

MEN OF THE PERIOD.

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ENGLAND

"THIS BLESSED PLOT, THIS EARTH, THIS REALM, THIS ENGLAND."
Shakespeare: RICHARD II

THE

Records of a Great Country.

ILLUSTRATED

WITH VIEWS OF BRITISH NATIONAL EDIFICES.

PORTRAITS AND PEN PICTURES

OF

LEADING MEN.

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❖ BRADFORD PORTRAITS. ❖

IF brevity be the soul of wit, we hope to gain a reputation for being witty by making this editorial address the briefest on record.

The object of this publication is to show who the men are who are trying to serve the state, or their fellow-citizens, by doing their share of public work, according to their light, opportunity, or capacity. It is our intention to give examples, month by month, of politicians, local government representatives, the clergy and ministers, philanthropists, educationists, social reformers, &c. We shall not permit any sectarian or political bias to trespass on our pages. We intend to publish "Bradford Portraits" every month, if appreciated, and we suggest that they should be preserved by the purchasers and bound together at the end of the year.—
THE EDITOR.

THE MAYOR OF BRADFORD.



ALDERMAN THOMAS PRIESTLEY is the younger son of the late Mr. Henry Priestley, worsted manufacturer, and a nephew of Mr. Briggs Priestley, M.P. The Mayor was born at Thornton, in September, 1841. In 1850, his father removed to Bradford and began business as a worsted manufacturer. He was educated at various private schools in Bradford, including the well-known "academy" in Tetley Street, which was conducted by the late Mr. Harrison. Mr. PRIESTLEY left school at an early age and commenced to acquire a practical knowledge of business in the "school of experience," that school in which so many other successful Bradford citizens have graduated.

Messrs. Henry and Briggs Priestley were in partnership for some years, and on the retirement of the former, Alderman PRIESTLEY became the partner of his uncle, in January, 1869. They dissolved partnership, however, in 1876, and a few years later the Mayor bought and rebuilt Bank Top Mills, Great Horton, where he carries on a large business, having his eldest son for partner, the style of the firm being Thomas Priestley & Son. His residence is at Bank Top House, Great Horton. In politics, the Mayor is a Liberal, and in religion a Congregationalist. He has not hitherto taken a very prominent part in public affairs, but in a quiet way he has done good service. For several years he has acted either as secretary or chairman of the Central Liberal Club, in which institution he has always felt a lively interest. The Mayor entered the Town Council in 1884, as



representative of the Exchange Ward. He has been Chairman of the Markets and Fairs Committee for about seven years. He was promoted to the aldermanic bench last November. The office of Mayor of a large and populous borough like Bradford is no sinecure; on the contrary, it involves a great amount of arduous and anxious work and worry. Our borough occupies a proud position amongst the largest boroughs in the United Kingdom, and is known throughout the country as one of the most advanced and enterprising towns anywhere. Its area is 10776 acres; its paved and macadamised roads measure 132 miles; its flagged causeways 173 miles; and its asphalted walks, 33 miles. Its population at the last census was 216,361, and the number of burgesses on the roll for the whole borough is 41,856. In consequence of the town being anything but a handsome one, the Corporation

have, for many years, been gradually improving its appearance at a very heavy outlay, and these works, together with the necessary negotiations for the purchase and resale of property, have added greatly to the ordinary labours of more than one Committee. The rateable value of the borough is £1,052,468, and the amount of rates laid for the year 1891-92 was £211,220, being 4s. 6d. in the pound, exclusive of water and gas. Unlike many large boroughs, Bradford has long owned the waterworks, the gasworks, and the tramway lines. Besides these, the undertakings of the Corporation include electric lighting, baths and washhouses, five public parks, public libraries and museum, markets and slaughter-houses, burial grounds and cemeteries, fever and convalescent hospitals, and all the usual departments of a well-equipped and well-regulated town.

REV. DR. STRAUSS, M.A.



It was the writer's privilege and pleasure to be introduced to the polite and pleasant Rabbi of the Jewish Church in Bradford, a few days ago. His reputation for learning, amiability, and broad-mindedness, had reached us before, so that we were not unprepared to see an accomplished and courteous gentleman, at his residence in St. Paul's Road, Manningham. The pains and patience with which he sought to enlighten our dull and heavy Christian mind on the subjects of Jewish history, polity, and principles, cannot be too highly commended. We are afraid he found the task of imparting instruction an irksome one. However, he persevered, and by degrees we became interested and instructed.

We gathered during our interview that there are three classes of Jews in England: one the Spanish and Portuguese, whose pronunciation of the Hebrew tongue is the purest; another the Polish-German, and the third the Anglo-German. The latter community may be described as the Reformed Jews, and to this school Dr. STRAUSS belongs. He is not bound hand and foot to the

old forms of Judaism. He has, perhaps, as much reverence, or more, for the time-honoured religion of the patriarchs; but he does not attach so much importance to the mere ritual of his religion, the vestments, the forms and ceremonies, as the unreformed Jews do. He teaches that religion is something more than creeds, traditions, and ritual; is, in fact, a pure life to be lived by each individual for himself, and that neither the Mosaic law, nor the traditions of the fathers and elders can avail to save a man. Dr. STRAUSS was born at Berlichingen, Wuerttemberg—the place immortalised by Goethe—in 1845. But he is now, and has for a long time been, a naturalised British subject. From his earliest childhood Dr. STRAUSS was under tuition by great rabbinical teachers. He first received his classical education at the Royal Protestant Theological Seminary, at



Photo. by

Brown, Barnes, & Bell, Bradford.

of the Spanish Bible commentators living in the twelfth century. This essay, together with his oral examination in theology and philosophy, held at the philosophical faculty of the University, procured him his Doctor of Philosophy and M.A. degrees. In 1873 Dr. STRAUSS was invited by the Reformed Jewish Congregation of Bradford to become their first Rabbi, and he accepted the call. That position he has held nearly nineteen years, gaining the sympathy and goodwill, not only of his own people, but of his Christian fellow-citizens. After five years of labour his congregation presented him with a gold chronometer watch and a writing desk, and at the end of seven years he had so aroused the enthusiasm of his co-religionists for their sacred and ancient religion, that they determined to erect the synagogue in Bowland Street, Manningham Lane, which was consecrated in 1881, the then Mayor (Mr. Angus Holden), and other prominent Christians being present to show their sympathy with Dr. STRAUSS in his work. The services at the synagogue are rendered both in English and Hebrew, and a set prayer book is regularly used. He takes an active and sympathetic interest in the Christian as well as Jewish institutions of Bradford, particularly the Charity Organisation Society. He acted as lecturer on Hebrew and German for three years at the Airedale Independent College, and for 13 years he occupied a similar position at the Yorkshire College, Leeds, one of the constituent colleges of the Victoria University, where he still holds the lectureship in oriental languages. He has acted as examiner to several grammar schools, and still is examiner to the Royal College of Preceptors, London. He has contributed numerous articles and letters to the daily and periodical press, both of England, America, and Germany, and a little work of his, published in 1876, entitled "Religion and Morals," has reached its third edition. He has also published other books. He has frequently lectured gratuitously for Christian Adult Sunday Schools and Literary Societies in Bradford and neighbouring towns.

Schoenthal, and afterwards at the Stuttgart Royal Gymnasium, one of the well-known higher grammar schools of Germany. Having passed the university matriculation examination he entered upon his scholastic career. After studying theology—which in Germany includes philosophy, classics, the Semitic languages, natural science, and the science of education—at the Universities of Wuerzburg and Tuebingen, he passed the theological state examination (first-class) in 1870, which qualified him for the degree of Rabbi, taken in its most literal sense, a master or doctor of the law. For three years afterwards he acted as assistant to his former tutor, the Rev. Dr. Von Maier, the Royal Grand Rabbi of the kingdom of Wuerttemberg. During that time he devoted his leisure to higher divinity studies, and wrote an essay entitled "The Religious Philosophy of Ion Ezra," one of the greatest

Whitley, of which firm, some time after, the partnership was dissolved, and Mr. Edward B. Whitley commenced business in 1862 on his own account, and assumed the present title. Messrs. Edward B. Whitley & Co. occupy a large and imposing block of buildings, extending a considerable distance down Holdsworth Street. The five spacious floors are admirably arranged for the purpose of the business, the entire warehouse is lighted by electricity, and, upwards of eighty hands being regularly employed, it at all times presents an animated scene of business activity. The firm are specially identified with the importation of mohair; they are, in fact, the largest importers of this commodity into England. Messrs. Edward B. Whitley & Co. control a trade of vast and con-

social life of Bradford. of the borough, and has most creditably fulfilled the duties of almost every office in the municipality. As a Justice of the Peace, Mr. Jonas Whitley discharges his official functions with characteristic ability; he is also the Chairman of the Bradford Commercial Joint Stock Banking Company. His public life has been marked by a constant interest in the welfare of the town and its inhabitants, and both as a business man and as a citizen, he has contributed in no small degree to the maintenance of the very creditable reputation in commercial, municipal, and social matters which is so worthily enjoyed by the good town of Bradford.

MR. BERNHARD COHEN.

MR. BERNHARD COHEN, the senior partner in the old-established and prosperous firm of Charles Semon & Co., was born at Altona (Holstein), and was educated at a private school there. He commenced his business life in 1850, with Messrs. B. A. Dehn & Melchior, in Hamburg, and four years later joined the Manchester office of this house; but in 1860 he became connected with Charles Semon & Co., entering the firm as Manager of the Bradford branch. In 1868 he became a partner. The firm deals very extensively in yarns, stuffs, worsted, and woollens, occupying very large premises. It was founded by Messrs. Charles Semon and John Siltzer, under the title of Semon, Siltzer & Co.; the former, however, temporarily retired, embarking in banking business in London. A few years later, however (in 1858), witnessed his return to Bradford, when he inaugurated the business. He was soon afterwards joined by Mr. Cohen, and Mr. Sonnenthal joined them in 1872. Mr. Semon's death occurred in 1877, after which Mr. Cohen and Mr. Sonnenthal continued in partnership. In 1894 Mr. Sonnenthal died, when Mr. Cohen became sole surviving partner. The death of Mr. Semon was a great loss to Bradford. He was elected twice to the Mayoral chair, and was a Deputy-Lieutenant of the county. His generosity to Bradford gained for him the respect and kindly feelings of all the inhabitants. He presented the Corporation with the Semon Cottage Home at Ilkley, which he built himself. Taking an extract from "Ardworth's Historical Notes of the Bradford Corporation, 1881," it was there stated that "Mr. Semon, who had been unanimously elected to the Mayoral office, an honour much appreciated by the foreign merchants of Bradford, although a German by birth, he became a naturalised Englishman while in early manhood, and came to England while the

worsted trade was still in its infancy. From that period until shortly before his death he was one of the most active commercial men in Bradford. As a member of the Town Council he threw himself heartily into the work, and was for some time Chairman of the Watch Committee. Upon his election as Mayor in 1864, he was the only gentleman not an Englishman who had been honoured with that distinction, and during his tenure of office the Mayoral dignity was sustained in a manner not surpassed by any of his predecessors. He was also a Justice of the Peace for both the borough and the county, and a Deputy Lieutenant of the Riding." The trade carried on by the house is enormous. They deal in yarn, stuffs, worsted, and woollens; each of these is sufficient to form a trade in itself. The firm supply these goods to all the principal markets all over the country, and they are also exporters on a huge scale to Australia, the United States, and to the Continent of Europe. Over 200 hands are employed at 25, Bolton Road, and a number of agents are in connection with the firm in London and abroad. The present premises were erected in 1877, the former ones in Church Bank having been destroyed by fire. The entire buildings are lighted by electricity. Mr. Cohen is a member of the Council at the Chamber of Commerce and of the Technical College, Treasurer of the Eye and Ear Hospital, and Director of the Bradford Old Bank. In the political world he is known as a Liberal Unionist, and in private life is fond of literature. To the business he brings marked business ability and large organizing powers, heaps of energy, and sound principles. He is liked by all the employes, and has gained a host of friends in Bradford.