sipuraw. . .", Vol. II, Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv, 1953.

27. I.e.: a ḥasidic rabbi.

28. MS, 187, l. 7. Nahardea⁴ was a town in Mesopotamia in the days of the Persian Sassanids. It was one of the main cultural centres of "Babylonian" Jewry until its destruction in 259 A.D.

29. MS, 187, ll. 7-8. Alludes to Babylonian Talmud, Shabat 11a: "Every city whose roofs are higher than the synagogue will ultimately be destroyed". The famous synagogue of Nahardea⁴ is mentioned in Babylonian Talmud, Ro'sh ha-shanah, 24b and 'Abodah zarah, 43b.

30. MS, 187, ll. 10-11. Comp.: I Kings 17, 6.

31. MS, 187, l. 16: Initials of rabbi Yisra'el "Ba'al Shem Tob" (i.e. "Of the Good Name"; (1700-1760) the founder of Ḥasidism. These initials are usually pronounced: "Besht". On Ḥasidism and on the "men of the Name" see particularly: Ch. 4, pp. 21-22 and 24-26.

32. MS, 187, 19: "Swechenberg". This is most probably a mistake. Emanuel Swedenborg (1688-1772) was a great Swedish scholar and mystic.

33. I.e. Raba' bar Yosef bar Hama' (died in 352 A.D.), one of the creators of the Babylonian Talmud.

34. See: Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin, 65b: "Raba' created a man". - There does not exist a similar tradition about Swedenborg, although many miracles were ascribed to him (See: J. F. Immanuel Tafel, Swedenborg und der Aberglaube. . ., Tübingen - London, 1856, 76 ff.) Those may well be some muddled up echoes of Swedenborg's mystical conception of "Maximus Homo". See e.g. his: "Arcana Coelestia. . .", [English translation], Vol. III, London, 1890, 432; Vol. V, London, 1896, 86; etc. And comp.: G. Trobridge, Swedenborg. Life and Teaching, London, 1935, 198 ff. - We would like to express here our thanks to the "Swedenborg Society" in London for their kind help.

35. Many of Peretz's works deal with mentally ill and schizophrenic persons. Peretz's interest in the psychopathological may have originated while he himself, as a little boy, earned (because of his many capers) the nickname "the crazy one" (see: Z, 28, 31, 45-46).

36. MS, 188, l. 1. Comp.: Lamentations 2, 14.

37. MS, 188, l. 6. Ll. 7-8 are blank (perhaps left for the names of the books).

38. MS, 188, l. 10: a blank space in the middle of the line.

39. Comp. above: Ch. 6, p. 71, note 75.

40. MS, 188, l. 16. Probably the Warsaw book-seller 'Eliezer Yisḥaq Shapira' (see above: Ch. 11C, p. 157).

41. MS, 188, l. 17. Comp.: Proverbs 21, 20.

42. On Peretz's negative attitude towards Reifmann and towards all the "investigators of antiquities" see particularly: Ch. 6, p. 67.

43. "Shtet un shtetlekh. 20. (October 1, 1902)." (A, VIII, 310).

44. Comp. above: Ch. 18, p. 358.

G. Hebrew Articles.

- 1) An Article on Literary Criticism, or on the State of Hebrew Literature
(against A. Zederbaum) (no. 7) ¹ .

The little fragment has three asterisks instead of a title ² .

Peretz is opposed to A. Zederbaum's ³ opinion, as expressed in one of his articles published in his journal "Ha-melis" ⁴ , that literary criticism is useless. He believes that the critics are good guides for readers and especially for writers. Peretz distinguishes between the "old" writers and the young ones. The "old" neither will nor can benefit by criticism. They are eaten by rot and will be gone before the change for the better starts in our literature.

.

Peretz, who once, in jocular mood, denied any importance to literary criticism ⁵ , here seems to write its apology. His hostility towards the "old" writers indicates, perhaps, misunderstandings between Peretz and Lichtenfeld and Gottlober ⁶ . However, such an attitude was typical of the younger generation of "realistic" maskilim (Kowner and others) ⁷ .

NOTES

1. MS, 99-103 (p. 99 contains only two crossed-out words; p. 100 is blank; p. 103 contains only one line). - Described in "Gilyonot" (Vol. XXV, 1951, 265) as: "7. An Article on Literary Criticism, or on the State of Literature. The beginning only".

2. MS, 99, 1. 1.

3. On A. Zederbaum and on Peretz's attitude towards him in the MS see above: Ch. 4, p. 32 and p. 45, note 115. He is mentioned also in: K, II, pt. 1, 133 ("Ha-sab le-minehu" is the title of Y. L. Gordon's article against Zederbaum); A, VII, 83, 97; A, VIII, 48, 65, 66; A, IX, 118; Z, 36, 72; "Briv un redes" ed. N. Meisel, [1st ed.], Wilno, 1929, 46 (= B, 157-158), 72. - On Zederbaum see also (in addition to the bibliography above: Ch. 4, p. 45, note 115): Sh. L. Citron, Dray literarishe doyres. . . , Vol. III, Wilno, 1922, 96-129.

4. Perhaps: "Hobrey habarim" printed in "Ha-melis", Vol. VIII (1868), no. 9, pp. 65-66.

5. In 1876 in "The Distribution of Knowledge" (K, IX, [pt. 2.], 11-13). Comp. above: Ch. 16, p. 274.

6. See above: Ch. 11C.

7. Comp. above: Ch. 3, p. 12.

End

2) Review of "Mordkhay Kisowitz" by M. D. Brandstädter (no. 19)¹

Mordkhay David Brandstädter's (1844-1928)² short-story "Mordkhay Kisowitz" was published in 1869, in the first volume of Smolenskin's "Ha-shahar"³. We believe that it influenced the end of Peretz's story "What is a Soul?"⁴.

.

The review is a small fragment of which probably the beginning⁵ and certainly the end are missing.

Peretz does not approve the very subject chosen by Brandstädter: a couple of lovers overcome the obstructions in the way of their union. This kind of story, says Peretz, cannot be useful to anybody. He is against the romantic idealization of woman and love. Our problem, according to Peretz, is "not. . . 'how will we love' but 'how will we live!'"⁶.

.

This is about all that can be deduced from the small fragment. It is quite clear that Peretz fought for the "utilitarian" ideas of the younger, "realistic" Haskalah-writers.

This tendency is much more prominent in Peretz's other reviews from the same period; with which we shall deal below.

NOTES

1. MS, 247-249 (p. 247 comes after p, 248; p. 249 contains only one and a half crossed out lines).
2. On Brandstädter see e.g.: M. Waxman, A History of Jewish Literatur . . . , Vol. III, New York, 1945², 298-301 and particularly: J. Klausner, Historiyah shel ha-sifrut ha-'ivrit he-hadashah, Vol. V, Jerusalem, 1949, 269-281.
3. Reprinted in "Kol kitbey. . .", Vol. I, Warsaw, 1910, 3-24.
4. "Mah hi' neshamah?", Ch. 15 (K, IV, pt. 1, 20).
5. Two pages immediately preceding it were removed;
6. MS, 248, ll. 5-6.

-
- 3) "Zyuki Poezi¹ Alexandra Zeidlera. 1874". (no. 16)²

Peretz criticizes a book of poetry written by a Jewish poet in Russian: "Strains of Poetry" by Alexander Zeidler. It contains probably love poems³ and is dedicated to a lady called "S. B-n".

Peretz expresses his approval of Zeidler's rebellious mood in his youth, to which his lady put an end with her beautiful eyes, as the poet explains in the dedication. Peretz believes that human progress is possible solely because of those youngsters who do not pay much attention to the

moralizing of their fathers and teachers. Thus, says Peretz, it is a sign of weakness if Zeidler changed his behaviour under the influence of his sweetheart. However, Peretz has some doubts whether the young poet's "rebellion" was not just childish capers.

Peretz objects to Zeidler because he writes love poems for a lady. He believes that "people have to repay Society for the abilities they possess. ■ [Therefore] the poet's poems do not belong to him but to the Nation" ■ which it is his duty to guide towards" the desired aims of the Haskalah" 4 .

True to the example of the Russian realistic critics 5 , Peretz attacks the romantic idea that poetry is too elevated and exalted to have anything to do with ordinary mortals 6 .

"However", concludes Peretz, "why should we criticize Zeidler's book if this book is not [written] for us but for the lady S. B-n.
. . . ." 7 .

.

It is not sure whether this was intended to be the end of the criticism.

As can be seen, Peretz never pays the slightest attention to the artistic side of the work reviewed by him. His criterion is "utilitarian"; his ideal - Haskalah. In view of Peretz's statements to the contrary 8 , this is a very important proof of his being in the 1870's for a certain (if perhaps only a short) period a champion of the ideals of Haskalah.

As we shall see, this is not the only proof of this kind

provided by the MS.

Peretz's approval of rebellion against authority and tradition is symptomatic.

NOTES

1. Written erroneously: "Poeziy".
2. MS, 205-209.
3. In spite of many attempts we could not get hold of this rare little book (published in Kremenchung in 300 copies only) or of a photocopy of it. Comp. on this book: V. I. Mezhev, Tret'e Pribavleniye k Sistematicallyeskoj Rospisi Knigam, prodayushchimsya v knizhnykh magazinakh I. I. Glazunova. . . , S. - Peterburg, 1882, 702, no. 13314. - Its character is obvious from the criticism and from Peretz's quotations.
4. MS, 207, ll. 14-20.
5. Comp. above: Ch. 3, p. 12.
6. Most of this page (MS, 208, after l. 2) is blank. This space was left for a quotation and later filled out instead by a drawing (comp. above: Ch. 18, p. 363, note 19). After that comes: "sings Pushkin" (MS, 208, l. 3). Peretz certainly intended to quote from Pushkin's poem "Poet i tolpa" ("The Poet and the Mob"; see e.g.: A. S. Pushkin, Sochineniya v trekh tomakh, T. I, Moscow, 1955, 258-261). He is opposed to this poem (as he understands it) also in the long version of the review of Braudes' "Modeh we-Cozeb" (MS, 166 ff.; see below).
7. MS, 209, ll. 13-15.
8. Comp. above: Ch. 15, pp. 230-231.

4) A Review of Braudes' Story "Confession and Repentance". First (short) Version. (no. 2) ¹.

Most of Peretz's opinions on problems of Jewish life, literature language and so on, stated in the MS, are to be found in his reviews of R. A. Braudes' story "Confession and Repentance" ("Modeh we-Cozeb"; 1875) ². We have often referred to and quoted these reviews in our study. Therefore we will now only sum up their contents.

It seems that there^{are} in the MS two different versions of Peretz's review: a short and a long one.

The short version bears no title and has an asterisk instead ³. This version is complete but for a blank space probably left mainly for quotations but never filled out ⁴. The end, although explicitly introduced by Peretz ⁵, is rather abrupt. There is a hardly legible signature at the end: "Yishaq Peretz" ⁶.

.

The aim of every Hebrew writer has been, according to Peretz, Biblical language in itself; beautiful but empty literary phrases gathered from the Bible ⁷. The critics too dealt until that time only with the language and the phraseology of the reviewed works. They have not paid any attention to the idea, which sometimes simply did not exist either in book or in the criticism. Only the younger critics (Smolenskin and Kowner) choose a different way.

Peretz does not believe in the revival of the "dead" Hebrew language ⁸. Anyway, in his opinion, it can serve only as a temporary means for educating the unlearned who do not yet know the language of the country in which they live. With the promotion of general education and with the emancipation of the Jews, Hebrew writers and poets will cease to exist.

Peretz sees in many Hebrew books nothing but mosaics of Biblical and other quotations in which the idea of the work, even when there

is one, can hardly be discerned.

Braudes' story does not excel in pure Biblical language because its author wanted to write for living people in a language they could understand. He wants to say what he has to say and sometimes cannot possibly put into Biblical Hebrew. Peretz agrees with Braudes but thinks that he exaggerates, and sets up Smolenskin as the right example. Braudes, according to his critic, uses expressions based on "Jargon" ⁹ (i.e. Yiddish), a language which Peretz despises ¹⁰ .

". . .Mr. Braudes did not fulfill his duty [as regards the language]. Now we will give as examples some quotations -" ¹¹ . These words are followed by four blank pages ¹² .

The review ends by expressing thanks to Smolenskin who, in his books and in his monthly "Ha-shahar", has revived the Hebrew literature. Peretz hopes that in future many useful books will appear and will attract numerous readers.

"However, let's stop talking about the Future. . .", concludes Peretz ¹³ .

.

Negation of "mosaic"-language and of empty phraseology; opposition to the "old" maskilic writers; contempt for Yiddish and disbelief in the future of Hebrew; a fight for useful literature; hopes for emancipation through education and for a certain degree of assimilation - these are the main ideas of the review. They put its author unmistakably in the ranks of the younger, "realistic" generation of Haskalah-writers.

NOTES

1. MS, 3-11 (pp. 8-10 are blank). Described in "Gilyonot" (Vol. XXV, 1951, 265) as: "2. An Article on the Preference for Language and Poetical Phrases ["melisah"] over an Idea in Literature and Criticism. Fragmentary".
2. Comp. above: Ch. 11C, pp. 154-156 and Ch. 18, pp. 350-351.
3. MS, 3, l. 1.
4. MS, 7 after l. 1, and the following pp. 8-10.
5. MS, 11, l. 1: "We will finish the review. . .".
6. MS, 11, l. 12.
7. Peretz introduces here (MS, 3, 5-9) Reifmann's words (from his book "Qan sipor") quoted by him also in the printed version of "Nagni'el", (comp. above: C, 3).
8. MS, 4, ll. 1-2.
9. MS, 6, ll. 11.
10. MS, 6, ll. 10-14. Quoted above: Ch. 15, p. 233.
11. MS, 7, l. 1.
12. See above: note 4.
13. MS, 11, l. 12.

-
- 5) "Confession and Repentance. A Story by Braudes".¹
A Review. Second (long) Version. (no. 6)².

As may be seen, reviews served Peretz not so much for analysing the reviewed work as for expressing his own opinions on a variety of problems. Nowhere is this as obvious as in the second, rather chaotic, very long and yet unfinished version of the review of Braudes' story. The second version is dispersed all over the MS. It is divided into nine chapters. Its title (which misled J. Joel³) and its first chapters appear in the MS after some later chapters⁴.

1 ⁵. In the old days the Jews were regarded by the Russian and Polish Governments as foreigners and had an autonomous rule under the "Heads of the Community" ⁶. Even when the "Communities'" rule was limited, the "Heads" collected the taxes and decided who had to be sent to serve for twenty-five years in the Russian army. Later, before the rule of the "Communities" was abolished altogether, the "Heads" were still able to exempt from military service anyone who could pay. This is the time of Braudes' story.

2. ⁷ Before proceeding with his review, Peretz quotes Pushkin's poem "The Poet and the Mob" ⁸. Following the poet N. A. Nyekrasov (1821-1877) in his poem "The Poet and the Citizen" (1856) ⁹ and the critic D. I. Pisarev (1840-1868) ¹⁰ in his article "Pushkin's Lyrics" (1865) ¹¹, Peretz attacks Russia's greatest poet who did not think that poetry should serve to enlighten the mob and other "utilitarian" purposes.

According to Peretz, similar views still prevail in Hebrew literature. All the innumerable "occasional" poems, love poems, and so on, are of no use to the Jewish masses. They will demand: "Write books for us. . . Teach us the ways of life. . . . Without Haskalah it is bad and bitter, hunger and want. . ." At the same time "the pillars of the Faith tremble" and the masses can no more draw strength from the belief ¹².

3. ¹³ Man owes everything to the soil on which he grows, to Society among which he lives, to the books he reads, and so on. He gets all his abilities from his environment, and it is his duty to repay Society his debt. Thus, the writer and the poet should teach and enlighten. Their knowledge and their books belong to Society and not to their wives and mistresses.

The writers should guide the masses ¹⁴. "This is the duty of the poet and the writer -" ¹⁵.

From the days of Mapu ¹⁶ there appear more and more writers ready to fulfill their duty.

However, there is no use in Braudes' telling about "Heads of the Community" who nowadays have no more influence ¹⁷.

4. ¹⁸ Our writers lack connection with the life of the masses. Those who have succeeded in acquiring some general education turn their backs on the Hebrew language. Most of our writers are consequently good-for-nothings or immature adolescents. Only a few who have not succeeded in finding their way to the wide world feel the sufferings of their Nation. One of these is Braudes; but it is a pity that he deals with pains that belong already to the past ¹⁹.

5. ²⁰ Braudes intends to leave a recollection of what the "Heads of the Community" were in the days bygone. However, according to Peretz, Braudes' hero is quite different from a typical "Head": he is a weakling, without will and without character.

[6] ²¹. The aim of all human activity has always been egoistic and utilitarian. This is good when it serves also common interest; bad if it is against common interest. Love in this materialistic and egoistic age still exists. However, the financial side of marriage is very important, although not as an end but as a means to a happy life.

The history of the love of Braudes' hero demonstrates that he has no will of his own: he gives up his beloved without any struggle.

7²². Some more reflections about love are followed by additional remarks on the weakness of Braudes' hero. Under the influence of his mother and his teacher he agrees, without arguing, to abandon his beloved, and to marry a rich girl.

8.²³ Peretz again emphasizes the uselessness of Braudes' story: the "Heads of the Community" do not exist any more. Moreover, only a weakling would have repented under the influence of a dream (as Braudes' hero did). Cruel and wicked leaders, whether "Heads of the Community" or rabbis, would not have repented.

Here, and in some other places, Peretz points to what he believes to be psychological improbabilities.

9.²⁴ Braudes' hero agrees to marry a girl chosen by his mother. This reminds Peretz of the sad fate of so many Jewish young men forced to live with wives they do not love imposed on them by their parents²⁵.

This last existing chapter of the very verbose review is interrupted in the middle of a sentence. Peretz adds in Yiddish: "Too much" and "Too long" (?)²⁶. With this we will certainly agree.

.

Peretz's views in this article, as in all others, do not excel in originality. Still, they are important, as mentioned, because they show the young writer as an ardent maskil of the new generation.

It is only in the later parts of the MS²⁷ that Peretz speaks ironically about Haskalah and repudiates the "egoistic-materialistic"

views on love and marriage expressed by himself in the review dealt with last - using practically the same words 28 .

NOTES

1. "Modeh we-lozeb. Sipur me'et Braudes" (MS, 163, l. 1).
2. MS, 163-165, (251-252), 166-179, 189-192, 75-98. Described in "Gilyonot" (Vol. XXV, 1951, 265 and 266) as: "6. A Detailed Review of 'Confession and Repentance' by Braudes. Partly in two different versions. Fragmentary", and "21. A Story(?) about 'ransom' by which 'one could be redeemed from military service'. A Fragment" (=MS, 251-252; see below).
3. Comp. above: Ch. 18, pp. 350-351.
4. The title: MS, 163, ll. 1-2. The beginning: MS, 163-179.
5. MS, 163-165. Not marked as Ch. 1. but followed by "2" (MS, 166, l. 1). MS, 251-252 is a different version of Ch. 1. from MS, 163, l. 20 (the beginning and the end of this version are missing; P. 252 is placed in the MS before p. 251).
6. "Ro'shey ha-qahal" (sing.: "Ro'sh ha-qahal").
7. MS, 166-171.
8. Comp. above: G, 3 and note 6.
9. "Poet i grazhdanin". See e.g.: "Polnoye sobraniye stikhotvoreniy", Ed. by K. Chukovski, Moscow-Leningrad, 1931⁶, 80-83.
10. Comp. above: Ch. 3, p. 12.
11. "Lirika Pushkina". See e.g.: "Sochineniya", T. V, S.-Peterburg, 1894, 96-114.
12. MS, 170, l. 14 - 171, l. 4.
13. MS, 172-175.
14. Similar ideas in G, 3.
15. MS, 174, l. 7.
16. See above: Ch. 3, pp. 11 and 13.
17. In a crossed out variant (MS, 175) Peretz says that they are replaced by reactionary rabbis.
18. MS, 176-179.
19. This chapter is unfinished.
20. MS, 189-192.
21. The end of the review: MS, 75-98. The beginning of this last "instalment" is marked: "1" (MS, 75, l. 1). This is no doubt a mistake because next (MS, 91, l. 1) we encounter Ch. 8. Thus, pp. 75-91 probably contain Ch.Ch. 6 and 7 (it seems to be too long for a single chapter: 16 pp.; all the others are between three and six pages). In our opinion Ch. 6 begins on p. 75 and ends on p. 82. Two blank pages (MS, 83-84) divide the 6th Chapter and the following.
22. MS, 85-90 (comp. the previous note). MS, 85, l. 1: "Love and Fidelity" (in Hebrew with a German translation in Hebrew letters, added in brackets) seems to be the title of this chapter. And comp. above: G, 8, note 3.

23. MS, 91-93.
24. MS, 94-98.
25. Comp. above: Ch. 11A, p. 126.
26. MS, 98, ll. 13 and 14 (the reading of the last remark is not certain.
27. Comp. above: F.
28. Comp.: MS, 79, ll. 5-6 and Lewi's words to Amnon in "The Revenge" (MS, 24, l. 11; above: E, 1).

EPILOGUE

20. Short Survey of Peretz's Life and Work after 1878.

The years following Peretz's second marriage were quiet and happy. He was successful as a lawyer, his financial situation was favourable, he was appreciated and liked by Zamość society ¹.

In those years Peretz read diligently on various subjects ². According to his wife, he also wrote a great deal ³. Yet he certainly did not think about a literary career. He did not write for publication. He produced Yiddish poems that became popular in Zamość. Some of them reflected Peretz's reaction to the growing anti-semitism and to the terrible pogroms of 1881-1882 ⁴.

In spite of encouraging reviews by P. Smolenskin (1878) and R. A. Braudes (1880) ⁵ Peretz did not publish anything either in Hebrew or in Yiddish between 1877 and 1886.

Instead, he took part in the social and public life of Zamość ⁶. As already mentioned ⁷, Peretz was until 1882-1883 a member of the voluntary fire-brigade. In 1882 he participated in founding a school for children and courses for adults (where he himself lectured on Jewish history). The violent opposition of the hasidim brought this venture of the maskilim of Zamość to an end ⁸.

In about 1886 the young lawyer's financial situation changed for the worse. He felt that "these are bad times" ⁹, "very unsafe" ¹⁰.

A visit to Warsaw in 1886 renewed Peretz's contacts with the

Jewish literary circles of the Polish capital and revived his interest in literary work¹¹.

After an interval of nearly ten years Peretz resumed publication of his works - again in Hebrew, only: the poems "Melodies of Our Time"¹², "The Little Town"¹³ and "To the Jewish Maiden Estranged from Us"¹⁴, and also a few short-stories¹⁵.

One of these short-stories¹⁶ was mutilated by the editor. This, as Peretz says in a letter to Shalom-Aleykhem, caused him to cease publishing in Hebrew for several years¹⁷.

However, the editors' "scissors and pen"¹⁸ still persecuted the young writer. The fate of so many of his Hebrew works was also the fate of his first published work in Yiddish. This was Peretz's famous poem "Monish", printed in the first volume of Shalom-Aleykhem's "Di Yiddishe Folksbibliotek" ("The Jewish Popular Library") in 1888. "Monish" suffered so much from the editor that its author found it necessary to publish in 1892 the "genuine" version of this poem.¹⁹

Monish, a handsome young talmudic scholar, is bewitched by the beautiful Maria, sent by Sama'el and Lilit²⁰ to tempt him. Ultimately the hero surrenders to Maria's charms and falls into the clutches of the Evil One.

This frivolous, sentimental-ironical poem, very much in Heine's genre, was something entirely new "in a dialect that has no words for 'love' and 'sweetheart'"²¹. The publication of "Monish" is a milestone in the history of Yiddish literature.

In the second volume of Shalom-(Aleykhem's Yearbook (1889) Peretz published three short-stories in Yiddish.

At the end of the 1880's, as a result of denunciation, Peretz lost his right to practise as a lawyer. His enemies accused him before the Russian Government of being a socialist ²².

Peretz felt this as a very hard blow and was deeply depressed ²³. With no savings and no prospects for the future he decided to leave Zamosc. In the second half of 1889 or in the beginning of 1890 the Peretz moved to Warsaw.

For a short time the Peretz lived in the house of a relative, a lawyer whom Peretz helped in his work.

In 1890 Peretz joined a statistical expedition financed by the baptized Jewish philanthropist Jan Bloch. He visited many small towns and villages in the province of Tomaszów collecting materials about the life of the Jewish population not only for a statistical survey (which was never published) but also for many of his literary works.

Most of Peretz's impressions from the expedition are reflected in a series of sketches entitled: "Pictures from a Provincial Journey", published in Yiddish in 1891 ²⁴. Peretz describes in these short, excellent "pictures", permeated with poignant wit, the dire poverty and pettiness of life in the "Pale of Settlement".

Back in Warsaw and jobless again, Peretz plunged into various

cultural activities, publishing a book of short-stories²⁵ in Yiddish and lecturing in Hebrew.

Finally, through the good offices of some of his friends, he secured for himself a permanent job, albeit not a very suitable one for a poet and writer. He was appointed an official in the burials department of the Jewish Community of Warsaw.

He occupied this position for nearly twenty-five years: from January 1st, 1891 until his death²⁶.

At the same time the new official energetically pursued his literary activity. In the very first year of his work at the Jewish Community Peretz edited the first two volumes of a periodical of his own: "The Jewish Library"²⁷. Peretz published here many of his stories²⁸, poems and articles - practically for the first time beyond the reach of somebody else's "scissors and pen".

Three years later Peretz launched a new literary enterprise: "Little Leaves for Holidays"²⁹ (1894-1896), where he advocated enlightenment of the Jewish masses and socialism. Peretz's socialist inclinations caused, in 1899, his arrest at an illegal meeting and imprisonment for several months.

In the seventeen "Little Leaves" and in a collection "Literature and Life"³⁰, edited by him in 1894, Peretz continued publishing his Yiddish writings.

In the 1880's, after the pogroms, the main tendency in Peretz's poems was towards nationalism. In the 1890's he turned again, as in the

1870's, chiefly to problems of social injustice. He wrote for the poor and unlearned and his writings contributed greatly to the elevation of their "Jargon" to the status of a literary language.

Yet Peretz also persisted all his life in his love for the language of the Bible ³¹.

In 1894 he edited a Hebrew collection "The Arrow" ³² and published a book of his Hebrew love-poems called "The Harp" ³³. He also contributed to many Hebrew periodicals and translated some of his works, originally written in Yiddish, into Hebrew.

In spite of Peretz's love for the Hebrew language, in spite of the fact that "his heart drew him to Palestine", as he wrote in one of his letters ³⁴, and in spite of his persistent fight for Jewish national revival, Peretz did not join the Zionists. He did not become a Zionist even after the First Zionist Congress (1897), when this movement swept a great part of the Jewry. Peretz did not believe in the possibility of the revival of an ancient tongue and an ancient country.

Like so many in those days, Peretz thought that the future of the Jews lay in the diaspora and that their language would be Yiddish. But even of this he was not always sure, and sometimes he inclined to the opinion that the future belonged to Hebrew ³⁵.

In 1908 Peretz took an active part, as a deputy-chairman, in the proceedings of the "Conference of Czernowitz", the aim of which was the promotion of the Yiddish language. Characteristically enough, he strongly opposed not only the resolution "Yiddish is the only Jewish national language", but even the amended version: "Yiddish is a national language

of the Jewish people" 36.

Still, Peretz wrote in those years more in Yiddish than in Hebrew. Peretz's literary output was very rich and many-sided. He was tremendously popular with both the readers and the young writers. General admiration for the great writer found its expression during the celebration of the 25th anniversary of his literary activity in 1901 37. In this year there appeared for the first time Peretz's collected works, both in Hebrew and in Yiddish 38.

From about the middle of the 1890's Peretz showed a growing inclination towards the new currents of West European literature: "Neoromanticism" and "Symbolism". These currents, and folk-lore, which interested him very much, became the main sources of his inspiration in his best short-stories - the series "Folk Tales" 39 and "Hasidic [Tales]" 40 - and in his symbolic dramas.

Peretz's approach to folk-tales and hasidic legends was a revelation. His stories broke new ground and opened new vistas both in Hebrew and in Yiddish literature. Peretz was neither a naive folk-poet nor a believer in Hasidism. Yet he discovered sparks of real beauty and grandeur in the midst of desperate poverty and pettiness, and saw deep, mystical truth in the life and beliefs of the ignorant and the simple 41.

Thus Peretz's views broadened. He was already too large a figure to be limited by any partisan doctrine or view. He was regarded from the beginning of the 1900's as one of the leading personalities of the entire Jewry.

In 1903 the most important Hebrew monthly in those days, "Ha-shiloah", published Peretz's drama "The Ruin of the Sadiq's House" ⁴². This was the first version of one of Peretz's best-known dramatic works, published in 1907 in Yiddish as "The Golden Chain" ⁴³.

This was a time when Peretz was deeply interested in promotion of the Yiddish theatre ⁴⁴. Besides several one-act plays in Hebrew ⁴⁵ and in Yiddish ⁴⁶, he published his two great symbolic Yiddish dramas: "At Night at the Old Market" (1907) ⁴⁷ and "Chained in the Vestibule" ⁴⁸ (1908) ⁴⁸.

One of Peretz's last important literary works was "My Memoirs" ⁴⁹ published in 1913-1914 ⁵⁰. It serves as the main source for Peretz's biography until 1870 ⁵¹.

In the last years of his life Peretz was very active in the cultural and political life of Polish Jewry. He visited and lectured in many towns of Poland, Galicia, and so on.

The suffering of the Polish Jews in the early years of the First World War greatly depressed him.

Peretz died of a heart-attack, pen in hand, on April 3rd, 1915.

His funeral was an impressive demonstration of the admiration of the Jewish Nation for one of its greatest writers in modern times ⁵².

NOTES

1. Comp. above: Ch. 12, p. 186.
2. See e.g.: Y. Margolit in YB, XII (1937), 309; N. Sokolow, Ishim, Vol. II, Tel-Aviv, 1935, 48.
3. B, 9.
4. Comp. above: Ch. 15, pp. 235 ff.

5. Comp. above: Ch. 17, pp. 302 and 314-315.
6. Comp. above: Ch. 12, pp. 171-172 and Ch. 15, p. 252.
7. Ch. 12, p. 179 and Ch. 15, p. 252.
8. Comp. above: Ch. 4, pp. 27-28 and 43-44, note 78; Ch. 15, pp. 242-243.
9. B, 120.
10. B, 122. Comp.: N, 124-125.
11. Sh. L. Citron, Dray literarishe doyres. . ., Vol. I, Wilno, 1922, 130-133; N, 115-116 and 124-125.
12. "Manginot ha-zeman" (K, IX, [pt. 2], 23-45).
13. "Ha-'ir ha-qetana" (o.c., 46-60).
14. Comp. above: Ch. 15, p. 247.
15. See e.g.: S. Niger, Y. L. Peretz u-Khatavaw ha-'ibrim, "Ha-tequfah", Vol. XXX-XXXI (1946), 473 ff.
16. "Hesis we-nifga" . Not included in K, but see: "Kitbey. . .", Vol. IV, Tel-Aviv, cop. 1925, 101-126.
17. "Briv un redes", [1st ed.], Wilno, 1929, 17. Comp.: N, 131.
18. Peretz's own expression.
19. Reprinted in A, I, 3-27. The earliest version of "Monish": YB, XII (1937), 269-279 [c]. Comp. above: Ch. 15, pp. 241-243. And see e.g.: M, 88-93; N, 170-179; etc.
20. Comp. above: Ch. 19E, no. 1, p. 403, and p. 418, notes 15a and 16.
21. L. Wiener, The History of Yiddish Literature. . ., London, 1899, 112.
22. B, 129; M. Altberg's statement in YB, XII (1937), 305; etc.
23. See his two letters to M. Altberg (B, 129-136).
24. "Bilder fun a provints-rayze" (A, II, 117-209); a Hebrew version: "Siyurey masa" i.e. "Travel Pictures" (K, III, pt. 1, 7-80).
25. "Bekante bilder" (mentioned e.g. in Z, 81).
26. Comp. above: Ch. 7, p. 85.
27. "Di Yuddishe Bibliotek", Vols. I and II: 1891; Vol. III: 1895. Mentioned e.g. in Z, 81.
28. I.a. the above-mentioned "Pictures from a Provincial Journey".
29. "Yom-tob-bletlekh". Mentioned e.g. in Z, 81. See Wiener, o.c., 359.
30. "Literatur un Lebn".
31. Comp. above: Ch. 16, pp. 263-264.
32. "Ha-heg".
33. "Ha-'ugab". Reprinted in K, IX, [pt. 2], 63-81.
34. B, 280.
35. Comp. above: Ch. 16, p. 264.
36. See e.g.: N, 395.
37. Counted from his Hebrew poem "I am told" (comp. above: Ch. 16, pp. 275-279).
38. See: M. Ravitch, Vegn farsheydene oysgabes fun Y. L. Peretzes "Gezamelte" un "Geklibene" verk, YB, XXXVI (1952), 83-84 and N, 463-464.
39. In Yiddish: "Folkstimlekhe Geshikhtn" (A, V); in Hebrew:

"Mi-pi ha-Cam" i.e. "From the Mouth of the People" (K, I, pt. 1).

40. In Yiddish: "Hasidish" (A, IV); in Hebrew: "Hagidut", i.e. "Hasidism" (K, II, pt. 1).

41. Comp. e.g.: Y. A. Klausner, J. L. Peretz's Strivings for the "Higher", "Sifrut", no. 2 (1956), 36-42.

42. "Hurban beyt sadiq" (K, II, pt. 1, 173-212); "sadiq" is a hasidic rabbi (comp. above: Ch. 4A, p. 25).

43. "Di goldene keyt" (A, VI, 101-179).

44. See particularly: A. Mukdoni, Yishaq Leybush Peretz un dos Yiddishe teater, New York, 1949.

45. Reprinted in K, VI, pt. 1.

46. Reprinted in A, VI.

47. "Baynakht oyfn altn mark" (A, VI, 181-280).

48. "In polish oyf der keyt" (A, VI, 335-372).

49. "Mayne zikhroynes" = Z.

50. Comp. above: Ch. 1., pp. 1-2.

51. And has been extensively used especially in Part I of this study.

52. See e.g.: R, 148-154; N, 515-523; etc.