

# CANAWAY AND THE LUSTIGS

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## Canaway and the Lustigs

Joseph Leiser

*To what extent had the bucolic character of preindustrial nineteenth-century rural America ever existed except in fancy? Joseph Leiser (1873–1940) would have been unlikely to ask such a question. Leiser, born in Canandaigua, New York, was at home in a countryside whose Jewish immigrants had been “Germans” rather than “Russians.” A graduate of the University of Chicago, he was ordained by Rabbi Emil G. Hirsch and served congregations in the Midwest, the South, and his native New York State.*

*Leiser’s publications included a volume of poems and songs, a hymn for the Union Hymnal, holiday plays for Jewish children, and an historical survey of American Judaism. In Canaway and the Lustigs, he testifies to rather an observant eye for detail, an ability to write with some charm—and an addiction to moralism and sentimentality.<sup>1</sup>*

1. See his necrology in *Central Conference of American Rabbis Yearbook* 50 (1940): 254.

## Chapter I

*The Lustigs in Canaway*

There used to be over the entrance and along the upper line of the store windows of a two-story brick building on Main Street of Canaway, a large gilt and black sign, the bright glistening letters standing out distinctly against a background of black. The words read:

## ROCHESTER CLOTHING STORE.

This building, not an imposing structure by any means, or a thing of beauty, is still standing, and may be seen on any day in the year by one who chances to be in this Western New York town. But the sign has changed, and the interior of the store has been greatly enlarged and improved, since the owner and proprietor, with whom we are especially concerned, carried on business there.

At the time of which I write, the store was long and narrow. It still conforms in the main to these dimensions. But it has been so lengthened that one scarcely notices its width. In former days it was about one-half of its present depth and the rear end was as dark as a cellar.

In those days the store was packed with clothing. On both side walls stood tiers of shelves reaching from the floor to the ceiling, and in the middle of the floor ran a succession of tables. There also were counters that stood a few feet away from the shelves. These and the center tables made four little aisles up and down which the proprietor passed as he waited on his customers.

On the right and left of the entrance were small show-cases resting on the counters. The modern show-case, which is made wholly of glass, was unknown in those days. The type of show-case used in the Rochester Clothing Store may still be found in the confectionery stores of country towns. It is about six feet long, three feet wide and one foot high. Candy dealers in country towns find it necessary to confine their sweets within this limited enclosure to keep out the flies and sundry small fingers. But these show-cases are no longer used in large cities, where merchants are eager to display their wares.

In the Rochester Clothing Store of Canaway there were few fixtures. Over the counter, on a home-made wooden frame, some wires were

strung, the whole device being suspended from the ceiling. On these wires were pinned red bandanna handkerchiefs, suspenders (called by the country people "galluses"), and socks, usually of two colors—a bright red and a light gray. The socks were not of a pretty design, like those worn by the present generation. They were thick and as hard as cardboard, but kept the feet warm, and for that reason men bought them.

Directly opposite this rack and over the counter to the right of the entrance, hung another rack, on which in winter a variety of hats, chiefly felt hats or woolen caps, were displayed. In summer all this cloth headgear was removed, and a goodly assortment of straw hats hung from the rack, being mostly wide-brimmed for the farmers, and more especially for the farmers' sons, who prided themselves more on possessing a broad-brimmed straw hat for the haying season than the city boys do on owning a bicycle.

On the tables, counters, and shelves, each kind in its place, were coats, trousers, vests, overcoats, overalls, shirts, underwear, neckties, paper collars, and linen dusters, which were made popular by Horace Greeley, who, it is said, never wore any other kind of coat when he could help it.

This was a country clothing store; and the goods offered for sale were the sort most needed by the farmers and country people. The material was good and strong, but not strictly fashionable. It was worn for use and not for show. This is the general appearance of the place, except in winter time, when, by removing one of the center tables, a space was cleared for a large cylinder-shaped sheet-iron stove, around which a half-dozen tottering chairs were set. These chairs were like war veterans—one wanted an arm, another leg. Not one was sound of limb or unbandaged. All were bound in place with twine—a decrepit lot of props for a parlor, but very comfortable seats for a clothing store in winter, when the north wind blew and the stove, roaring back defiance, threw out warmth and cheer to those encircling it.

Were one to enter this store, he would be met by a man of average height, who would advance slowly from whatever part of the room he happened to be, and grasp the newcomer by the hand cordially, and begin to talk at once about the weather, the last runaway in the village, and end up his inquiries by asking, with apparent deep concern, all

about your family, your wife and children, your father, mother, sisters, brothers, aunts, uncles and cousins.

Being usually in his shirt sleeves, both in summer and in winter, he appeared to be inclined to obesity, and so he was. His arms were short and fat, and his shoulders wide apart, giving ample space for the setting of his large, round head, which was covered with a heavy growth of brown, curly hair. His neck—and that was the one feature of the man to be remembered—he had no neck. It was so short that his head appeared to rest level with his shoulders. At times one might think he was deformed; but not so; he was simply short, and not a stiff-necked nor obstinate man. His eyes, which were dark blue, always sparkled with good cheer. The color of his skin was ruddy, in spite of his indoor habits. There was not a frown or a wrinkle on his low but wide forehead, nor a furrow on his cheeks. Honesty and friendliness were written over his open face. Light and happiness shone from his eyes.

This was Herman Lustig.

The people of Canaway and the farmers of Ontario County considered Herman Lustig a prudent, trustworthy business man. When he said the cloth of a coat was “all wool,” his customers believed him, because he never hesitated to inform a customer, if he knew it was so, that a coat was not all wool. It became a proverb among the country folks that whatever “Dutch Herman” said was true. And Dutch Herman is what they called him. In other words, Herman Lustig was honest in his dealings and public-spirited when necessary. But he attended strictly to his own business, and allowed others to do the same with theirs. So he prospered, as all do who adhere to this policy.

But were he simply an honest clothing merchant, and nothing more, I would have no occasion to introduce him here. He was more than a clothing merchant, as we shall have opportunity to learn before long.

Our interest in Herman Lustig arises from two facts: First, he was the father of two boys, Ludwig, the older, and Gottlieb; and secondly, Herman Lustig had many stories to tell his sons about places he had seen and men he had known—men, the like of whom live only in the provincial towns of Germany. And Lustig was born and brought up in one of them, and had many experiences there, which are not the lot of boys of our day and country.

We are tempted to say that Herman Lustig and his sons are of special interest to us because they lived in Canaway. To be born or to live

in Canaway is a rare good fortune to any one. And since our stories are all located in this place (those who hear them and he who tells them lived there), suppose we learn something about Canaway.

Bear in mind that Canaway is not a manufacturing town. Only two things are made there—ale and bricks, two articles that do not always go together. There used to be a spoke factory just outside the jail limits, but the only fact of interest about the spoke factory was that occasionally it burned.

Canaway is not a place of mills and factories. It is simply a Western New York village, situated at the foot of Canaway Lake, on the banks of which grow the most deliciously flavored grapes raised in North America. Canaway Lake gives the town of Canaway its distinction. Without the lake, the town would be a bride without a bridegroom. The two are inseparable.

Now, it must be remembered that the Lustigs did not make Canaway famous, although certain great men make their places of residences well known. "Let a man do a great deed," says Emerson, "or think a great thought, and even if he lives in a forest, men will come to see him." But the chief interest we have in presenting Herman Lustig and his sons is due to the fact that they and their mother were the only Jewish people in Canaway.

A few such people live in country towns, and to distinguish them from all other kinds and classes of Jews, they are called country Jews. For this reason their relatives and friends who live in cities commiserate them. But there is no need to do that, even if the only Jewish family dwelling in a country town enlarges the Jewish population by bringing a mother-in-law, a cousin, or a step-brother, or a sweetheart to live with them in that place. . . .

. . . But let it be understood now, that Ludwig and Gottlieb never regretted that they were born in Canaway, for although they occasionally visited Rochester, the biggest city in the world to them, and saw a real fire engine there, and a patrol wagon and policeman, and big stores with more goods in one corner than their father had in his entire store, and more people on one street than in Canaway on a fireman's parade or circus day, still they never regretted their childhood in Canaway. There was no occasion for them to regret the many times they went barefoot. There was no need for them to recall with a shiver the day they fell in the brook when the ice broke upon the creek. Was there

any disgrace in picking up bones and selling them to Mr. Cornell, the phosphate man, to buy firecrackers with on the Fourth of July? Not at all. All this was boys' fun. All the boys in Canaway did something like this. Many of them flew kites with Ludwig and Gottlieb in Blanchard's pasture lot. Many a time a dozen or more boys would help Mr. Mutchler drive the cattle which he bought at the Buffalo Stock Yards from the freight cars to his abattoir on the Poor House road. There were a thousand and one things Ludwig and Gottlieb never forgot or felt sorry that they had seen and done.

On the contrary, Ludwig and Gottlieb remembered their experiences in Canaway all their lives, and perhaps this day they are telling a younger generation, born in the city, of what country boys in America used to do, just as their own father told them of his life in Schwersenz. And because all these things happened and were true, I am telling them.

Ludwig and Gottlieb were not very old when their father made known to them that they were Jewish children. In fact, they were the only Jewish people in Canaway. But nobody paid any attention to that matter. The boys played together—the Mutchler boys, Will Andrews, Charles Ashley, Charles Kleinle, Art Ellis, Speedie Blanchard, Pat Meade's boys—all the boys on Bristol Street, Clark and Coy streets, say nothing of Main, as if Ludwig and Gottlieb were no different from the other children. Nobody called them names; nobody referred to their religion; and nobody knew that they were Jews except for the fact that Mrs. Rosalia Lustig usually sent Matzoth in Passover week around to all her neighbors. But then the Lustigs called them crackers, and that is all they thought about it.

But in their own household Herman Lustig and his wife tried to preserve a few Jewish practices. On Friday evening extra candles were lighted, and on Saturdays the boys were not allowed to dig a cave or build a hen house. At first they did not understand the reason for this rule; but Herman Lustig made it very clear by saying that Saturday is the Jewish Sabbath, and no hard work must be done on that day.

During the week days the boys ran in and out of their father's store. On Saturday afternoon, and during summer months on Saturday evening, they were permitted to stay in the store.

This was always a rare treat. On Saturdays the farmers came to town. At every hitching post along either side of the main street stood

a horse and a wagon. The farmers who stepped into the store always talked to the boys and invited them to come out to their farms, and especially to see a young colt or a flock of young ducks or geese or turkeys. The town was a-hum on Saturday. Every Saturday there seemed to be a runaway to furnish excitement for the rest of the week. Every Saturday something happened—somebody was lost in the great crowds that flocked into town, either a baby or a wife or a husband; something occurred that did not happen week days, and so made the town lively.

Busy as Canaway was on Saturday, it was at its quietest on Sunday. Early Sunday morning the church bells rang, sending their tones over the hills and far away. The Baptist Church on Main Street started the music. Up Main Street the sounds hastened, carrying along with them in their train the tones of the Congregational and Presbyterian bells, quickly answered by the Methodist bell, and far out on Upper Main Street by the Episcopal chapel's, whose sweet, tinkling tones ended the strain. As soon as the bells rang, the procession of church-goers began. From almost every house along Bristol and the other streets some one came forth attired in his best clothes.

It was natural that Ludwig and Gottlieb, who witnessed this scene every Sunday morning, should have their curiosity aroused. And it was.

"Why don't we go to church, papa?" Ludwig asked his father one Sunday morning, as he saw the Stuart children step out of the house, directly opposite their own home, and follow close behind their parents on their way to the Congregational Church.

"Our temple is at Rochester. We have no church. We go to a synagogue," answered the father.

And with this statement of the bare fact, began a recital of the history of the Jewish people as Lustig knew it. But it was, in truth, simply the briefest outline of early Biblical times, including the stories of Abraham, Joseph, Moses, David and King Solomon. Much of what he told his sons, he had heard in his own father's house in Schwersenz. Some of it, too, he had picked up in Cheder [Hebrew school], which he had attended. Brief as it all was, it was sufficient to interest the boys and evoke Lustig this wise saying as he concluded the story:

"You see, boys, we Jews try to do the fair and square thing. We try to take care of people when they need help. We study and are instructed

to make a good living. Every man should be able to work. Whatsoever a man can do, he should do with all his might.”

But it is not my plan to now tell what the Lustigs did, as in later chapters you will hear how they kept Purim, Pesach and other holidays. To tell all about it would be like picking out all the raisins from a pudding. It is best for us to know something about the Lustigs and their life in Canaway before we know what they did. You will find that out soon.

. . . Ludwig and Gottlieb were too young to appreciate the natural beauties of their native village and the lake region. But so long as they lived they remembered the lay of the land, as we say—the lake and surrounding country. It was only as young men, on revisiting their native town that they discovered the charm and magic of the scenery. In those days the mere pleasure of riding in a boat over the smooth waters, along the shore and under the willows, in and out of coves and to and from the island, with swift glimpses of the town before or back of them, as the case might be, sufficed and answered all their wishes.

But this interest they did have—they were eager and curious to know how their father happened to come to this particular spot in America. One Sunday, while driving to the Sulphur Springs on the west shore of the lake, five miles from town, the subject came up, Ludwig asking his father how it was that he came to Canaway.

Lustig answered promptly: “Walked. Yes, sir,” he said, “I walked.”

“Tell us about it, papa,” Gottlieb urged, suspecting that it was something worth knowing. And, by the way, there is no better place to talk without being interrupted than on a drive in the country or on a stroll along the roads.

Lustig was in a story-telling mood, and began:

“One day, when I was a peddler—”

“Were you a peddler?” inquired Ludwig, in great surprise.

“Certainly,” Lustig answered, and he let the horse walk so that he might the better tell his sons. “When we immigrants come from the old country, the quickest way we have to learn the language here is to peddle. Then, too, we must earn our living. So we peddle. There’s no disgrace in that.”

His sons did not understand exactly what he meant.

“What did you do?” Gottlieb asked.

“Go from house to house trying to sell my goods,” Lustig explained.

"Most of the time I was in the country among farmers. At every farm house I stopped, I sold something, because in those days there were few stores, and it was difficult for farmers to get to town. That's how I started in business in this country, and that's how every man of my people that I know began his business career."

Many people were out driving this beautiful Sunday afternoon. Now and then Lustig would stop to talk to his friends whom he met on the road. But after a while he resumed the story that had been interrupted in this way.

"I came over in the time of the Civil War, boys, the day after the battle of Gettysburg, as I learned later. I did not understand a word of English. My grandfather had a brother living in New York, whose address I had obtained from my father in the old country. I called on my granduncle, who was then an old man. He received me pleasantly, and set me to work at my trade—that was tailoring. I worked a month for him, and then he sent me to some relatives who lived in Rochester. They supplied me with a peddler's outfit, and told me to go anywhere in the country."

"Where did you go?" Ludwig asked, with a boy's impatience to know everything at once.

"Anywhere," Lustig told him, carelessly. "I did not know the country roads or the language—that is, English. But every house I stopped at they would ask me to tell them the news of the war; but I did not know what they meant."

"De noose? De noose? I repeated, just like that."

It amused the boys to hear their father imitate himself.

"Noose? I hev henkershiffs, stockin's, ribbons, lace-goods."

"Naw, the news! What's going on in the war?" the farmers asked me, anxiously.

"I shook my head. I did not know what they were talking about; so I unpacked my bundles, opened my satchel, and showed them the stuff I had to sell. And they always bought something of me," he added, with a chuckle.

"Everyone tried to teach me how to speak English. When I said handkershiffs, I would be corrected. They made fun of me in a pleasant way."

"What did they do, papa?" the boys asked, together.

"Well, whenever I came to a farmhouse, some one, seeing that I was

a foreigner or a greenhorn, as we were called in those days, would say:

“Hello, Dutchman! what have you got to sell?”

“I would unpack my bundles and spread out my goods on the floor. The men would come in from the fields, and then the women and children would gather around me to look at the stuff. If it was meal time, they would invite me to take dinner with them, although you know that in those days we Jewish men dare not eat everything. Sometimes I explained, as best I could, why we Jews were forbidden to eat pork, or drink milk in our coffee at dinner, or spread butter on our bread. But what a mess I made of it, trying to tell them in my broken English! They laughed at me, and imitated my words, and made me blush to the roots of my hair. Often they showed that they wanted to convert me, and invited me to attend church with them to hear their preacher. All asked me questions about the Bible. No matter how busy the farmers were, they always had time to talk with a stranger. They had a little fun with me; but none ever said an unpleasant word to me; and only on one instance was I refused a night’s lodging. But that’s how I came to Canaway.”

The boys were looking curiously at their father. He kept his horse on a walk, so that he could better tell them this all-important matter.

“We peddlers, you know, could not afford to stop over night at a hotel. However, there were no hotels where I went. Whenever I came to a farmhouse about dusk, I asked the farmer or his wife to let me stop there till morning. No matter how much they bought of me, they would not accept pay for a night’s lodging, and very few would accept pay for meals. People are different these days; but then, times have changed. I must tell you what happened one night.”

“What was it?” they asked.

“It was over in Cheshire. I have forgotten the name of the family. We were seated in the parlor talking about the Bible and the Jews; for I had got so I could make myself understood. We had been talking a long time, and then all went to bed. How long I had been asleep, I do not remember. But I was suddenly aroused by some one calling, ‘Hey, Dutchman! The barn’s afire!’ ”

“Didn’t they have fire engines?” Ludwig asked, interrupting.

“Fire engines in the country!” Lustig exclaimed. “We formed a bucket brigade. I will tell you what that is. When I heard the farmer call, I hurried into my clothes and rushed down stairs. The barn was

burning. Great sheets of fire shot high in the air, lighting up the whole country around. From every part of the neighborhood men came running across the fields, those coming from a distance riding on horseback or in wagons. I never saw so many farmers in a farmyard, nor such excitement as was there. Every one had a plan, and they were shouting at the tops of their voices: 'Save the house! Save the horses! Save the cows!' "

Lustig imitated the hoarse, wild cry of excited farm folks his loud words resounding over the fields.

"Some cool-headed men shouted out: 'Fire brigade! fire brigade!' "

"What was that?" Ludwig asked, a trifle frightened by his father's vivid description.

"I'll tell you," Lustig said. "We formed in line instantly from the well to the fire. A couple of farmers kept pumping water from the well. As fast as the buckets were filled, they were passed down the line, and the last man in line threw the water on the flames.

"Fortunately, the well was deep and the pump new. We had plenty of water and saved a part of the barn. That was my first experience as a fireman in America. After I settled in Canaway, I joined a volunteer fire company. Every man belongs to such a company in Canaway."

"We will, too, when we are men," the boys said, proudly.

"Pshaw! when you are young men, they will not have fires," Lustig said, mischievously.

They evidently did not understand what he meant, and, in order to spare them needless inquiries, he added, quickly: "I haven't told you yet how I came to Canaway, have I?"

"Tell us," they said, in chorus.

"One dark night I stopped at a farmer's house in Paddleford—that's five miles north of Canaway. Do you know where it is?"

"It's where the train stops first after it leaves Canaway for Rochester," Ludwig answered, promptly.

"Exactly. The locomotive runs out of Canaway so fast it must stop at Paddleford to get breath. That's right, son. It was hop-picking season; but I did not know it then, and every house was crowded with hop-pickers. Every place I stopped at, I was told they were crowded, and, at their suggestion, I started to walk to Canaway.

"I was tired, and an extra five miles to go on a dark night, with heavy things to carry, was not a pleasant prospect for me, I can tell

you. But off I started, hurrying as fast I could with a big pack on my back and filled satchels in both of my hands.

“For some time I walked on. I could scarcely see. I was very tired. The pack on my back and my two satchels were growing heavier all the time. I stumbled against stones and ran against bushes, trees and fences. It was so dark I could not keep in the road. All along the way it was as if I was blindfold. I did not know where I was going. Finally, far down the road, I saw a tiny light, and I made for it. After a while I reached the farm-house where the light came from. And I walked into the yard. A dog began to bark and rushed at me. I was accustomed to such treatment from dogs, and stood prepared to knock the brute down, when a man on the porch—I do not to this day how he knew me—called out in German:

“Hello, countryman! Where are you going?”

“I was so tired that I could not answer politely. I walked up to the porch, put down my bundles, and the first words I said were: ‘Can I stay here over night?’

“‘Come in,’ the farmer said, pleasantly; ‘come in, eat something and let’s see who you are.’

“He spoke in German to me, and that made me happy.

“As soon as I went into the house, the entire family came into the room where I was. The farmer had a large family. His children were young men and women; and there were some relatives, all living in one farm-house. They got me something to eat and gave me some home-made wine to drink. After a little while I felt rested; but I was too tired to open my bundles. They asked me my name, and what part of Germany I came from. Then I asked again for permission to stop there over night. I was too tired to go farther.”

“‘Stop here? Certainly,’ the German said, with evident pleasure; but first we go to town to meet some of our countrymen.’

“I refused, but they persuaded; and soon the farmer, his sons, and I drove off to town.”

“Who was the man, papa?” Ludwig asked promptly.

“What town was it?” Gottlieb inquired, before his father had time to answer the first question.

Lustig smiled. “The man? Why, that’s our friend Reeser—the best friend I have in Ontario County. And the town? Why, that was Canaway.”

There was not so much mystery to it after all. The boys became suddenly silent. It seemed their father had reached the end of his story. But he had more to say.

"That's how I came to Canaway. Old Yakob Reeser and his sons brought me here. Well, we drove into town that night and up to Lem Sprague's clothing store. We all got out, and Reeser took me into the store.

" 'Lem,' he said, 'I have found a clerk for you;' and he presented me to the proprietor, who was an Englishman.

" 'Just the man I want,' Sprague said, as he looked at me. 'Do you speak German?'

" 'Sure,' Reeser answered for me. 'He is a countryman of mine.'

" 'What's your name?' Sprague inquired.

" 'Hyman Lustig,' I said.

" 'Hyman,' he repeated after me. 'Hyman? That won't do. Nobody here by that name. A clerk must have a name everybody knows. Suppose you call yourself Herman instead?'

" 'That's good,' Reeser laughed; 'call him Dutch Herman; then every one of his countrymen will buy clothing here.' And that name has clung to me to this day. Everybody knows me as Dutch Herman; but in the old country my name was Hyman."

The boys were not at all surprised at the ease with which men change their names in America.

"That was an experience for me," Lustig resumed, presently. "Sprague engaged me as a clerk then and there; and while we were talking over the arrangement, Reeser went out and brought back all the Germans in town to meet me. There were Singlaf and Mutchler, and Lintner, and Metzger, and Adolph Yahn, the furniture man, and a dozen others. They all came into the store, shook hands with me and urged me to remain in Canaway and give up peddling. I sold out my goods, and—well, I acted as a clerk for Lem a whole year. Meanwhile I learned how to sell clothing and speak English. Lem wanted to speculate in hops. So he sold out to me, and I started in business for myself."

"After another year I prospered so that I sent home for mamma from Schwersenz; and that's the way Lustig came to settle in Canaway."

*A Country Cheder*

Ludwig and Gottlieb were greatly excited over the information their father imparted one June evening, when he announced with his usual persuading cheerfulness that he had arranged to have them taught Hebrew. The boys were sorely perplexed. For of all things he had told them—and he had, as you know, narrated sundry episodes of his early days in Schwersenz, not to mention the many incidents that had happened in Canaway—he had never told them what Hebrew was.

They were, therefore, a trifle anxious; and, if the truth must be said, they did not know exactly what to make of the news. It presented to their young minds many mysteries. This is certain. Not one of the Gentile children had ever said anything about Hebrew, and so the Lustig boys were quite in the dark.

“What is Hebrew, papa?” Ludwig asked, concealing his bewilderment sufficiently to show intelligent curiosity.

“My son,” Herman replied with more severity than the question warranted, “we are Jews; and Hebrew is our holy language. Every Jewish boy ought to know a little of Hebrew, in order to understand his religion. And, just as luck would have it, a Hebrew teacher has come to live in Canaway.”

“What’s his name?” they asked with lively interest.

“Hyman Goldstein, D.D., professor of music and languages.”

But this they could not understand, and stared at their father with amazement, baffled by the long-sounding words.

But they soon learned. On that very afternoon the newcomer had stumbled into Lustig’s store, made his peace with the proprietor, and ended the visit by arranging to instruct Ludwig and Gottlieb in Hebrew. So far as they were concerned, this was sufficient to fill them with either pleasure or dismay; but that the forlorn professor came to Canaway with his large family because he did not have money to take him elsewhere, and that he and his family were allowed the use of an abandoned house on a back street where he proposed to support his family by the precarious method of teaching music and language to unappreciative townfolk—these grim facts and the pitiful struggles of this unfortunate man, Lustig did not relate to his sons. They would not

have realized their pathos. The professor himself interested the boys more than his untoward circumstances. After answering many inquiries, Lustig proceeded to describe the teacher.

"Oh, I know him," Ludwig interrupted with animation. "He wears a stovepipe, and all the boys threw stones at him."

"You must not throw stones at him," Lustig commanded them. "He's a learned man; you must respect a learned man."

"The boys chased him all the way down Coy street," Ludwig continued excitedly.

"And every one yelled after him," Gottlieb broke in, "Say Mister, where did you get that hat?" Yes, they did papa. I heard them."

His high hat was indeed conspicuous in spite of its shabbiness; and the urchins of Canaway could not help noticing it. In fact it was the third of its kind to appear in town. One was worn by the manager of Barnum's circus, another by a country physician of Reed's Corners, a third by Hyman Goldstein, D.D., professor of music and language.

"Why does he wear that long coat?" Ludwig asked, after he had exhausted all available information bearing on the significance of the hat.

"His Prince Albert you mean," Lustig observed. "Oh, that's fashionable. All professors wear long coats to make them look smart."

"He's got such big whiskers," Gottlieb cried out, "and he is so odd." Lustig tried to contain himself in defending the unusual appearance of the newcomer, which does not imply that the professor was uncanny or unsightly, but that the innocent people of Canaway had seldom rested their eyes on one so distinguished as a professor of music and languages. After skillfully defending his client, Lustig succeeded in awakening in his sons a proper regard for the man, as well as a desire to receive instruction from him. Such glowing accounts did Lustig give of his accomplishments, that the instruction they were to receive on the following afternoon promised to be one of the greatest events of their lives.

Early next morning both boys were on the street telling all their playmates what they had in store.

"We are going to take Hebrew lessons of Professor Hyman Goldstein, dee, dee," they said proudly. "Only smart people study Hebrew."

"Humph, that's nothing." Charlie Ashley returned unimpressed by

what the lads told him so innocently. My sister, she's in the normal school at Genesee. She takes botany and hydrogen, and she is awfully smarter."

"Well, Hebrew is the holy language, that's what my papa says and only Jews study it. We are going to take religion." Ludwig added promptly.

But Charlie was not affected by even this additional reminder. "That's nothing," he related blandly. "I study catechism in church. Reverend Lee, he teaches that, and he's smart, too."

But the Lustig boys did not know nor care what all this meant; and thus, having driven themselves into unknown realms, they abruptly changed the subject by referring to things of greater moment to them.

"Say, Ludie," Charlie drawled, "have you seen my dove eggs?"

The three repaired instantly to the dovecote that Charlie had built in the back yard of dry goods boxes given by Mr. Lustig, and instantly forgot every other matter while inspecting the wonderfully made little white eggs. For some time they glowed over them, and then, having commented to the full extent of their knowledge, the three young hopefuls sauntered down Bristol street to see what the Mutchler boys were doing.

It was cherry season, and the Mutchler offsprings were found picking Mrs. Blodgett's sour cherries, an employment in which the three new arrivals soon busied themselves with such diligence and interest, that the dove eggs and Hebrew lessons were for the time overlooked.

But this is certain; every boy who lived in Bristol knew before he ate his dinner that day that Ludwig and Gottlieb were going to take Hebrew lessons of the stranger in Coy street; and furthermore, that odd undersized individual, who had shot out of space and landed in Canaway, was none other than a wonderfully learned man, who taught music and languages and many mysterious things.

The children's guileless and inexpensive advertising explained many an incident which the professor experienced during his brief, but bustling career in Canaway. It accounted in particular for the cohort of youngsters that surrounded the rural Beth-Hamidrash [religious school] on the afternoon that Gottlieb and Ludwig, attired in the new sailor suits their father brought from Rochester, wandered over to Coy street on the most solemn and awe-inspiring journey of their young lives. Every boy on Bristol and the adjoining streets accompanied

them. Each was anxious to see a Hebrew teacher. Had they other motives such were not patent. Even so, they intended to introduce themselves by the favorite method, which country lads have of making the acquaintance of a stranger, that is to play some deviltry. A mutual interest, which often continues through a lifetime, may thus be compacted.

In this instance, however, the Canaway boys were moved by higher impulses. They were at least as eager as the Lustigs were to see what species of a man or beast a Hebrew teacher was.

And, it is fair to say that the meeting was as great an event for the professor's family as it was for the lads. For when Ludwig and Gottlieb, with steps slow and heavy, walked into the yard, they found the professor's family awaiting them. The teacher himself in a solemn black but shabby Prince Albert coat, graciously received them at the door as befits a professor of Hebrew; and then introduced them to his shrivelled wife, who cast servile and sad smiles on them as they marched through the narrow, uncarpeted hall way, passing en route a retinue of girls and boys, each of whom was scantily clad and looked thin and hungry.

The coming seemed to have been formally planned. And how could any one help finding the spot? Every boy in Canaway knew this old, green, brick house. Tradition reported, with self-evident falsity, that it was built in the days of Noah. But ever since the discovery of America it had been uninhabited because, so the boys said, the house was haunted. Though it was not haunted, almost every window pane in it was broken, every blind off one or other of its hinges, and every brick loose in the chimney. But when this rejected and dejected dwelling was invested with scholastic dignity and converted into a studio, as well as a school of languages, all Canaway must needs celebrate the, at least partial, rehabilitation of this old and somewhat dilapidated dwelling. This was a new epoch in the history of the town. When, in addition, the old green, brick house was decorated with a weather worn sign, bearing the singular legend, "Professor Hyman Goldstein, D.D., professor of music and languages," the Canaway boys felt it their duty to use the sign as a target. For what other purpose were old signs for?

Long after the Lustig lads had lost themselves in the cavernous interior the cohort of youngsters had not departed. Some hung around the building; others threw themselves on the uncut grass of the front yard;

others began the time-honored practice of throwing stones at the sign; and then, every little while, the more impatient ones cried out; "Ludie, oh, Ludie, come on! We're goin' swimmin'!"

'Tis well that the timorous Lustigs heard merely the faint echoes of the voices of their comrades. It speaks well for their self-control that they fastened their attention on the peculiar presence of their teacher, who had escorted them to the front room which was to be their seat of learning. And it revealed a fine sense of propriety that they gazed steadily at him instead of looking at the boxes and bags of unpacked furniture, and open bags and boxes of peanuts, oranges and other Italian commodities deposited carelessly around the uncarpeted room. Fright, more than curiosity may have impelled them to attend to their instructor. He had planted himself squarely before them; and ere they had found a comfortable position on the hard wooden chair, he began to lecture about the majesty of all languages, with peculiar reference to Hebrew.

He was a rapid speaker, making use of words they had never heard. But suddenly he interrupted himself. Staring at their bashful, half-frightened faces, he asked curiously: "Boys, are you twins?"

"No," Ludwig answered shyly. "We are Jews."

"Yah, yah, I know!" the professor snapped irritably. "Are you twins?"

"I am the youngest," Gottlieb ventured.

"You are a hacham [sage]!" the professor exclaimed, patting his head. "Now my dear youths, we begin the study of our mother tongue. Hebrew is the guardian of our holy scriptures. The angels discourse in Hebrew. The cherubim whisper their divine syllables in it. Ah, my children, when your tongues are touched by fire, the exclamations of your soul are proclaimed in Hebrew. We now begin the study of all subordinate languages. As we begin French, Latin, Greek, as we begin violin or piano instruction, so we begin Hebrew with the alphabet, known among the lexicographers as the aleph-beth."

"The A, B, C?" Gottlieb suggested, encouraged by his former success. "We study it in school."

"Good"; the professor cried, patting him again on the head. "You are a wise lad. Study, my son, and learn. Some day you will be a signor."

Ludwig turned a bewildered eye on his younger brother, who

seemed to have won the Professor's favor suddenly and with astonishing ease, and thereafter deferred all questions to Gottlieb.

"Well, now," began the professor, "say after me: Aleph a, a."

"Aleph, a, a; aleph, beth, gimmel; gimmel, daleth, hey," said the professor of music and languages.

They imitated his intonation.

Their intonation was exact, and received instant approval.

"Ah," Professor Goldstein exclaimed gleefully, "now both of you are instructible."

Whirling around, he snatched an open primer from a box and handed it to Gottlieb. Both boys laid hold of the covers and held the book firmly as the professor, pointing to each letter, pronounces it and had them repeat it after him in his sing-song style. With singular adaptability they mastered the pronunciation, and had learned the name and form of the camel shaped lamed, when, with sudden violence, a broadside of pebbles hit the closed shutters.

The professor jumped to the window.

"Such loafers," he fumed savagely. "Wait I will reprimand them for their torments? I will communicate with the police. Such imbecilities!"

But the Lustigs smothered their laughter and were reading along the bottom of the page where the lonesome shin and sin are located, when the drawling tones of Charlie Ashley came through the window:

"Ludie, oh, Ludie! Come on! We're goin' swimmin'!"

"Ach!" the professor ejaculated, scowling, that's the boy! Does the boy cogitate on the holy languages? No. The boy never touches his heartstrings with divine speech. Do not think about them. When we have completed our instruction I will give you a momentum."

The boys looked wistfully at an open bag of peanuts and oranges. The professor noted the direction of their gaze and smiled.

"Yes, yes that too," he said hurriedly, pointing to the fruit, "but something better than all things material. Indulge me, I will read you some poetry. Youths, do you know I am a poet? Furthermore, have you ever lisped poetry?"

He turned to Gottlieb who had heretofore answered all questions promptly and in a satisfactory manner. But the unhappy boy knew not whereof the professor spoke and hung his head in dejection.

"Ah, poetry is the chant of the celestials," the professor explained with melting sympathy; and full of anticipated pleasure, he suddenly

darted from the room and as suddenly returned, his face wreathed in smiles and his eyes beaming. Holding a mass of wrapping paper in his trembling hands, he began to sway his body, and as he swayed, he intoned musically, as if he were rendering an anthem, these lines:

“The night is dark, and not a star  
Doth shine in all the empty space;  
I am a stranger and alone,  
A dethroned prince of a homeless race.”

“Isn’t that fine?” he said, enthusiastically, kissing the tips of his fingers. But the boys stared at him vaguely, much amazed to see tears streaming down his face, as he continued to murmur the remaining verses.

“Listen to this!” he said after a pause. And having selected another poem for recitation, he tossed his head back, as if he were about to sing and began:

“Count not my tears, O Lord, my God;  
With tears I pray to thee;  
My tears have knit a ladder  
Whereon I climb to thee.”

Copious tears filled his eyes at the conclusion of this verse, and he was unable to continue either reciting the subsequent stanzas, of which there were many, or to resume the instruction. The tears welled from his eyes, flowing down the grooves of his face and melting in the thick meshes of his beard.

“Are they not divine, boys?” he asked, kissing the tips of his fingers.

‘Ah,’ he sighed languidly, “a sweet singer of Israel left perishing in a foreign land! Shield of David redeem me! Harken to this youths!”

Tears were gathering in the boys’ eyes, but the professor did not see them. Shuffling the scrappy pieces of paper hurriedly, he selected the desired poem, and then read slowly:

“How burdened are we sons of men,  
Where’er our steps are lead;  
There is no peace for that poor soul  
Who daily begs his bread.

The sheep or cattle in the field,  
Or dogs of a city's streets:  
They find their food—a whitened bone—  
Beneath their idle feet;

But man, God's child, he hungry goes,  
And starves for a crust of bread,  
And all the joys my poor soul knows  
Is buried with the dead."

Because the professor was in tears, the boys thought they ought to weep too, and they did.

"Boys, boys," he said sorrowfully, "you will never comprehend my position. Never, never! God spare you that catastrophe. But my own poor children, how they must suffer on my account."

He was indeed overcome. Burying his head in his hands, he wept with a sad disconsolate wail, heart-rending and grewsome. His sobbing now still further affected Ludwig and Gottlieb, and so loud did they cry that their lamentations attracted the professor's notice. Realizing the futility of provoking needless tears, he composed himself, brushed his own tears aside and, resting his hands gently on his scholars' heads spoke softly to them.

"Gentle, my lads," he said, "methought in America all Jews hard-hearted and stiffnecked. In country towns, alas! methought the Jew turned goy [gentile]. No, no! The Jewish heart is ever moved by distress. God made it so. See, even you princes of fortune, you feel for your teacher. I espy that in you. So now let us continue our tutORIZATION."

He pointed to the open primer and sang:

"Aleph, a, a; aleph, beth, gimmel; gimmel, daleth, hey; hey, vay, zayin."

So the lesson continued to the end of the hour.

Not one of their companions was waiting for them when the Lustig boys emerged from the house, each sucking an immense juicy orange. Devouring the succulent fruit, they sauntered down Coy street, into Bristol street, toward their home beyond Sucker Brook.

When Herman Lustig returned at supper time from his store, he called the youngsters from the backyard where they were digging a cave.

"Well, boys how did it go? What did you do?" he asked.

"He threw kisses at us, and we cried." Gottlieb answered immediately.

"Didn't you learn your aleph, beth?"

"Aleph, a, a; aleph, beth, gimmel; gimmel, daleth, hey," they sang, repeating the professor's intonation.

"Is that as far as you got?"

"No, no; we shall know all of the alphabet," Ludwig said proudly, and thereupon both convinced their father that the hour under the professor's instruction was profitably spent by reciting fluently the entire Hebrew alphabet.

"Ah," Lustig said with evident pleasure, that's fine. I give each of you five cents because you have learned it so well."

"Give my money to the professor," Ludwig said. "He's poor."

"Mine too, papa," Gottlieb echoed warmly. "He's hungry. He said he was and that dogs ate bones and he couldn't—yes he did. And he likes me."

Recounting the incidents of their lesson was the chief diversion of the evening; and Lustig listened intently to all they had to say along these lines, on this and many subsequent evenings of the summer vacation. The boys continued their lessons regularly and faithfully during July and the first week in August, when the long expected Barnum circus came to town.

A circus is the annual carnival of a country town. Before sunrise the youths of the place are astir. In Canaway, as in most of such places, attention hangs on the event. Many a boy remains awake all night in order to be up in time to see the circus train come in and unload. Of great importance to all is such a show in Canaway. But with the advent of Barnum's circus, the brilliant career of the professor came to an untimely end.

In defense of Barnum's let it be known that on its account the worthy professor did not leave Canaway. But on circus day he became convinced that the place did not appreciate his imposing citizenship, for then culminated the series of torments to which he had been subjected by the younger generation of his townfolk.

Ludwig and Gottlieb were unaware of the many pranks played on the professor by the ingenuous [*sic*—ingenious?] youths of Bristol street. They were obviously too young either to engage in the many

midnight prowls or to play "hunt the grey." The big boys, those who wore long trousers, could endure the strain of that game, and then only the older boys were sufficiently skillful to attach undetected a tick-tack to some one's window. On Saturday night only, the Lustig lads were permitted to go down town after dark.

So it came to pass that they never heard of the frequency with which the professor reported these annoyances to Hiram Doolittle, the town constable (there was no policeman in Canaway; policemen were invented for cities;) nor of the many times the professor had harangued the youngsters on the front lawn, long after the town clock had tolled the curfew.

Had the Lustigs engaged in any of these dare-devilties, they would have understood what Charlie Ashley, the Mutchler boys or Will Andrews meant, when they asked where the professor kept his "stove-pipe." The Lustigs did not indeed know in what part of the studio or boudoir the professor bestowed his headgear. Nor did they understand that the boys were hinting when they asked them if they ever heard the professor lecture. These veiled references were lost on them, although they confessed they had been lectured. With familiarity came indifference. Frequently their teacher reproved them for carelessness. But never had they heard him lecture the village boys. It had not been their fortune to hear him shriek:

"Wait! I communicate your imbecilities to the police—loafers!"

The Lustigs had never been a party of the chorus of the youngsters who verbally repeated his threat, and then added with rural disdain:

"Ah, come off!"

"Insolence!" the professor would yell back, "know you not that I am a teacher? Have you no respect for learning, you ignoramuses? Am I so distinguished that you maltreat my repose, and annihilate the tranquility of my family!"

Hyman Goldstein, D.D., professor of music and languages, was not the first nor the last to hear the derisive laughter of the gentiles. But the town boys were not maliciously inclined. They were playful, and the impressive professor afforded them one of a very few sources of amusement.

Wherever he went he was sure to have a following. And as domestic exigencies compelled him to move about frequently, with his baskets of fruit, he was constantly driven to desperate straits.

On circus day the battle ended. Within a few months he had succeeded in making himself one of the best known characters in Canaway. His whiskers and his stove-pipe had singled him out on the street; and his retorts to the boys were quoted in all parts of the town. Besides his poems in the village paper popularized him jocularly with the literary people and the lawyers. Canaway had never had a real poet, nor had it ever bought fruit and garden truck from one who wore a stove-pipe hat. Whatever it was that moved his townfolk to patronize him, he did a thrifty vegetable business for a time; but it did not last long; for the boys practically drove him away.

The Professor was alive to the profitable advantage that a fruit stand would be on circus day. With a discerning eye he had pitched his tent near the depot. Over some clothes poles he spread a bed sheet, beneath which on the dry goods boxes which Lustig gave him he piled small mountains of oranges and peanuts, while into a big wash-tub he poured gallons of diluted lemonade. Appointing his older son and daughter to stand guard behind the counter, he stationed himself without the shadow of his tent, calling aloud to everyone:

“Lemonade! lemonade! Peanuts and oranges!”

It may have been the rest of his attire, but it was particularly the hat that attracted the rustics. They had never seen anyone so arrayed. It appeared to them a part of the circus attraction to look at a small, coatless fellow, wearing a high silk hat that slightly sheltered a strong but sad face, and who was eyeing intently the passersby and chanting to them persuadingly, in tones that remotely resembled a melody:

“Peanuts and oranges! Lemonade and candies!  
Lemonade, ladies! Lemonade and candy!”

The throng on the street thickened. From the surrounding towns and the rural districts streamed into Canaway the farmers and others. Main street was packed with people awaiting the circus parade.

The Canaway boys who had been on the circus grounds since dawn and had witnessed the bustling method of pitching the tents, were now drifting back to town to watch the procession from the crowded curbstone on Main street. But the more restless ones circulated among the crowd, and in good time a detachment of Canaway's choice spirits, the Bristol street gang, discovered the professor's tent.

"Hello, Professor Deedee!" they yelled, familiarly. The constant mention by the Lustig boys of Goldstein's theological title provided the rest with the needed nickname, which all town boys invent to honor each of their favorites.

Their greeting was righteously ignored.

"Peanuts and lemonade! Oranges and candies!" sang the professor.

"Peanuts and lemonade!" the boys shouted, imitating his tones.

"Lemonade! Lemonade!" sang the professor, unheedingly.

"Lemonade, made in the shade with a spade by the aid of an old maid," one urchin shouted; while his companions in a semi-circle, closing in on the booth or tent, took up the strain instantly, adding to and improving it so that the professor heard a saucy lot of lusty throats cry out:

"Lemonade, made with a spade in the shade, by an old maid."

Goldstein's patience was tried. The idle throng, amused by the humorous and somewhat musical wrangle began to enclose them. When the Lustigs, who, like other town boys, feel the superiority of the local resident, found themselves at the end of their wanderings at the railroad station, they overheard the familiar voice of the professor exclaiming excitedly:

"Imbeciles, begone with you! Loafers, vagabonds! hie away! You are injuring my business. Begone with you, hoodlums."

Angered by the persistent disobedience of his tormentors, he darted toward the bolder with a threatening gesture, and they instantly retaliated by coming nearer to his tent, and shaking the unsteady tent poles and pretending to grab some of the fruit. The sales stopped, for the crowd was more interested in the scrimmage than the wares.

Ludwig and Gottlieb looked on with fear, blanched by the possibilities of the situation. The agonized appeal of their teacher aroused their sympathy and moved them to tears.

"Pity me, my good friends," he cried to the gawking crowd. "I am a poor man. Don't you see you are taking the bread from my mouth?"

The crowd was unmoved, however, and a country bully, inflamed, perhaps, by the hard cider and impelled by mischief, pushed some one against the stand, upsetting the fruit and lemonade and wrecking the tent. Oranges rolled over the ground, while the lemonade made its own rivulets, wetting the place underfoot and forming many pools.

The catastrophe paralyzed the professor. For a moment he stood

without motion or speech, and then winding his arms about his crying sons and daughters, who had crept out from under the ruins of the booth, he himself burst into tears and wailing, but suppressed his own feelings presently, in order to soothe his son and daughter.

His grief softened the heart of the mob. Many a rustic who had stared open-mouthed and dully at him now set about to pick up the fruit and restore the tent. But all the while a silence was over them, and few ventured to move, none to pilfer the fruit. The crowd merely stood and gawked. Then a broadshouldered red-faced man pushed his way through and facing the crowd and shaking his fist at them, said in his country drawl:

“See here! The fellers that’s done this ‘er thing’s goin’ to pay for it and I know who it is. Any fellow what moves from here before he settles up, that feller’s going to wrastle me!”

He threw off his coat and flung it to his wife, who carrying a baby on one arm, tried to restrain her husband with the other.

Ludwig and Gottlieb did not wait the outcome. They ran to their father’s store, attracting attention by their loud cries and causing everyone they met to ask them what had happened.

Lustig’s Rochester Clothing Store was crowded when the boys came in, sobbing and rubbing the tears from their eyes.

“What’s this?” Lustig demanded, sharply, leaving his customer.

“The boys wanted to kill our Hebrew teacher,” Ludwig blubbered.

But the professor was fully repaid and all damages repaired. When the gorgeous band-wagon that leads the parade loomed into view on lower Main street, he had his tent restored, his oranges replaced, and the lemonade renewed in another and better vessel. He was plying to a thrifty trade. His sympathizers had increased apace, and his fruit was sold out again and again.

But the accident did not alter his intention. “I leave this hamlet,” he confided to Ludwig and Gottlieb the following day. I have just been appointed Chief Rabbi of the Rhine Street Ahavas Israel in Rochester, and I must obey the summons. This is my vocation; and now at last fortune destines me to better ends. I need it; God knows I need it!”

He sighed and blew his nose vigorously in his large red and white bandana handkerchief, and then he shook each boy by the hand.

“Hearken, lads. I am proud to have met you country youths. Ludwig and Gottlieb Lustig, always be proud of your Jewish heritage,

and some day, perhaps, you will read all of my poems in one immense publication like Shakespere. Some day the sweet singer of David will be famous, and you will remember your teacher, nicht wahr?"

Then he blessed them, gave each an orange and a bag of peanuts, and sent them on their way. This was the last they saw of Hyman Goldstein, D.D., professor of music and languages.