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From the New York Tribune.

The Jew's Quarter in Prague.

One of the most remarkable localities in Europe is the 'Ghetto,' or Jews' Quarter in Prague. Untouched for centuries, and until late years undisturbed by the visits of Curious Christians, it is one of those rare spots where the very form and spirit of antiquity have not yet given way to modern enterprise and change. Some description of its physiognomy and the curious Hebrew traditions, of which it is the source, will be interesting to the readers of *The Tribune*.

The 'Ghetto' lies in the northern part of Prague, not far from the Moldau. Approaching it from the Christian part of the city, one generally sees a group of Jew porters sitting at the entrance. In these crooked, dwarfish, and antiquated men, the enormous strength which they exhibit in their profession, would not be suspected. One of the grey-haired, shriveled and wrinkled porters, almost crawling in his gait, not infrequently carries, for a mile or two, immense chests and coffers, or the whole furniture of a family. With the exception of Amsterdam, there is no city in Europe, whose Jewish population is accustomed to such severe physical labor.

The *Breitengasse* (Broadway) is the principal street of the 'Ghetto.' Here everything is dark and forbidding; below gateways and stairways were a lantern would not be out of place at noon-day; above, roofs of hundredfold slants shooting over the high rows of houses on each side and forming narrow, airy bridges for pigeons and sparrows. Each story has its separate family, for more than 7,000 souls are clustered together in the 'Ghetto,' the few favored Hebrews who live in the other parts of the city being obliged to pay large sums for the privilege. The confusion, noise and movement in the street, on account of the crowded state of the quarter, is a marvel to behold, and impresses one with somewhat of the same feeling with which, when a child, he looked into a fantastic picture book. At the Jewish festival of 'Purim,' when Israel celebrates its delivery from the hands of Haman, the Ghetto is half a fairy city, half a Gipsy camp. Stately Judiths and Esthers, chanting the love-songs of Schiller with the winning tone of their dialect, go in masks from house to house, while the old women in gilded caps, the sturdy beggars, the cripples and cheese-rabble (so called) seem more like masks than actual settlers. A discordant, continual cry, which might be taken as an expression of either joy or woe, peals from the brilliantly-lighted synagogues; screaming cooks run against each other with their shallow pans of that national Jewish dish, which is older than the Egyptian pyramids, and which the Bible alludes to as the 'flesh-pots of Migraim.' In the garrets the children of the beggars hold a jubilee over the strongly-spiced dishes which have been sent them in charity; in the third story the dealer in old clothes tells his family about the old times when it was dangerous for a Jew to go outside of the Ghetto on Good Friday; but in the first story all is brilliance and Parisian perfume, and the rich Israelites, dressed in the latest style, go through with their dances and *tableaux vivants*.

The Ghetto of Prague is a little world in itself, rich in traditions and monuments of the past. Its origin goes far back into the times of the Pagans. Long before the days of King Herod—according to the current legends—there lived in Palestine three virtuous men of the race of David, to whom God revealed the future in a dream. In order to spare their descendants the sight of the desolation of which Judea was to be the theatre, they took up the pilgrim's staff, and left the Promised Land in company with their wives and children. The image of the many-branched candlestick in the Temple at Jerusalem, with all its burning lights, appeared in the air before them, as a guide. Thus they came further to the West. During their long pilgrimage they did not cease to praise the Lord by diligent study of the Talmud, and this preserved them from all danger. Whenever the little caravan was attacked, its members began that curious pantomime which accompanies the reading of the Talmud, with clapping of hands, agitation of body and loud outcries; whereby both savage beasts and wild Pagans were alarmed, and took to flight.—Once however, the Sabbath was violated the first star had appeared in the sky, one Friday evening, when a boy among them broke a sapling in the woods, to cut a staff. The image of the burning candlestick immediately vanished; the caravan fell into confusion, went astray and separated. It so happened that part of the pilgrims reached Toledo in Spain, another part of the town of Worms, and

a third part settled on the right bank of the Moldau before either a German or a Slave had trodden the soil of Bohemia. Their families increased so fast, in consequence of their piety, that in the course of a single generation, there were several synagogues erected in Prague.

The 'Almeusehat,' as it is called, is the oldest synagogue in the quarter. For many centuries it was entirely choked up and buried in the earth, and only discovered and exhumed in the time of Wallenstein. A stone stairway leads downward its entrance, as to a vault; the interior is built in the old Judean style of architecture. Pillars, ceilings, walls and galleries are as black as coal. The fact has no ordinary significance. The synagogue remains to this day a place of wonder, since it is reported to have given, in the early times of the settlers regular intelligence of their home in Palestine. When Titus led his legions against the City of David, the pillars of the Synagogue, according to the old legend, began to tremble; the doors of the Ark flew open with a sound of lamentation, and the holy parchment upon which the Books of Moses were inscribed, unrolled in itself until the Chapter of blessings and curses was visible. Then arose great weeping and lament among the old men and children. The young men, however, armed themselves, and set out to the rescue of the Holy City, with a warlike young Rabbi at their head. Scarcely had they passed without the gate of their city when the knees of their leader began to tremble, and his feet were rooted to the earth. 'I am like the ass of Balaam,' he cried; 'I see warning visions—they come up from the earth and down out of the clouds, and beckon me to return.' Then exclaimed several; 'Thou hast not repeated thy morning prayer with due devotion, or hast omitted a sentence therefrom. Let us choose another leader, who is undefiled.' But it happened to all as to the young Rabbi, so they turned sorrowfully homeward and Jerusalem was lost.

When the eventful day came when Zion fell and Jerusalem was destroyed, the synagogue was suddenly filled with thick Egyptian darkness.—The congregation fled in terror from the temple, but lo! the sky was as blue and clear as ever.—Shuddering, they comprehended the meaning of the sign; they commenced a fast, rent their best garments, and strewed the ashes of desolation upon their heads. After seven days the mysterious darkness disappeared from the synagogue, but the white walls remained as black as the charred cedar joists of the Temple of Jerusalem. The night of that exile which was thenceforth the doom of the scattered Children of Israel, remains as a perpetual admonition upon the walls. Their blackness is holy; no human hand dares to remove it; the blasphemous finger would wither, that dared to scratch thereon. But on the Day of Redemption, the stain will disappear of itself, and the walls of the consecrated edifice suddenly beam with a diamond lustre, like the gates of Heaven. Since the fall of Jerusalem; therefore, the curse in common use among the Jews of Prague is: 'Be you blackened!'

Any change in the structure and decoration of this half subterranean temple is forbidden. During the last century, a sexton ventured to attempt driving a nail into the walls. The ladder on which he had ascended tumbled down, hammer and nails fell out of his hands, and he remained a whole hour hanging dead in the air. At last he gradually lowered to the earth by invisible spirits, and only came to life again after he had been dressed in the garments of the grave. This man, on whose countenance a smile was never afterwards seen, saw and heard all that was passing around him while he lay in the trance—the lamentations of his children, the voices of his friends and acquaintances, and even the tears and kisses of his wife which he felt like melted lead on his face, without being able to move. While hanging in the air, he beheld terrible sights with the inward eye.—What they were, he confided to no one, except the celebrated 'Hock Reb Lob,' a most wise and powerful Rabbi, to whom he confessed.

Near the graveyard, which stands in the middle of the Ghetto, the residence of the great Rabbi is still pointed out, and the garret where he passed long summer days and winter nights in cabalistic studies. Here he was waited upon by 'Golom,' a slave made of clay, to whom, with the assistance of the Magi, he had given life, in order that no one born of woman, no being darkened by the breath of earthly passion might approach him. So holy was the Rabbi, that even in the distance, the guilty and impure were troubled by his glance. A look of his eye compelled liars and slanderers to speak out their most secret thoughts and criminate themselves. The pious Empress, Maria Theresa, once came to Prague, and determined to drive the Jews out of the land. Mighty advocates, high officials, even Catholic priests, won by precious gold, endeavored in vain to soften her heart. When 'Hock Reb Lob' heard this, he took the huge Chaldaic folio in which he had been reading and set out to visit the Empress. He crossed the bridge, and when he had reached the city on the other side, a great crowd of curious Christians collected around him, and cries of contempt arose on all sides, he smiled and passed on. The gilded stage-carriage of the Empress drawn by six horses, came at full speed down the hill from the Palace of the Hradshin. 'Hock Reb Lob' stationed himself at the foot of the hill, and lifting his arm, cried in a loud voice, 'Halt!' This boldness exasperated the crowd to fury, and women and children pelted him with mud and stones. But the stones turned into

cherry-blossoms, and the mud fell like a rain of apple-blossoms on his furrowed brow, his silver beard and his broad shoulders. The carriage stood suddenly still in the midst of the descent; the six horses tossed their manes, champed their foaming bits, struck out wildly with their hoofs, threw their heads nearly to the earth in terror, then plunged again in the air, but could not move a step.—'Mighty Empress!' cried Hock Reb Lob, 'I swear by the Almighty God, thou wilt change thy mind before the sun goes down, and my people shall live in peace, till the Moldau flows over the towers of the Hradshin!' He then turned and walked slowly homeward through the awe-stricken crowd, carrying his Chaldaic folio; and in the same hour the Empress tore in pieces the decree which she had already signed for the banishment of the Jews.

The Cemetery is a most dismal place. There the wind blows over the rank, unknown grass around the tombstones, and rustles the boughs of the neglected trees which lift their crooked trunks here and there. Many of the stones are centuries old, decaying and half sunken in the black soil.—Snow and rain have half worn away the sharp Hebrew characters, and only the mossy, scroll-like heads of many others are to be seen among the grass, or a pair of hands of carved stone, denoting that there moulders one of the tribe of Aaron. Inside of the cemetery walls every foot of earth is composed of the dust and crumbling bones of the dead, but their rest is never disturbed in order to give place to the newly departed. Each one keeps possession of his narrow house, for the orthodox Jew thinks that economy of space, which is so greatly to the interest of the living, an infamy when applied to the dead; and wherever it is possible, he makes the severest sacrifices to obtain for himself and his fathers an everlasting property for their mortal remains. The cemetery has been full as far as the memory of the place reaches, and the dead are now burned in a spot outside of the city. Around the old graves cluster the lofty, toppling, crowded houses of the living, but no one ventures to enlarge his room at the cost of disturbing his ancestors whose name are mostly forgotten, whose race has often been long extinct. This piety, however, will vanish like the legends, whose source has been sealed since the commencement of this century.

Such a place as the Ghetto is rich in specimens of humanity as quaint and antique as itself. One of the most curious characters which one meets in Prague, is the old pedlar, a dealer in small wares, such as fishbones, knitting implements, needles and the like. He may be seen at all seasons and in all weathers, going the rounds, calling attention to his wares with a long nasal cry. Notwithstanding the toilsome nature of his business, the scanty returns it yields, and the general contempt with which he is looked upon, he plods through year after year feeling a kind of satisfaction in knowing that that prejudice against his race is growing less and less. 'In the *Jesuitengasse*,' he says, 'it is a long time since I have been drenched with water from the windows, and the children in *Smichw* are not so dangerous as formerly.' Thus consoling himself he goes along the street repeating his shrill cry. At the door of a brewery he sees a lusty apprentice with a green cap on his head, and a wish mousethatch just sprouting on his upper lip. He smiles in secret, for he remembers how, many years ago, a wicked boy burned off half his beard while he lay asleep beside the steps of a beer house. In his wrath at this disfigurement, he had cursed the boy and besought God to give him no beard when he grew up. Afterward, he had repented of his anger in sack-cloth and ashes, and begged that the curse might be removed. Now he sees the den on that apprentice's lip, and feels that his penitence had its effect.

His life, however has its annoyances. Sometimes he goes wandering all day long without selling even a needle, and goes home groaning, not a kreutzer in his pocket. Perhaps it is late on Thursday evening, and he is anxious to get back before the Sabbath commences. Just as he turns his steps towards the Ghetto, some one calls him from the third story of a high house. 'Well,' he thinks, 'a little profit is better than none,' and toils up the long dark stairway, thinking of how much he shall make. When he reaches the top, he sees an impatient young mother trying to stop the screams of a refractory boy. 'Here he comes!' she cries, pointing to the poor dealer; 'there, do you see the frightful Jew? If you are not quiet this minute, he'll put you in his pack, and eat you alive when he gets home. There that's enough. Now, Jew, you may go!'

Man's Unwillingness to Die.

In the old and quiet days, when men lived more peacefully, we may reasonably infer that they died more willingly than now—or, at least, if the death struggle was as bitter when once it began its approach was less dreaded. To those who are accustomed to measure the length of happiness enjoyed, of knowledge or business accomplished in it, may seem paradoxical to suppose that, in these latter days, when men can see, learn, do, enjoy so much more than any previous generation; when, in fact, according to a rational estimate, the lives of men have been more than quadrupled, death, Heaven's last and loudest messenger, is more unwelcome than ever before. It would seem that the present generation should be satisfied with the lease of life which the genius of progress has lengthened materially for their benefit, and should contemplate with less regret its final termination; but such is not the fact. When we contemplate the mechanical inventions which have so enlarged the sphere of mind, and furnished it machinery, by the aid of which its most stupendous results are accomplished—those inventions which have almost annihilated space, those which have increased in a wonderful degree, the productiveness of labor—when we contemplate these, and with them, the increased mental activity, and the progressive ideas of the age, consciousness aware that a new and brighter chapter in the world's history is just opening, we sigh to think that ere we have pursued a single page, our eyes must be eclipsed by the dark

wing of the death angel. When, by the powers of association and analogy, we follow the great inventions and moral movements of the present into future generations, our speculations upon their ultimate results are interrupted, and our hearts chilled by the thought, that long before their fulfillment, we shall be sleeping in the dust—that just when the providence of God is working new wonders upon earth; and just when it has furnished us the means of taking a comprehensive view of these wonders, we must, after catching a glimpse of the great drama, sink into the silence and darkness of the grave. The miser and the sensualist may know nothing of these aspirations after long life—they ask no more than an average duration of existence, if their keen passion allow them to think of death at all; but the philosophic mind, or minds in philosophic moods—those who take the most elevated and comprehensive views of life are most appalled by the first thoughts of death. We say the first thoughts, and we mean the natural, abstract idea of death which first strikes the imagination—before faith plumes her wing to soar across the death flood, and open to our view the regions of immortality beyond the mysterious veil that hangs before our mortal eyes. Happy is he whose faith stands ready at such a moment to lift his soul out from the blackness into which his native instinct plunges it. This aspiration after a long life in which to watch and admire the developments of God's great plan of Providence, is really a yearning after immortality, and to such souls, at such moments, infidelity is possible. They would prefer an eternal hell to annihilation, and hell itself would be a heaven to them were they permitted to behold from it the doings of the Almighty upon this our earth.

From the New York Tribune.

"Spiritual Manifestations."

The following is a letter, written in answer to an urgent request for a relation of the writer's personal experience, (which we had vaguely heard was remarkable), with reference to the 'Rappings' or vibrations which have been attributed to the agency of disembodied spirits. Although thus written solely as a private testimony, we have since obtained permission to publish it, if we thought any good end would thereby be subserved. Very many of our readers will recognize the name of the writer as that of a lady of the highest character, who holds an honorable rank among the Poetical writers of our country. [Ed. Tribune.]

PROVIDENCE, R. I., Sunday March, 9, 1851.

HORACE GREELEY, Esq.—Dear Sir: Mr. C. has recently reminded me of my promise to write to you in relation to the Spiritual Phenomena in which I am so much interested. I should have done so many weeks ago, in compliance with a wish which you intimated to Miss P., but testimonials to the verity of these mysterious demonstrations have accumulated so rapidly of late that I imagined anything I might have to say to you on the subject would be merely a repetition of statements previously made by others. If a brief account of my initiatory experience can be of any value to you, I shall be most happy to impart it.

My intention was first called to these mysterious sounds in the Autumn of 1849, about three months before any intelligence had reached me of the singular manifestations in Rochester. I noticed them for the first time within twenty-four hours after the death of a friend. Since that period, I have heard them almost daily both when alone and when in company with others. They generally occur in some remote part of the room—oftenest when I am thinking of these manifestations, and, not infrequently as if in reply to some mental question. Even now while I am writing to you, I hear a succession of slight sounds, which seem to proceed from the center of a table which stands at the distance of four or five feet from the desk at which I am seated. I am alone in the room, and the noonday sun is shining brightly into the apartment. There is no apparent cause for the production of these sounds. They have been repeated, after the interval of a few seconds, for ten minutes. This is a new experience. I have never before heard them so continuously and for so long a time. In October last, I noticed that these apparent responses to my thoughts came more frequently, and more promptly, in the presence of M., a young girl who has lived many years with my mother. She has never outgrown an instinctive dread of the supernatural, evinced from her childhood; and it was with difficulty that I obtained her reluctant consent to sit with me an hour every evening, for the purpose of observing more critically the effect her presence might have on them. For the first week or two they were heard as before at a distance—either on the walls, the floor or the furniture. I one evening asked *mentally*, that if these sounds were caused by an invisible intelligence, I might receive some evidence of it by hearing them made near my person, on an object that I would *mentally* indicate. In less than a minute I heard three low but distinct raps on the back of my chair. This experiment was several times successfully repeated. I then sought to elicit the sounds by requiring M. to place her hand on a table, but failing in the attempt, I discontinued it, and some weeks elapsed before these seeming responses to my thoughts occurred with any certainty or regularity in the presence of this young girl.—

In the meantime, however I had an opportunity of hearing alleged spiritual responses, and even direct communications, made through the alphabet, at the house of Mr. W., and at other places. My private experience had prepared me to observe these manifestations attentively, and critically, but without incredulity. When the persons presiding

at these sittings asked if there were any spirits present who would communicate with me, they were answered "None." This was rather mortifying to me, as I had been so sincerely desirous to ascertain the truth in this matter. But it would seem that my own friends were determined to choose their own time.

On Monday, Nov. 4. I happened to be relating what I had witnessed on these occasions, to a group of curious, but very incredulous listeners, casually met together at the house of an acquaintance. In reply to their entreaties that I would obtain for them an introduction to some of these charmed circles, I suggested that we might possibly find some favorable medium in the party then present. They laughingly gathered around a large table in the centre of the room; when, not less to my own astonishment than to theirs, we were greeted by a succession of slight raps, which presently became clear and sonorous vibrating on the ear with startling distinctness in the midst of the breathless silence that now reigned throughout the company. The right hand and arm one of the ladies soon became cold and rigid, and, by the advice of a physician, who was present, we discontinued the sitting; not, however, until I had asked (according to the usual formula) if I might know what spirit was communicating with us: I received in reply a series of letters which sounded like an oriental name.—Thinking there might be some mistake, and anxious to know if these sounds were indeed caused by an intelligent agent, I repeated the request, and again received the same series of letters, of which I could make nothing. The lady who was ascertained to be the medium on this occasion, was a stranger to me, and left town the next morning.

Not many days after, being with another circle of friends, and in presence of another medium, the name of a deceased friend was announced to me as that of a guardian spirit. This was the first intelligible communication I had received.—I asked, "is this the same spirit who communicated a series of letters to me on Monday evening; and if so, may I know the meaning of those letters?" To the first of these questions I received an affirmative answer; to the second, "At some future time." Three weeks from the date of this communication I was one evening receiving responses purporting to be from the friend whose name was announced to me as above, when I was interrupted by the entrance of some young visitors. They were curious to know what spirit I was conferring. I know not what fancy impelled me to say, "May the name be given us in an anagram?"

I had, previous to the decease of this friend, made several very curious anagrams from the letters of his name, (arranging them so as to form another word or phrase,) and I mentally wished that one of these phrases might be given. But instead of receiving the words I looked for, the same series of letters, the same Oriental name which had been indicated to me on the 4th of November was again communicated, and I now found, to my astonishment, that these letters were the letters of my friend's name! Could I doubt, after this, that there was an intelligence present on these several occasions, over whose thoughts and purposes neither my thoughts nor the thoughts of any one in the circle had any control? It should be remembered that these communications were made at different times, in the presence of different persons, having no acquaintance with each other, and through different mediums.

These incidents, though trivial in themselves, are, when viewed in connection, full of significance, and seem to have been deliberately and skillfully devised to prepare my mind for the reception of subsequent manifestations. All the communications which I have received purporting to be from the same intelligence have been consistent with each other—often seeming to indicate a sequence which has afterwards been fulfilled. When alone with M. I have seldom asked what are called "test questions," and seldom requested or received physical demonstrations; yet proofs more convincing, than any that I could have devised have daily been accorded me, and in the scene and at the request of other persons I have repeatedly seen evidences of an invisible power exerted upon material objects so strange and startling, that "Henceforth I shall not smile at the most marvelous legend."

It is urged as an argument against the spiritual origin of these sounds that the demonstrations are often frivolous and contradictory. There are doubtless many puzzling and seemingly anomalous things yet to be accounted for; but in the midst of these apparently trivial and inharmonious particulars will be found, sooner or later, a harmonious result. A new class of facts is presented for our observation, which, so far from conflicting with any known law, will, I am persuaded, throw light on much that was obscure in the Past and illumine our views of the Future.

It seems to me very wisely ordered that these things should come to us for the present in a form which the dullest and most unimaginative cannot question. I feel well assured that all we have yet seen is but initial—preparatory to more beautiful and impressive revelations and more efficient modes of communication.

A large class of persons, compelled to admit that the facts are perplexing and mysterious, are bent upon finding out what they term a "rational" solution of them. Only two suggestions have yet been offered—one, that the whole thing is diabolical; the other, that some person in the circle unconsciously impresses some other person, who is equally unconscious of that impression, and that in this state of unconscious subjection to an unconscious will, electric forces are projected and sentences transmitted to us indicating as distinctly a separate and independent agency as any that were ever transmitted through the electric wires of the telegraph!

The diabolical theory seems rather the more plausible of the two. Yet it is hardly credible that malignant spirits should take upon themselves so beneficent a mission as that of hovering about us with messages of love, sustaining us with words of 'lofty cheer,' and inciting us to faith, patience and charity; for such, I believe, is the general purport of these mysterious 'raps.' Those which have been