The Damascus Affair—1840

By Albert M. Hyamson, O.B.E., F.R.Hist.S.

On the 5th February, 1840, Father Tommaso, an Italian friar of the Capuchin Order who had been resident for many years in Damascus, disappeared. His servant also was never seen again. It had been Tommaso’s practice to vaccinate children—especially Jewish and Christian—and he was consequently on friendly terms with many Jewish families in Damascus. The friar and his servant were said to have been last seen in the Jewish quarter at about 11 a.m. affixing placards, announcing a forthcoming sale of goods. One of these placards, which it was suggested had been removed and re-affixed, was found near the shop of a Jewish barber. A few days earlier, Tommaso and his servant had been involved in a quarrel with some Moslem Arabs, and one of them, a muleteer, had been heard to swear that Tommaso would die at his hands. As soon as the disappearance became known, another of this group of Arabs, a merchant, committed suicide.

The Latins or Roman Catholics of the Ottoman Empire were at that time under the protection of France and it fell in ordinary course to the Consul of that power in Damascus, the Count de Ratti Menton, to investigate the disappearance. Menton unfortunately had very strong anti-Jewish prejudices. He was described by the Paris Correspondent of The Times as an instigator of atrocities and arch-persecutor of the Jews, “A Legitimatist of the oldest and worst school, an adherent of the imbecile and fanatical party who by their folly brought about the revolution, and who, like his masters, has ‘learned nothing and forgotten nothing’. He is represented moreover as a person who has everywhere rendered himself obnoxious.” 2 Heine, who was at the time correspondent in Paris of the Augsburger Zeitung, described him as “Formerly he was French consul in Sicily, but having twice been bankrupt, had to change his residence. Named consul at Tiflis, in Russia, he was recalled at the insistent demand of the Russian Government.” 3 Before he had commenced any investigations he proposed to make, Ratti Menton seems to have decided that Tommaso and his servant had been murdered by Jews and that the murder had been committed for ritual purposes.

Ratti Menton’s first step was to have the Jewish barber arrested and tortured in order to get him to confess and, still better, to accuse some of the prominent lay and ecclesiastical Jews of Damascus. To this end he secured the assistance of a couple of Arab criminals, in one case securing his release from prison, whom he used to persuade and threaten the barber and others to give evidence in support of his charges, and of some astrologers who managed to deduce from the stars that the criminals were certain named prominent members of the Damascus Jewish community. Ratti Menton in these activities seems to have had the sympathy of most of the small European community—limited almost to the Consuls—of Damascus, to a large extent like himself imbued with Levantinism. Among these there was however one prominent exception, the Consul for Austria, G. G. Merlato.

Tommaso was said to have been last seen at eleven in the morning in the Jewish Quarter. A Jewish witness, however, came forward to testify that he had seen him

1 Paper read before the Jewish Historical Society of England on 4th August, 1940.
2 The Times, 18th May, 1840, page 5.
3 H. Heine, Lutèce, Paris, 1855, pp. 59, 60.
elsewhere on the afternoon of the same day and others, Moslems as well as Jews, were prepared to support his testimony. Ratti Menton could, however, tolerate nothing that went contrary to his theory regarding the disappearance. The Governor of the City, Sherif Pasha, who was also an adopted son of Mehmet Ali, the ruler of Egypt, at the time in control of Syria also, was entirely under the influence of Ratti Menton just as Mehmet Ali himself rested largely on French support. Moreover Ratti Menton and Sherif were close friends. Ratti Menton had consequently little difficulty in getting the witness who had dared to give evidence contrary to his wishes bastinadoed. The poor wretch died under the punishment. The incident is described in a report, translated from the Hebrew, by a Jewish resident sent to Constantinople and forwarded by the heads of the Jewish community there to the leading Jews of England and the Continent.

"After this a Jew who was free, presented himself before the Governor, stating that the calumny that we make use of blood for our Passover cakes, had been discussed before all the Powers, who, after consulting their Divines, had decreed the inadmissibility of such a calumny, and he added that it could not be other than that Christians had killed them, or that they had clandestinely absented themselves from the country, and that the Barber, in order to save himself from persecution, had stated that which was not true. Upon this the Governor replied that as he had said that the Christians had killed them, he must know who was the murderer, and in order that he should confess he was beaten to such an extreme that he expired under the blows."

Another witness whose evidence confirmed that of this victim was similarly punished. A gatekeeper of the Jewish Quarter was also bastinadoed to death.

The young barber under the pressure of torture and of Ratti Menton's agent provocateur broke down and mentioned seven prominent Jewish merchants all of whom were arrested. One of them was David Harari who had sent a message by a Moslem servant to the barber shortly before Tommaso had disappeared. This servant was also arrested and bastinadoed and under torture more or less corroborated the barber's story, even going so far as to say that he had himself murdered the friar, acting under the orders of the Jews. One must mention at this point that a Moslem female slave of David Harari, despite torture and imprisonment, refused in response to both offer of bribe and threat, to inculpate her master.

The seven prominent Jews, who included four members of the Harari family which is still well and honourably known in Egypt, were put to the torture. Two of them, one aged eighty, died under it and another embraced Islam and was released. The others steadfastly denied that they knew anything of the disappearance of Father Tommaso or were in any respect responsible for it. Another prominent Jew whose family is also well and honourably known in this country and in Egypt, Isaac Picciotto, was also arrested, but he was under Austrian protection. This arrest gave the Austrian Consul, who had hitherto watched the proceedings with ever increasing disgust and reprobation, an opportunity to intervene. He demanded the immediate release of his protegé. This course the French Consul opposed to the utmost, but the Austrian demand could not be refused and Picciotto was thereupon released. The occasion for his arrest seems to have been a visit he paid to the barber in his prison to induce him to tell the truth as he knew it, whatever it might be, certain that even if the friar had been murdered by a Jew it was not for ritual purposes. The number of prisoners, seven, seems to have been a consequence of a mystic belief of Menton or his associates that it has some special religious virtue and therefore for a ritual
murder seven participants were necessary. It was also necessary to get some "expert" evidence that Christian blood was a requisite for the Jewish ritual. For this purpose three of the rabbis of Damascus were arrested and tortured. Further efforts in the same direction took the form of the arrest of 64 schoolboys—apparently the whole of the attendants at a Talmud Torah—and their imprisonment in the hope that their parents, overcome by the sufferings of their children, would confess and supply the required evidence. Apart from the children about seventy Jews were tortured to secure confessions or evidence.

Sherif Pasha was entirely in the hands of Ratti Menton and was prepared, it would seem, to do anything that he wished. At his desire soldiers were sent to demolish houses of the Jews to secure evidence of murder. Hitherto since no bodies had been found there was no evidence at all that the friar and his servant were dead. The houses were demolished but nothing to assist the case was found. At length, however, some bones, afterwards certified by anatomists to be those of animals, a piece of cloth, and an old shoe, were found in a sewer in the Jewish Quarter, and this discovery was considered conclusive. Ratti Menton stepped from the role of prosecutor to that of judge. Since a French protégé was concerned he was entitled to do so. He quickly found the Jewish prisoners guilty not only of murder but of murder for ritual purposes. The Governor of Damascus as quickly confirmed the finding. Before the prisoners could be hanged, however, the confirmation of Mehemet Ali in Alexandria was required. The bones discovered in the sewer were buried with pomp in the chapel of the Capuchins and an inscription placed above them to the effect that they were the bones of Father Tommaso who had been murdered by Jews.

In the meanwhile news of the charges and of their accompaniments began to reach Europe.

The structure of the community of Damascus, as now, was on the basis of nationalities and in the East nationality is almost synonymous with religion. Father Tommaso was a Christian; those accused of murdering him, Jews. The Affair at once became a matter of Christian versus Jew, even Latin or Western Christian versus Jew. The European Consuls and their entourage were a part of the Latin Christian community. One of their members was taking a leading part in the prosecution of the Jews. It was almost natural that his colleagues should leave the matter to him and accept his conclusions whatever they might be. The British Consul, N. W. Werry or Wherry 1 did so and we will see later how this action of his was appreciated in London. The Consul for Austria, however, Merlalto or Merlato, took another line. He was not satisfied to accept without question the findings of the Consul for France. He himself examined them and the evidence on which they were based and came to very different conclusions. He found the charges based solely on perjury and confessions forced by torture. In his report to his superior officer in Alexandria, the Consul-General for Austria in Egypt, he appealed to his Government to intervene so that justice should be done and the iniquities cease. "I declare to you, Sir," he said, "that it is impossible to endure any longer the spectacle of such atrocities." Merlalto did not appeal in vain. He had the sympathy and support of his Consul-General and of their Government. Metternich, the Austrian statesman and pillar of autocracy, appealed personally to the Pope but without avail. Otherwise the efforts of Merlalto and the Austrian Government met with considerable success.

1 He spelled his name with or without an h indiscriminately.
He was able to report on the 23rd April that the tortures to which the prisoners had been subjected had been suspended and that there was some improvement in the position of the Jews generally. At the same time the Consul-General for Austria had been energetic at Alexandria and he was able to report to his Government on the 2nd May that Mehmet Ali, the ruler of Egypt and Syria, had written to the Governor of Damascus “We have been informed that certain powerful men among the Christians attack our Hebrew subjects of Damascus, and that complaints have been vainly addressed to you. Such aggressions displease us; they are contrary to our wishes. I command you, therefore, to prevent their recurrence.”

He also contemplated entrusting the decision regarding the punishment of the prisoners which had been remitted to him, to the Consuls of the four Powers, Austria, Prussia, Russia, and England.

In the whole sordid affair Merlato stands out as the Christian gentleman in the best sense, one who put his humanity and his human feeling, his sense of right and devotion to it above all other considerations. It is to be regretted that one cannot speak similarly of his British colleague. Wherry, who to take the most charitable view, impregnated with the inertia of the East, was willing to leave everything to his French colleague and accept without question whatever he told him. That this latter view is correct cannot be doubted when one reads Wherry’s dispatches on the subject. Despite their unpleasantness one feels compelled to do so. The first was sent to Lord Ponsonby, the British Ambassador at Constantinople, on the 28th February.

“The horrible assassination committed in this City on Padre Tommaso of the Capuchin Convent has been discovered, the perpetrators are seven of the most influential Jewish merchants here, in the dwelling of one of whom it took place. It was attended with the most cruel and revolting circumstances. It is stated on the evidence of the Jew Barber and a servant, auxiliaries, that, after having cut the throat of the victim, the flesh was cut from the bones in pieces, the bones pounded and the whole thrown into the large common sewer of their quarter of the town, abundantly washed with the great quantity of water which flows through it: many parts have however been found; on the same evidence it is stated that the blood was saved by the merchants, from whom they learnt that it was for the purpose of being employed in their religious feasts. No discovery has yet taken place respecting the assassination of the Padre’s Servant, who disappeared with him in the Jewish Quarter of the City.”

This was followed on the 30th March by a further dispatch.

“In my last despatch, I had the honor of addressing Your Lordship, I stated some particulars on the subject of the sacrifices made on the Christians, by the Jews of this City; I now proceed to communicate to your Lordship what further information I have obtained. It has been immemorially the received opinion and belief of the Christian population throughout Turkey, and several instances have been brought to light, by the local Governments in different parts that, the Jews scattered throughout the Country, immolated clandestinely Christians, to obtain their blood, to celebrate their feasts there-with in their religious ceremonies, this fact has been proved here. The Padre Tommaso, chief of the Capuchin Convent, under the French protection and his servant, were immolated in the Houses of two of the most influential Jews of this City, at each, seven of these influential persons performed the Sacrifice, being in each four laymen and three Rabins, the blood of the victims was saved, for the above purpose and the remains mutu-

1 The Times, 2nd June, 1840.
2 F.O. 195/170 No. 48 of 28th February, 1840. N. W. Wherry to Viscount Ponsonby.
lated and disposed of in the common Sewer of the City. Four of the actors in this horrible murder have made a full and detailed confession of all the circumstances, and the facts have been so minutely proved on the spots that they were committed and of the remains disposed of and partly found that, no doubt can exist thereof. The extracts from the Talmud, taken from the Rabin prisoners have been translated, which warrant these enormities and the Secret, which has been hitherto traditional and only imparted to the initiated, now has been revealed to the public. All the principals in the murder of the Padre, are in the hands of the local Government and two who murdered the servant, have been arrested, the remaining five have evaded. It is remarkable that, the principals in these murders, are fourteen of the most influential and wealthy Jews in this City. Too much praise cannot be given to the French Consul here the Comte de Rattimenton, for the energy and perserverance (sic) he has displayed conjointly with H.E. Sheriff Pasha in discovering this horrible transaction and it is to be hoped, as the investigation proceeds, every further necessary evidence will be obtained, independent and impartial, before falling into the Power of the local Government or of the French Consul, distinct from the evidence already produced, extracted in some cases by violent punishment and torture and in some, by witnesses turning evidence for the prosecution, so as not to leave a ray of distrust in the most sceptical mind, or of dissidence in opinion, relative to the difference between the proceedings in the Tribunals of Europe and the summary violent course practised in Turkey, either on facts of the murders, or the object for which they were committed, and that on such substantial grounds the perpetrators will be brought to condign punishment and measures taken with the Jew people to prevent a repetition of such horrible crimes."  

Palmerston's comment on this dispatch was unequivocal, "I am sorry to find Mr. Werry entertains opinions so un-English about Torture and Justice. He has been too long in the Levant and must come home and spend a year in England from Christmas next."  

By the 14th May, however, Wherry seemed to be developing a little doubt on the subject. In another dispatch to Lord Ponsonby of that date he reported:—

"The Jew prosecution and the recently reports made thereon have been ordered by Mehemet Ali to be referred to Ibrahim Pasha for decision, orders are now awaited here from Marrash(?) on this affair. Neither the detained accused nor the nation are now persecuted. The latter are generally in good spirits and following their avocations as formerly; the Christians are somewhat depressed at the protection the Jews generally efficiently receive in this Affair. I am acting on instructions I have received from Colonel Hodges respecting the watch I keep on the course of these transactions. The Mussulman population take a decided bias in favour of the Christian cause against the Jews. Considerable conflict of opinion and authority on this persecution has arisen between the French and Austrian Consuls here and with the Austrian Consul General at Alexandria. The French pursuing the prosecution and the Austrian defending the accused Jews."  

A week later he however relapsed somewhat. Writing privately to John Bidwell, Palmerston's Private Secretary, he was more frank and showed all his prejudice.

"... The Jews are moving heaven and earth, both in Turkey, Egypt and Europe, to gain over the Governments, public authority and public opinion their side, to establish their innocence, if not of the crime, the object for which it was committed. Ingenuity of

1 F.O. 195/170, No. 49 of 30th March, 1840, and F.O. 78/410 of 23rd March, 1840, Wherry to Palmerston.
2 See F.O. 78/410, Minute on No. 4 of 23rd March, 1940. Dispatch from Consul Werry.
3 Mehemet's son and representative in Syria.
4 F.O. 195/170, No. 51, of 14th May, 1840.
argument, every species of intrigue both of influence and pecuniary is resorted to, to arrive at that end. The Pacha here and the local authorities here, particularly the French Consul, might, to have quashed this investigation, have made immense sums of money, but fortunately the latter virtuous officer by his firmness prevented such infamous practises succeeding and most certainly as far as depended on him, induced the Government here to mitigate the violence of its proceedings, both as to the bastinadoe and torture of the Prisoners, but such is the established practise in this country, nay throughout Turkey, that his efforts were not always successful; but it must be borne in mind that the Tribunals in Turkey are not organised as in Europe; where are the judges, the attorney and solicitor general, the experienced Counsellors and the practiced talented attorneys, we have in England. All this is replaced, and it may be said legalized by custom, the bastinadoe (barbarous as the system is) to extort confession—and on this confession, corroborated by facts and details, the guilt of the accused is fully established. Such was the inflamed state of the public mind when the remains of the unfortunate victim, the Padre and his servant were found, that it required the greatness firmness and prudence of the Government here and of the French Consul to restrain the Mussulman and Christians from massacring the whole of the Jew population here and they may consider themselves peculiarly fortunate in having suffered so little. But on the other hand was a consul here to remain passive and for the sake of Hebrew influence and gold, to shut his eyes to the horrible murder of a Minister of Christ. Tolerant as I am and moving in accord with the liberal and philosophic principles of the age we live in, I must confess that I conceive the conduct of the French consul here was honourable and virtuous. What is now attempted to be established?—to prove black white!—the innocence of the Jews and thereby blacken the reputation of an honorable public functionary and destroy his career!—by whom? by persons whose acts of venality are notoriously before the public, to reap themselves an assumed fame and to fill their pockets, thereby completely reversing the relative positions the defendant and prosecuting functionaries stood in when the investigation commenced. But all these intrigues and base measures, whether for private pecuniary motives, or for Hebrew national and political ends cannot succeed in the face of completely established fact. Moreover the French consul has demanded, to guard his own reputation and for the better elucidation of this tragical suit that the French Government appoints a commission to examine into his conduct and the nature of the investigation and suit, to come here for that special object. He courts enquiry and I feel the result will be completely honourable for him... we shall see how the affair will finish here, but I feel quite convinced that any impartial and conscientious person will decide on reading the Investigation that the Jews are guilty.”

Wherry reported also on the persecution to Lord Palmerston, the Foreign Minister in London. His dispatch of the 23rd March followed generally his earlier ones to Lord Ponsonby. The reply that he received must have caused him much astonishment. The archives of the Foreign Office contain few dispatches couched in language similar to that in which Palmerston wrote to his representative at Damascus.

“I have received your despatch No. 4 of the 23rd of March last; and I have to state to you, that I have read with much surprize that part of your despatch which relates to the atrocities which have been committed on the Jews in Damascus, and I have to observe that the manner in which you make mention of those Transactions, either proves you to be wholly uninformed of what passes in the city in which you are stationed, or else evinces on your part an entire want of those principles and sentiments which ought to distinguish a British Agent.

1 F.O. 78/410, of 22nd May, 1840. Private. Consul Werry to John Bidwell.
“I have to desire that you will make accurate and minute enquiries into the circumstances to which your despatch relates, and that you will send me a full and detailed report of everything which took place.

I inclose for your information and guidance copies of a despatch and of its inclosures which I have addressed to Colonel Hodges, instructing him to represent to Mehemet Ali the extreme disgrace which the barbarous enormities perpetrated at Damascus reflect upon his administration, the more especially as those atrocities were the deliberate act of the Pasha to whom the Government of the great city of Damascus has been entrusted.

Her Majesty’s Government can entertain no doubt that Mehemet Ali will feel it due to his own character, as well as to a sense of justice, not only to make immediately the most ample reparation in his power to the unfortunate Jews who have been sufferers on this occasion, but also to dismiss and punish those officers who have so greatly abused the powers and authority which had been placed in their hands.”

The dispatch to Colonel Hodges to which Lord Palmerston referred ran as follows:—

“I have to acquaint you that a few days ago I was requested by a Deputation of the Jews residing in this Country; to receive from them at a formal interview a communication which they were anxious to make to me respecting some intelligence which they had recently received from Constantinople deeply affecting the interests of the Jewish Community in the Levant. I accordingly saw this Deputation on the 30th of last month, having in the meantime received from Mr. Henriquez, their President, the letter and papers of which copies are enclosed for your information. It appeared from the communication made to me by the Deputation, as well as from these papers, that the Jews of Damascus and of Rhodes have recently been exposed to most grievous persecutions by the Authorities in those quarters.

With respect to the outrages at Rhodes, I shall instruct His Majesty’s Ambassador at Constantinople to make a suitable communication to the Porte; but I have to instruct you to communicate officially and in writing to Mehemet Ali, as much of the inclosed papers as relates to the transactions at Damascus. You will represent to Mehemet Ali the extreme disgrace which the Barbarous Enormities perpetuated at that place, reflect upon his Administration, and you will observe upon the astonishment which Europe will feel at finding that under the Rule of a Chief who has prided himself upon promoting civilization, upon establishing security for persons and property, and for maintaining public order, atrocities such as these should have been committed, and that these atrocities should have been not the acts of an ignorant rabble setting superior authority at defiance, but the deliberate exercise of power by the Pasha to whom the Government of the great City of Damascus has been entrusted.

Her Majesty’s Government can entertain no doubt that Mehemet Ali will feel it due to his own character as well as to a sense of justice, not only to make immediately the most ample reparation in his power to the unfortunate Jews who have been sufferers on this occasion, but also to dismiss and punish those officers who have so greatly abused the Powers and authority which had been placed in their hands.”

This was followed on 30th May by a dispatch from Palmerston to Colonel Hodges at Alexandria.

“With reference to my despatch No. 9 of the 5th of May respecting the persecutions which the Jews at Damascus have recently suffered, I have to instruct you to impress upon Mehemet Ali the injurious effect which has been produced upon public opinion in England by those transactions, and you will state to the Pasha that a deep and general feeling of

2 F.O. 78/403, No. 9, and F.O. 195/169, of 5th May, 1840.
3 F.O. 78/403, No. 17, of 30th May, 1840.
indignation has been excited throughout this Country by the barbarity of the treatment which the unfortunate Jews have experienced.

You will urge the Pasha to make compensation to the sufferers at Damascus for the injuries which they have sustained, at the same time that he takes measures for punishing the Parties who were guilty of the outrages, and for effectually preventing the recurrence of such disgraceful proceedings.

P.S. I enclose a copy of a letter ¹ from Sir Thomas Baring, and a copy of a Memorial ² from the Society for promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, calling the attention of H.M.'s Government to the late persecutions of that people at Rhodes and at Damascus."

This dispatch came to Wherry as a great shock. In acknowledging receipt of it ³ he expressed his grief at the opinions expressed and stated his hope almost abjectly that Palmerston would on reconsideration be "induced to reinstate me in Your Lordship's estimation and approbation, which it always has been and will be my study to merit ".

And writing to Bidwell on the same day he said "I am excessively chagrined at My Lord Palmerston's dispatch to me. If we are not supported by our superiors to whom are we to look and what is to become of us ?"

The Jews of Damascus, those who were not under arrest, were naturally not quiescent in these circumstances. They appealed to their coreligionists in Alexandria and Constantinople. Those in Alexandria at once appealed to Mehemet Ali and doubtless influenced him to some extent in his orders to the Governor of Damascus to protect the Jews of that city from the persecution from which they were suffering. Another incentive was undoubtedly the energetic action of Colonel Hodges, the British Consul-General in Alexandria, who invited the other European Consuls to join him in making representations to Mehemet Ali on behalf of the suffering Jews of Damascus. Those of Russia, Prussia (representing also Denmark), Spain (representing also the U.S.A.), Austria, Sweden, and Tuscany, joined him at once in these representations. The Consul-General for France stood aside. The leading Jews of Constantinople, on receipt of the appeal from their brethren in Damascus, addressed the principal Jewish communities of Europe. In the meanwhile, almost simultaneously with the Damascus Accusation, a charge of ritual murder was made against the Jews of Rhodes, then a part of the Ottoman Empire. This Affair followed to some extent the course of that of Damascus, but I do not propose to deal with it on this occasion. However, the Jews of Constantinople were as closely affected by the Rhodes Accusation as by that of Damascus and appealed for help in regard to both of them. The appeal to London was sent to Baron Lionel de Rothschild and his brothers and their kinsman, Sir Moses Montefiore, already the outstanding English Jew, in fact the best known living Jew, and through him to the Jewish Board of Deputies of which he had been and was again to be the President.

The appeal of the Jews of the East reached London in April and the Affair first found publicity in the columns of The Times on the 18th of that month. Long extracts from letters from correspondents regarding both the Rhodes and the Damascus affairs which showed their sympathy with the threatened Jews were printed. For example the evidence against the Jewish barber was summarized as follows: "Father Thomas had caused bills to be posted in different parts of the town, announcing the

¹ 28th May.
² 27th May.
³ F.O. 78/410, No. 10, of 20th July, 1840.
sale of the effects of a European recently deceased. One of these bills, which had been posted near the shop of a Jewish barber was said to have been taken down by the barber, and afterwards posted up in a different manner from the original posting. . . . Whether the barber took offence either at the number or the colour of the wafers is not explained. It is not said that they were disposed in a cruciform order. Be this as it may, the wicked Jew is said to have replaced the bill by two wafers only, a blue and a red, one at the top, the other at the bottom. This was proof enough. Nothing could be clearer to all Damascus than that there was a conspiracy among the Jews, of which the barber was the chief agent.”

A week later (25th April) *The Times* printed a letter from Abraham Conorte and Aaron Cohen, prominent Jews of Constantinople, as well as similar communications regarding the affair of Rhodes. Simultaneously (21st April) in Paris *Le Journal des Debats* adopted a line of protest similar to that of *The Times*.

The interest of *The Times* continued unabated. In its issue of the 14th May the greater part of Merllato’s report, dated 23rd March, 1840, to the Austrian Consul-General at Alexandria was printed and on the 18th of the same month its Paris correspondent wrote at length, quoting a letter from Joseph Salvador, the historian, to the *Journal des Debats* and a petition of the Jews of Egypt to Mehemet Ali. Five of the six columns on the last page of the issue of the 24th June were devoted to the Damascus Affair. On the 2nd July, 1840, communications from Chief Rabbi Solomon Hirschel and David Meldola, “Presiding Rabbi of the Bovis Marks Congregation,” refuting the calumny, were printed. Finally on the 17th August four columns were devoted to both sides of the case, including a detailed account of a Seder service and reprints of reports by Sherif Pasha.

On the 21st April a meeting of representative English Jews, members and non-members of the Jewish Board of Deputies, was convened by the Board. There was present also a representative of the French Jews in the person of Adolphe Crémieux, the advocate and statesman and Vice-President of the *Consistoire Central des Israélites Français*. This meeting rejected with indignation the charge of ritual murder in general and that against the Jews of Damascus and Rhodes in particular. It protested in the strongest possible terms against the atrocities that had been committed in pursuance of the investigation into the fate of Father Tommaso and his servant and appealed to the Governments of England, France, and Austria “to remonstrate with those Governments under which these atrocities have taken place against their continuance. That this meeting confidently relies on the sympathy and humanity of the British Nation to exert its influence and authority to stay such abominable proceedings.” The meeting also resolved to ask the Foreign Secretary to receive a deputation. Such a deputation under Joseph Gutteres Henriques, the President of the Board of Deputies, was in due course received and obtained full assurances of British Government sympathy and support. Palmerston in his reply to the Deputation expressed “his willingness to aid the object sought by the Deputation”, and said that for this purpose he would immediately forward instructions to the British Ambassador at Constantinople and Colonel Hodges, the British Representative at Alexandria “directing them to use every remonstrance in their power to prevent the continuance of atrocities so disgraceful to the present era.” That Palmerston carried out this undertaking to the full is disclosed by the terms of the dispatch which he sent to Hodges a few days after the interview.1

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1 F.O. 78/403, No. 9, of 5th May, 1840. See page 61.
Hodges acted at once on these instructions. He gave such instructions to the Consul in Damascus "as were warranted by prudence and likely to mitigate the severities of which the Jews were the victims". He had first taken up the subject with the Pasha of Egypt in April and had continued it on subsequent occasions. He found Mehemet Ali "well disposed to do justice" and orders had been given for the suspension of all tortures. Early in May a joint note of intercession and remonstrance was, as has been mentioned, presented by the Consul-Generals of Austria and Russia and himself. The Consul-General for France refused to sign it on the ground that the matter was sub judice, that the French Consul in Damascus was the plaintiff in the proceedings and that no outside person or power had the right to intervene. The Times was able to report as early as the 18th May that Hodges had demanded of Mehemet Ali protection for the Jews of Damascus. The meeting of the Board of Deputies of 21st April sent also a deputation to the French Ambassador in London, M. Guizot, who promised to communicate its views to his Government.

In Paris Crémieux brought the matter to the personal notice of the King, Louis Philippe, and asked for the active intervention of the French Government. He, however, found little response. In the differences that had arisen between Mehemet Ali and his suzerain, the Sultan, France was Mehemet's only supporter among the Powers and the policy of Thiers, the head of the French Government, was to give to Mehemet and his Government full support in all matters. Thiers even refused to receive a deputation from the Consistoire Central. The most that it could get was an instruction to Cochelet, the Consul-General for France at Alexandria, to inquire into Ratti Menton's actions, but since the officer deputed for the purpose was a junior official, subordinate in rank to the French representative in Damascus the investigation was obviously not intended to be serious. Mehemet Ali, when Hodges saw him again, sheltered himself behind this investigation. He said that he could take no action until a report had been received from the French consular officer. Hodges stated in his dispatch home that little advantage to the cause of the Jews was likely to accrue from this mission since the majority of the French subjects in Egypt, including the official element, were strongly prejudiced against the Jews and that "the Viceroy will certainly be entirely guided by the opinions and wishes of France".

The Jewish Community was, however, not the only English body to make representations on behalf of the suffering Jews of the East, nor was the Government in this unrepresentative of the British Nation. The accounts of the atrocities—other periodicals as well as The Times afforded considerable space to publishing them—as they penetrated different circles aroused abhorrence, indignation and sympathy. The feeling was perhaps most intense among those whole-hearted Christians who looked forward to the absorption of the Jews of Britain and, especially, of the East into the Christian community. Apart from their natural feelings of humanity, they no doubt felt most deeply that the atrocities should have been committed in what was to them the sacred name of Christianity. Typical and outstanding among these sympathisers with the suffering Jews was the Seventh Earl of Shaftesbury, then Lord Ashley, the philanthropist, social reformer and active Christian, who spent a great part of a long life in working for the resettlement of the Jews in Palestine and the conversion of those there and elsewhere to Christianity.

1 F.O. 78/405, Dispatch No. 54, of 18th June, 1840.
A deputation consisting of Lord Ashley, the Bishop of Ripon, Sir Thomas Baring, the banker, Sir George Rose, the Member of Parliament and diplomatist, and others, waited on Palmerston on the 28th of May. They presented a memorial from the London Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews, expressing in very strong and feeling language the deep sympathy of the members of the Society with the Jews "for all the cruelty inflicted upon that inoffensive people, under charges as repugnant to the character and religion of the Jews, as it is revolting to the feelings of Christians". "Your memorialists, deploring with the strongest feelings of compassion, and deeply sympathizing with the inoffensive people of Israel, suffering under unmerited and cruel torment for a crime as abhorrent to the character and religion of the Jews as it is revolting to the feelings of Christians, earnestly entreat of Her Majesty's Government to exercise its merciful interposition and powerful influence, if not to obtain redress for the already afflicted, at least to prevent the recurrence of atrocities so dreadful, and secure protection for those who under similar calumnies and false accusations may be subjected to similar treatment."

Palmerston in reply assured the memorialists that the British Government had instructed its representatives in Constantinople and Alexandria to persuade the Ottoman and Egyptian Governments to make amends to the sufferers and to take steps to prevent a repetition of similar crimes.¹

Alexander McCaul, who had spent a lifetime of missionary effort among the Jews of Eastern Europe and this country and who had hopes of success also in Palestine, was so moved by the charges and atrocities that he wrote and published a pamphlet, "Reasons for believing that the charge lately revived against the Jewish People is a baseless falsehood. Dedicated by permission to Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen." In this, with evidence of a considerable knowledge of Jewish history, he argued strongly against the prevalence of ritual murder by Jews. He dealt with some of the past charges in detail, showing their absurdity one by one. After giving a list of prominent converts from Judaism who specifically denied the practice of ritual murder by Jews, he concluded "Nineteen years of intimate acquaintance with Israelites, and study of their literature, have produced in me a profound respect for their genius, their kindness of heart, and their preference for learning and religion before wealth and luxury. Never was a people more misunderstood and misrepresented than the Jews. I confess that from the Bible I had learned to regard them with awe. A near approach has taught me to look upon them with respect and affection."

"The London Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews" in Jerusalem, as soon as a report of the charges reached them, sent one of their members, the Rev. G. W. Pieritz, himself formerly a member of the Jewish community, to Damascus to investigate. He carried out his mission thoroughly, and so satisfactory were the results that, despite a natural prejudice consequent on his surroundings and his past, David Salomons, afterwards Sir David Salomons, the first Jewish Lord Mayor of London, printed his report in full in his "An Account of the recent persecution of the Jews at Damascus with reflections thereon; and an appendix, containing various documents connected with the subject," devoting more than a third of the book to it. Pieritz' conclusion was "I found the whole charge against the Jews there a vile fabrication, and that all means and right of legal defence was denied

¹ F.O. 195/162, No. 80, of 30th May, 1840.
them; while the most cruel tortures were employed to extort from them false confessions of guilt." Pieritz proceeded from Damascus to Alexandria and presented a petition to Mehemet Ali, to whom he was presented by the British Consul General, appealing for justice for the Jews of Damascus, and had a sympathetic reception from that ruler.

Some light on this mission of Pieritz or Peiritz, from a different angle, is given in the dispatches. Writing on the 24th April to Bidwell ¹ Wherry said:

"We have had a Mr. Peiritz here, a missionary from Jerusalem, a converted Jew, who in his zeal for the Jew brethren has taken quite a different view of the assassinations committed here by the Jews than the French Consul and the local Government did, and strange to say looks upon the perpetrators as innocent victims. The violent measures resorted to by the Pacha here to extract evidence and confession give Mr. Peiritz ample room to make something like a case out for the Jews. He intends, I learn from Mr. Moore, to publish and is extremely violent against the French Consul and Sheriff Pacha—in which he very comically lets me in for a share of his displeasure pretending that I was the counsellor of the French Consul. It is quite sufficient to be personally acquainted with the French Consul, his French dragoman and Sheriff Pacha to be at once convinced that they are not men either to be influenced or receive the counsel of anybody, supposing for the sake of argument that I had been so presumptuous and forgetful of my position, to have offered counsel in a case, which did not belong to my jurisdiction. It is an axiom always acted on in the Levant, never to permit colleagues mixing in each others affairs. The fact is I only saw the French Consul in public company, never once visited Sheriff Pacha or went to the Palace during the whole investigation, never once went to the Jew quarter of the town, to which the whole population resorted to be present at the production of the remains of the Catholic Padre and his servant and never had either the case or any one document submitted to me, nor in fact knew anything about the affair, but through my dragoman, who occasionally went to the Pacha's Palace, on other business. Mr. Peiritz is wroth against me, because he could not persuade me to be a convert to his opinions, when he was wholly ignorant of the evidence obtained and the circumstances of the case acted on by the Prosecutors and relied solely on information he obtained from the Jew brethren here, who of course misrepresented the case to him, and he, who I verily believe is still a Jew in conscience and heart, rejected all other information, and determined to whitewash the Jews at the expense of the Christians and all the Mussulman population in the country. We shall see what he will publish at Jerusalem, and violent as have been the measures of the Government here, I believe the case is substantially correct as I related it in my despatch to Lord Palmerston."

In a private letter to Bidwell of 22nd June he reverted to the same subject:

"I find my friend Mr. Peiritz, the missionary for the conversion of the Jews at Jerusalem, not content with publicly giving me a bad character at Beyrout, as having taken an active part against the accused Jews for the murder of the Padre Tomaso (sic) and his servant and entertaining illiberal and uncharitable sentiments against the Jew nation, has been to Alexandria, and made such strong allusions on my conduct towards Colonel Hodges that he required Mr. Peiritz to put them in a tangible shape and he has preferred (sic) certain allegations and charges against me for an imputed part he pretends I took in that prosecution. I learn indirectly from Alexandria that the Colonel requested him to do this, because Mr. Peiritz told him he intended to publish in the principal capitals of Europe his opinions and information on the Jew affair at Damascus and the Colonel wished to give me an opportunity of clearing myself from the charges, principally to engage the missionary not to implicate me in his intended publication or to give me the

¹ F.O. 78/410 of 24th April, 1840.
opportunity of being also heard in my defence at the *Tribunal of public opinion*. . . . I have further to state that they are a tissue of misrepresentations and falsehoods. I give you my word of honor that I took no part in the proceedings, either one way or the other and am entirely innocent of all the charges Mr. Peiritz makes against me. . . ."

These charges came to the notice of Hodges who investigated them and reported to Palmerston his conclusion that most of them had been refuted by Wherry. Many of them were certainly based on nothing more substantial than rumour.\(^1\)

Parliament also was stirred by the reports of the charges and the atrocities. The subject was raised in the House of Commons by Sir Robert Peel, the ex-premier and Leader of the Opposition. He appealed to the Government "to exercise such influence as it could exercise in order to ensure to those persons impartial justice. . . . Tortures had been inflicted upon that unfortunate people, he feared with the connivance of some Christian authorities, which reflected disgrace and dishonour on the age in which we lived." \(^2\) Three days later he returned to the subject and, although out of order, was permitted to give the House an account of the occurrences in Damascus. He pointed out that the excitement and baseless charges might affect the position of the Jews throughout the world unless some effectual steps were taken to appease it. Turning to the Government, he said "He knew they could not interfere officially, but such was the confidence in the name of Britain and the authority of the British Government, that it was believed that that interference which they could exercise, and which he hoped and believed they would exercise, would be beneficial. . . . Thus the Noble Lord would be enabled to rescue that great portion of European society, the Jews, who, in every country in which they lived had, by their conduct in private life, conciliated the general estimation and good-will of their fellow-subjects, from a charge which was founded on prejudice, and would subject them to the most grievous injustice."

Palmerston in reply said the Government had anticipated the wishes of Peel. He had immediately instructed the British Consul-General in Alexandria "to bring the subject under the serious attention of the Pasha of Egypt, to point out to him the effect which such atrocities as these must produce on the public mind in Europe, and to urge him, for his own sake, to institute such inquiries as would enable him to punish the guilty parties, if guilty parties there were, and to make such an atonement as was in his power to the unfortunate sufferers. Of course, any representations of this nature would not bear an official character, but were to be made solely as suggestions which affected the Pasha's own interests." \(^3\) The British Consul at Damascus had also been advised to furnish a full report.

Sympathetic speeches were also made by Daniel O'Connell, Lord Ashley, and other members.\(^3\)

Finally there was a meeting in the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House, representative of the City of London, with the Lord Mayor in the Chair, on the 3rd July, which, in the words of *The Times* in the course of three columns devoted to a report of the proceedings, was convened "for the purpose of taking into consideration the recent treatment of the Jews of Damascus, with a view to adopting such a series of resolutions as should express the feelings of deep sympathy which were entertained by the merchants, bankers and others, citizens of London, in the suffer-

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\(^1\) F.O. 78/405, No. 66, of 20th July, 1840.
\(^2\) Hansard, House of Commons, 19th June, 1840.
\(^3\) *ibid.* 22nd June, 1840.
ings which that people had been labouring under”. Such resolutions were duly adopted after eloquent speeches in support of them by prominent citizens.

The principal resolution ran: “That this meeting has heard with the deepest emotion and the greatest horror the recital of the cruelties inflicted upon the Jews in the East and hereby expresses its sympathy for the sufferers and its earnest hope that an immediate and impartial public investigation will take place so as to disprove in the face of the whole world the atrocious calumnies invented and propagated by their persecutors as a pretext for the infliction of cruelties almost unknown to the previous history of mankind.”

The meeting was followed by pages of correspondence in The Times, although space was not available for three quarters of what was received. All of these letters were of course not on the one side. The Times also devoted three columns to extracts from Manasseh ben Israel’s Vindiciae Judaeorum which had been published two centuries earlier in somewhat similar circumstances, and later printed a detailed account of the Seder service. It itself contributed a leading article in which the opinion was expressed that the charges of the use of human blood in Jewish ritual were without foundation and “utter calumnies”. The most extraordinary feature of the whole case, however, was the charge against certain foreign consuls, especially French, of supporting the accusations, and The Times tried to explain this attitude without condoning it. The London Mansion House meeting was followed by a similar Town’s meeting in Manchester on 22nd July. Copies of the resolutions adopted at the London meeting were sent to representatives of the Powers and sympathetic replies were received from those of Hanover, Saxony, Portugal, the United States of America, Spain, and Prussia. Count Nesselrode, the Russian Foreign Minister, replied: “Based on the principles of humanity and justice, the manifestations of that honourable meeting could not be but highly appreciated by the Imperial Government. It partakes sincerely of the unanimous and lively interest which the fate of those unfortunate Israelites inspired in England, subjected as they have been to the Egyptian authority, and associates itself with the declarations announced in the resolutions of that meeting for the abolition of such revolting abuses and atrocities as those of which the city of Damascus has lately been the theatre...”

In New York also a meeting of protest was held (19th August) at which a message from John Forsyth, the Secretary of State, was read. In this he said “the heart-rending scenes which took place at Damascus had previously been brought to the notice of the President by a communication from our Consul at that place, in consequence whereof, a letter of instruction was immediately written to our Consul at Alexandria, a copy of which is transmitted herewith for your satisfaction.” In the communication to the Consul at Alexandria the abhorrence of the President at the atrocities that had been committed was expressed and instructions were given to range himself with the Consuls of the European Powers in any action they might take to secure justice and the display of humanity “to those persecuted people, whose cry of distress has reached our shores”.

Palmerston was not satisfied merely with sending instructions to his representatives abroad. He and they did not allow the matter to rest until justice had been done. There were parallel representations at Constantinople on behalf of the Jews of Rhodes which do not fall within the scope of this paper, and Lord Ponsonby, the

The Times, 7th October, 1840.
Ambassador, in his dispatches, sometimes referred incidentally to the Damascus Affair. In the course of a dispatch on the subject of Rhodes, dated 15th July,\(^1\) he reported: "The Affair of the Jews at Damascus and Rhodes has caused the display of much bigotry amongst men who ought to be wiser and I think it due to the truly Christian conduct of the Chaplain of this Embassy, the Rev. Dr. Bennet, to tell your Lordship that he has piously asserted in the pulpit the uncharitableness of admitting without clear and invincible proof of truth charges of iniquities (?) of creed brought against the Jewish Community and declared his disbelief in the existence amongst the Israelites of those monstrous doctrines which have been so freely attributed."\(^2\)

The Jewish Board of Deputies also was not lethargic. It felt that the interests of Jewry demanded an unequivocal and authoritative statement that whoever killed Father Tommaso he was not the victim of a Jewish ritual sacrifice. Such a statement could be obtained only from the Ruler of Egypt and perhaps also the Sultan, since the legal dominion over Syria was at that time indefinite. To this end the Board convened a meeting of representative Jews at the Great Synagogue, London, on 15th June. This meeting decided to invite Sir Moses Montefiore and Crémieux, who had also gained laurels as a champion of Jewry, as representing British and French Jewry respectively, to proceed to Egypt to advocate the cause of the Jews of Damascus there. £7,000, a very large amount for London Jewry in those days, was raised at the meeting to cover the cost of the mission and further sums were raised subsequently in England and France. Both Montefiore and Crémieux accepted, and the former with his party left England on 8th July. They arrived in Alexandria on 4th August. The Mission went with the knowledge and approval of the British Government and also of that of Austria. Not only was Montefiore received by Palmerston before he left, but he also had the honour of an audience of the Queen. The British Ambassador in Constantinople was instructed to obtain a firman from the Porte for the protection of Montefiore and his party and the unusual step was taken not only of asking for the safeguard of the British members of the party but also of Crémieux, a French citizen, and of Louis Loewe, Montefiore's secretary, who was a Prussian subject. This was necessary since Crémieux received no support from his own Government who considered him merely as a French citizen travelling on his own affairs. To give him some sort of status it was decided that Crémieux should travel as Montefiore's "adviser". He should in all respects act under Montefiore's direction and that to the latter, as head of the Mission, should be left the final determination of all questions in case any difficulties should arise.\(^3\) Montefiore writing to the Board of Deputies from Paris reported (13th July): "I am however sorry to say that the feeling here is not such as could be wished and much prejudice exists. I also find that the French influence in Egypt is likely to be predominant and that I shall have much greater difficulty to encounter with than I anticipated."

In another dispatch to Ponsonby,\(^4\) Palmerston after writing "Your Excellency has already been informed of the deep concern with which Her Majesty's Government received the intelligence of the atrocious cruelties of which the unfortunate

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1 F.O. 195/166, No. 145.
2 Louis Loewe in his Diary also referred to the sermons preached by Dr. Bennet on this subject.
3 Letter from Montefiore to Board of Deputies, Marseilles, 21st July, 1840.
4 F.O. 195/162. Separate of 27th June, 1840. A dispatch to the same effect, F.O. 78/403, was sent to Her Majesty's Consul General at Alexandria on the same day.
Jews have been the victims, and I trust that the representations which Your Excellency has been instructed to make to the Porte on behalf of that people, will have been successful: and Your Excellency will continue to urge their case upon the serious attention of the Porte", proceeded to direct him to instruct all Consular officers in the East to afford Montefiore and party "all the countenance and protection which your official character will enable you to give them, and to use your utmost influence with the Turkish Government, as Her Majesty's Consular servants will be instructed to use their influence with the authorities in their respective districts to obtain for these gentlemen... every facility for the prosecution of their enquiries".

Even with the departure of Montefiore and his party, Palmerston's interest did not flag. A month later, in a dispatch to Ponsonby on another subject, he repeated incidentally "the confident expectation" expressed in his dispatch of 27th June that the inquiries about to be made will prove to the world the injustice of the accusations and abhorrence of "the barbarous outrages committed... with the sanction of the local authorities".1

Montefiore's party consisted of his wife, who accompanied him on all of his travels, including his many missions on behalf of the Jewish people, Louis Loewe, the orientalist and traveller, who acted as his secretary, and David Williams Wire, a solicitor and Common Councilman of the City of London who had been Montefiore's Under Sheriff and in due course became Lord Mayor. Wire was fated to have several Jewish connections in public life. When David Salomons stood for Parliament for Greenwich in 1851, Wire, although a member of the same political party, unsuccessfully opposed him. Later in 1857 it was he who nominated Lionel de Rothschild for election for the City of London. The English party was completed by Richard Robert Madden, colonial administrator and author. Crémieux was accompanied by his wife and by Salomon Munk, the orientalist.

Montefiore had had very friendly receptions from Mehemet Ali on his previous visits to the East and might justly be termed to have been a persona grata with him. Thus he was an ideal choice as the Ambassador of Jewry, apart from the position he held among the Jews of the world. But the circumstances that surrounded the mission were very unpromising. The period was one of extreme tension. Mehemet Ali, the Pasha of Egypt, had in effect thrown off the suzerainty of the Sultan and had acted for some years as if he were an independent sovereign. He had gone further. He had invaded and occupied Palestine and Syria and added them to his dominions and was even threatening to invade Asia Minor and perhaps march on Constantinople. In all these measures he had the full support of the Government of France and of its Prime Minister, Thiers. The other powers—Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia—were supporting Turkey and the relations between the two sides were seriously strained. The Damascus Accusation had in its beginnings been entirely a French matter, and the French Consul there had, almost inevitably, had the support of his Government. Thiers also was dependent at home on support from the reactionary French Catholics to whom all that Ratti Menton reported was gospel. Continued French support of the charges had unfortunately at this point become almost a matter of prestige for France. And France was the only friend Mehemet Ali then had among the Powers. When Montefiore arrived at Alexandria a state of war was existing between Turkey and Egypt. Turkey had the active

1 F.O. 195/162 (Separate) of 27th July, 1840.
support of the British fleet, and Egypt, every support, short of arms, of France. As for Franco-British relations, Thiers had already told the British Ambassador that the alliance between the two countries was at an end. Even an attack by the French fleet was half expected, and in the chancelleries of Europe the possibility of war between France and the four Powers was being discussed. Preparations went so far that Prussia took military dispositions to repel a possible French invasion of Germany. However, not all opinions in France were on the side of their Consul and his charges. As early as 8th April the Journal des Debats appealed to the French Government to follow the example of that of Austria and protest against the iniquities and protect any of its subjects who might be accused. Returning to the subject a little later it said: "It is not only necessary that European subjects should be respected, but that justice likewise should be respected; and since Europe has interfered in the East as a political power, it would be as well if Europe interfered also as a civilized power." 1 Other liberal peridicals—The Gazette des Tribunaux and the Siécle for instance, took a similar line. In fact public opinion had some influence on the French Government, for in May Ratti Menton was ordered to suspend all proceedings against the Jews, and, as has been mentioned, a French official was sent to Damascus to investigate the charges.

In view of the attitude of the French Government, French Jewry was in a difficult position, torn between two loyalties. Abortive steps taken by the Consistoire General which had also received appeals from their coreligionists in the East, and by Crémieux have already been mentioned. 2 On 2nd June a discussion on the behaviour of the representatives of France in the Affair was initiated in the French Chamber by Achille Fould, the statesman, who although a Jew, as a rule kept aloof from Jewish affairs. Thiers especially resented this intervention. He defended Ratti Menton wholeheartedly. "You protest in the name of the Jews and I protest in the name of a Frenchman who has hitherto fulfilled all his duties with honour and fidelity." He held him innocent of any use of torture but, a victim of the hatred and hostility of the other foreign agents. Thiers, however, admitted even if grudgingly that he was not convinced of the guilt of the Jewish accused. On this matter he suspended judgment.

Montefiore reached Alexandria on 4th August and on the following day he was received in audience by Mehemet Ali. He was accompanied and introduced by Colonel Hodges. His colleague, Crémieux, however, did not take part in the interview. The Consul-General for France who had had a long interview with the Egyptian ruler the previous evening did not consider it appropriate for Crémieux to accompany Montefiore. According to the testimony of Albert Cohn, Cochelet was personally not unsympathetic and believed in the innocence of the accused, but as a French official he was bound to support his subordinate in Damascus. In fact Montefiore and Crémieux although on a joint mission often acted independently of one another and Montefiore had many complaints to make of the lack of support from his colleague and the absence of complete confidence between them.

At the audience Montefiore presented a petition to Mehemet Ali asking for permission to proceed to Damascus

"to institute such enquiries as may lead to the acquisition of satisfactory information on the subject of the accusation which has involved the entire Jewish population of that city

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1 21st April, 1840.
2 See page 56.
in sufferings hitherto unheard of and that such information may be officially authenticated by the authority of the Governor of Damascus and laid before Your Highness. That Your Highness will further grant to us every facility for procuring evidence, protection for the persons of the Mission, absolute security for all persons giving evidence, permission to see as often as might be deemed necessary and to interrogate the accused, and that Your Highness' authority and permission may be granted by a Firman, registered here in the Archives officially sent to the Governor of Damascus and by him to be publicly proclaimed in the streets of that City." 1

Mehemet Ali, although he showed himself very friendly at the audience, was not encouraging in regard to the immediate purpose of the Mission and was disinclined to discuss the subject. Montefiore was very disappointed. In fact he had not been very optimistic when setting out on his mission. Writing from Marseilles to his wife's nephew, Louis Cohen, on 21st July, he said: "the last accounts from Damascus are of the most gloomy description. I fear we have much to contend with, the French people as well as their authorities are no friends of Israel. . . . Do not believe that the affair of Damascus can be settled so speedily as we had hoped, indeed I fear it is only a part of a deep plot against the Jews, not only in the East but in Europe." 2

Hodges in his Report to Palmerston said that the mission was received "with courtesy but with a degree of coldness sufficiently obvious". "I have before assured your Lordship that the affair of the unfortunate Jews will not easily be settled in Alexandria, but must have its solution in Paris. Any efforts here are likely to be unavailing. Such is my opinion, and I may add that of all my colleagues. The Pasha as regards this question is completely under the influence of France; and as long as the Cabinet of the Tuileries shall think proper to support the French Consul at Damascus I have little hope that Mehemet Ali will listen to my representations." 3

Crémieux was received by Mehemet Ali on the following day but only for a few minutes. The French Consul General refused to present him, so the British Consul General did so. Mehemet Ali was less accessible to him than to Montefiore. There is reason to believe that the Pasha himself was not unsympathetic, but his position was critical and to a very large extent dependent on the favour of France, and in this matter France was definitely anti-Jewish. So anxious did Montefiore become at the difficulties that France was obviously putting in his way, that in his report to the Jewish Committee in London, sent on 7th August, he asked them to go to Palmerston and ask him to make representations to France so that the French Consul General in Alexandria should be instructed to support the Mission. Montefiore and Crémieux saw Mehemet Ali again, but still could not get anything decisive, except that he had given instructions that the Jewish prisoners should be well treated. However, he told an English merchant, named Briggs, whom he saw shortly after he had received the Mission for the second time that he believed in the innocence of the accused and intended to release them. Montefiore and Crémieux hearing of this drew up a firman declaring the innocence of the prisoners. Mehemet Ali, however, was not willing to sign this. He preferred merely to release them, but this did not satisfy the Mission. Cochelet thereupon proposed a compromise—to release and exculpate the prisoners, leaving on those who had died the stigma of guilt, but

2 From an unpublished letter in the possession of Mr. Ernest M. Cohen.
3 F.O. 78/405, No. 73, of 5th August, 1840.
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adding that neither the Jewish religion nor the Jewish writings in any way sanctioned the shedding of blood for the Passover. This also did not satisfy the Mission.

In the meanwhile Egypt's international position still further deteriorated. Everybody thought that the British fleet was about to bombard Alexandria and the Admiral had already made all arrangements to take Montefiore and his party on board one of his ships. A satisfactory solution of the Damascus Affair rested mainly in the hands of the Consul-General of France and he, under instructions or of his own accord, was little inclined to help. Yet unless a decision were given very shortly, it seemed that other and greater events would relegate the Affair into a position of obscurity. The situation was summed up in a letter from Montefiore to Louis Cohen dated 14th August.

"You will have heard no doubt of our arrival at this place. I wish I could give you a favorable account of our Mission, but since my last communication to the Committee I regret to say we have not progressed, the influence of France is exerted in every way against us, it poisons the minds of the people against all Jews, and most persons in this city, be they of what country they may, entertain a most unfavourable opinion respecting the murder of Father Toma, also many say they believe the Jews not only murdered him, but did so for the sake of his blood to be used in the Passover cakes. Even the English are not entirely free from this unhappy persuasion. It is therefore more needful than ever that we should proceed if possible to Damascus and investigate the whole of the affair ourselves; the Jews are suffering in every part of the East, for on this false charge some of the most respectable of Alexandria assured me they would be obliged to leave Egypt, unless we could succeed in removing the stigma from the Nation. Our arrival and application to Mehmet Ali could not have been at a less favorable moment, the Pasha is now being entirely engaged in his own affairs, threatened by England, Russia, Prussia and Austria, and for our misfortune or sins our enemy Mons. Tiers (sic) and the French Government support him. . . . I believe the Pasha will have ten days from this date to give his answer to the ultimatum, which should he not agree to, I have no doubt the English will block Alexandria and perhaps destroy the Turkish and Egyptian ships as they are so close together. . . . I am happy to say the unfortunate prisoners at Damascus are much better treated since it was known of our intention of leaving England, but nothing short of a complete and honorable acquittal will satisfy me, no half measures; it has been hinted to me that the four men at Damascus should be liberated with a strong expression on the part of the Governor that Jews do not use Christian blood for their Passover cakes but the declaration is also to state a belief that Father Tommas was murdered by the unfortunate men who unhappily died under the torture, if not for his blood, but private vengeance. I would rather die than consent to any compromise which could cast a stain on the memory of the unhappy men who so nobly endured their dreadful sufferings. One of them died with the words of the Shemang on his lips and the whole relying on the God of Israel to remove from their memories the imputation of murder. . . . Such an arrangement would in my opinion be sacrificing the Jews to screen Sheriff Pasha and the French Consul. I believe I have convinced my excellent colleague that nothing short of a thorough investigation on the spot will satisfy our co-religionists and the World, and every particle of evidence both for and against the accused must be published. Should the late horrid conspiracy be hushed up, by the liberation of the four unfortunate men at Damascus, I have no doubt other or similar charges would be brought against the Jews in a short time, both in the East and in Europe, the charge must be boldly met and I feel confident that if we obtain permission from Mohammed Ali to proceed to Damascus, we shall find sufficient evidence to satisfy every reasonable mind of the innocence of our brethren to the confusion of our enemies. . . .

1 The Turkish Navy had deserted to Egypt.
The Pasha did not return until after Sabbath had commenced. . . . I am pained to say he declined giving me an answer to my petition saying his mind was entirely engrossed by serving public affairs, that he could not devote any time to the consideration of my petition, I must wait quietly. I told him I was not anxious on my own account but for the lives of nine unfortunate but innocent men now confined at Damascus whose lives would I believed fall a sacrifice to the delay. I pressed him repeatedly for permission to proceed, but without success, in fact he will do nothing to offend the French consul, who it is said acts on the present occasion against his own feelings, but in strict compliance with the orders he has received from Mons. Tiers. . . .”

In addition to other anxieties Lady Montefiore was taken ill.

In the midst of this indefinite state of affairs on 24th August the Mission received from Constantinople a Firman of the Sultan granting all their demands. The Sultan was, however, not at the time in control of Damascus or Syria, but the Firman was nevertheless a valuable gesture. On the receipt of this document it was decided to approach Mehemet Ali once again. Laurin, the Consul-General for Austria, who had from the first supported the cause of the martyrs of Damascus, suggested to all of his colleagues that they should unite in appealing for the release of the prisoners and for permission for the mission to proceed to Damascus so that the disappearance of Father Tommaso could be investigated anew. If this petition were rejected, it was suggested that the Sultan’s Firman should be published and its execution demanded. All the Consuls, with one exception, ten in number, some however with hesitation, agreed to this course. The exception was the Consul-General for France. Since it was considered that the petition must fail unless it had the signature also of the French Consul-General, it was not sent.

The climax came suddenly. On 28th August Montefiore, almost in despair—Crémieux had gone to Cairo—went to the Palace intending, if he could, to see the Viceroy and ask for a reply to his original petition. Mehemet Ali noticed him, waiting in an ante-chamber, as he proceeded to the audience chamber and beckoned to him to follow. Montefiore asked for a reply to his petition and was told that the prisoners would be released, that those who had fled would be permitted to return, and that he would be given a Firman authorizing him to visit Damascus and investigate the disappearance of the Friar, but Mehemet most strongly advised him not to go there for the present in view of the disturbed state of the country. In the circumstances and especially as all the friendly consuls had advised most strongly against a journey to Damascus, Montefiore agreed not to go for the present. Mehemet Ali kept his word. He wrote at once to the Governor of Damascus ordering the release of the prisoners and the return without penalty of those who had fled. At the same time he gave a safe conduct for Damascus to Montefiore and his party with permission to investigate the disappearance of the Friar. Above all he issued a Firman declaring the innocence of the accused—both living and dead. The Firman as first drawn up mentioned their “pardon”. Loewe, whose languages included Turkish, detected the expression at once and sent Munk with a message to Montefiore to inform him of the blemish. Munk, however, proceeded to Crémieux instead. Crémieux went at once to the Palace, and the offending word was at once deleted and “honourable liberation” substituted. The Firman also promised the same protection for the Jews as for the other inhabitants. Montefiore, however, still felt some regret at his inability to obtain a new trial that would have completely vindicated the accused.

As for events in Damascus, in the words of Montefiore himself, recorded in his
Diary, “We have received letters that all the Jews were liberated on the 5th instant (September), in the most gracious manner, by Sherif Pasha, to the great joy, not only of the Jews of Damascus, but also of all the Mussulmans of that city. The unfortunate men were accompanied by bands of music and thousands of persons, Jews and Moslems. They first went to the Synagogue to return thanks for their delivery, and then to their respective dwellings. All the distinguished Mussulman merchants paid them visits of congratulation, expressing their firm belief in their innocence. The Christians maintained silence, denoting thereby their dissatisfaction at the justice of the Pasha.” 1 The Moslems of Damascus had never sympathized with the persecutions. As Sir John Wilkinson, the Egyptologist, said to Loewe, the Moslems of Damascus were not anti-Jewish, but great French influence was brought to bear on them, at a time when French influence was all powerful, and some of them kept silent when they might have spoken. Ratti Menton had made great efforts to arouse the Moslem mob. He went so far as to have a scurrilous Italian work, written to fasten the Blood Accusation on the Jews in general, translated into Arabic and scattered among the people. But even this step failed in its expected effect, despite the fanaticism and ignorance of the public to which it was directed.

As a last effort, when he learnt of the Firman, Ratti Menton did his utmost to prevent its publication and implementation, but in this he also failed. Merlato, the Austrian Consul, who had struggled so valiantly for justice from the beginning, wrote: “Yesterday was the happiest day of my life. All the prisoners accused of the supposed murder of Father Thomas and his servant were set at liberty and sent to their homes.” 2 This was quoted in Montefiore’s Report to his Committee in London of 17th September. On the following day he, Loewe, and Wire left Alexandria for Constantinople. Madden had already left for London. In view of the relations between Mehemet Ali and the Powers, the British Consul-General had left on the 16th. Montefiore gave a long account of the final stage of his mission to Mehemet Ali in a letter to Louis Cohen. Incidentally, this account illustrates the tension between him and Crémieux which was prevalent throughout the Mission. Of the sympathies of Crémieux, after Montefiore the foremost living advocate for Jewry, there can be no question, but he was not only a Jew and an advocate of justice: he was also a French citizen; and at that time Jewish rights and French apparent interests were not in agreement. Hence the difficulties that arose. The account runs:

“On Thursday evening the 27th August Mons. and Madame Cremieux called on us, they said they intended going the following morning to Cairo to visit that City and the Pyramids and would return in eight or nine days, by the time the next steamer was expected from Marseilles. On Friday the 28th I received a letter dated on the Canal from Mons. Cremieux that he was on his way to Cairo but he had been informed that the Pacha would grant our Request and advising me not to go to the Palace before his return from Cairo, if the Pacha sent for us in the meantime, only to speak with him on indifferent subjects. All this appeared most strange to me, that he should leave Alexandria at such a moment and endeavour to prevent me from doing anything in his absence. I therefore determined on going at once to Mehemet Ali and press him for a reply to the paper I read to him at my first Interview. Dr. Loewe, Dr. Madden and Mr. Wire accompanied me. I will not tire you with what occurred in the Palace before we were seated in the Hall of Audience with the Pacha. I then told his highness the purport of my visit.

2 The Times, 10th October, 1840, p. 6.
He replied that he would restore all the Jews that were in prison at Damascus to their families and homes; I thanked his Highness for this act of Justice for it was a proof of his knowing their Innocence; but the great object of my Mission was to proceed to Damascus to trace the guilty parties, be they who they might. He replied as he would restore all the Jews to liberty there was no longer any occasion for my going there. I told him I could not return to those who sent me without endeavouring to fulfil their orders and again pressed for a Firman, he replied he advised me not to go, the City was excited, my presence would increase it, the Country was in a disturbed state and political affairs very unsatisfactory at the moment. I said if his highness would (permit) I would not go at this moment, (but) that I might proceed there at the earliest moment prudence would permit; he replied 'I will give you a Firman.' I then said many Jews with their families had fled the City of Damascus from dread of persecution and Torture, and I begged of his highness to allow them to return to their property and homes, he replied he would do so. I then requested him would direct the Governor of the City to protect the persons and property of the Jews as fully as he did the persons and property of the other inhabitants, be they Moslems or Christians; the Pacha replied he would do so. I then said I had another favor to beg of his highness, that he would give me a copy of the Order he intended sending to Sheriff Pasha the Governor, with his own seal affixed to it, he replied he would send me a copy of the Order, he then desired me to write immediately to the Jews and inform them of their liberation and to send him the Pasha my letter, he would send it with his own post to Damascus, and the Jews would have my letter in five days; I repeated my thanks and gratitude for his compliance with the request I had made, we then retired.

On reaching our Hotel Dr. Loewe prepared an Hebrew Letter for Haham Abolaffi the most distinguished of our unfortunate Brethren and the one who had so honorably suffered the greatest torture. I signed it and Dr. Loewe went with it to the Palace that it might be dispatched the same evening. I requested him also to wait for the copy of the Order for their liberation. Mr. Wire wrote to Monsr. Cremieux acquainting him with what had passed and it was sent by a special courier to Cairo within an hour of our return from the Pasha. I sent for the Haham of Alexandria also the Parnesim of the three Synagogues and made them acquainted with the happy News, but requested they would not make it public before I had obtained the Copy of the Order which I (am) forwarding instantly by a confidential (messenger lest the) Governor might delay executing the (order and serving it) on the British and Austrian Consuls. It was then near Sabbath, your Aunt and I walked to Synagogue, on our return we with Dr. Madden and Mr. Wire had to wait dinner for Mr. Loewe, he did not get back till ten o'clock; he said when he reached the Palace the Pasha was engaged with the Consuls of the four Powers, they had a long audience and when they went away Monsr. Cochelet the French Consul was admitted and he remained closeted with his Highness for two hours, it was then too late for the Secretary to speak with him, and Mr. Bonfort directed Dr. Loewe to return at ten the next morning when he should have the copy of the Order and the Firman as Dr. Loewe had given him the names of the parties that were to accompany me. Before we sat down to dinner we were much surprised to see Monsr. and Madame Cremieux enter our room, he was extremely angry that I should have acted contrary to his advice in going to the Palace, but he gave me no reason for his being so much displeased. I could have no idea that he intended returning for at least eight days and if I had not had another motive than that of liberating at the earliest possible moment nine unhappy Brethren I should think that was quite sufficient. Saturday morning your Aunt myself and Dr. Loewe attended Synagogue, when prayers were finished I requested Dr. Loewe to go to the Palace for the Order and take Mr. Monck 1 with him. Mr. Monck is Monsr. Cremieux's Secretary and an Arabic Scholar. Your Aunt and I returned home where

1 Munk.
we waited with great anxiety the whole forenoon for Dr. Loewe, he had not returned many minutes and was giving me an account for his long absence, he said when the copy of the Pasha's Order which was written in Turkish was put into his hand he observed that the prisoners were to return to their homes and families by the Grace of ' pardon ' of the Vice Roy, upon which he desired Mr. Monck to go immediately to me, as he was sure I would not accept such an Order with the word pardon in it, as I never for an instant admitted (any question as to) the perfect innocence of the Jews and (in our conversations) not the smallest doubt of their Innocence was expressed. Mr. Monck left Dr. Loewe but did not come to see me but went immediately to Mons. Cremieux. I afterwards saw Mons. Cremieux who told me as it was Saturday he believed I would not go with him, he therefore went alone to Mehemet Ali, who made no difficulty in striking out the objectionable word. I should not have troubled you with this long account but I have seen a Flaming description of Mons. Cremieux speech to the Pasha in one of the Smyrna papers; you know me too well to believe that I should have accepted the liberation of our unfortunate Brethren on any other terms, than an acknowledgment of their being free from all Guilt. I am persuaded they would rather have suffered the loss of life than have gained their pardon with such a Stigma on them and their holy religion. No it was as clearly understood as words could be that they were to return to their families and homes as honorable men; believe me I have suffered Tortures myself during my stay in Egypt. At first I was abused for not consenting to accept the liberty of the prisoners on the condition of the honorable men who had died in prison being admitted to be the party guilty of the Murder, but not for the use of the blood, merely private revenge, in fact to the great God of Israel alone be our thanks for this deliverance, for every FRENCHMAN in Egypt be HE who he might thought more of the honor of the great Nation which they believed would be compromised unless some colour was given to the charge pressed by that Demon Ratti Menton against the Jews. I write this to you in great confidence and request you will not read or show this letter to anyone till my return or my Mission ended. I feel much happier than I did when I last wrote you, I was anxiously waiting for an account from Damascus, many days had elapsed after the time we had expected the news of their liberation, reports of an alarming nature were whispered in Alexandria, that the prisoners were to be executed, that Sheriff Pasha had delayed or declined to comply with the Pasha's order, but at length thanks to God the Austrian Consul brought us letters, the Prisoners had all been honorably liberated on Saturday Morn, the 5th Sept. at 8 o'clock, they were accompanied from the Prison by crowds of the Mussulman population, some FEW Christians, and bands of music, they first went to the Synagogue to return thanks to the L.G. of their Fathers for their deliverance from the base charge made against our Holy religion and dreadful persecution and torture, then to their homes, after they had embraced their families, they were visited by all the respectful and opulent Moslem merchants and some Christians who congratulated them on their happy deliverance and at the same time expressed to them the full belief of their perfect innocence; the letters also confirmed the Governor's statement that they had returned honorably to their families—the day following this intelligence Monsr. and Mdme. Cremieux took leave of us, he said they were going to Cairo would return by the 25th and embark with the steamer of this day the 27th inst. for Syra, they intended afterwards to visit Greece and to proceed by way of Ancona and Triest to Paris. I informed him that as it was impossible to go to Damascus at this moment I would go to Constantinople, thank the Sultan for the prompt Justice he had afforded our Brethren at Rhodes, also for the Firman he had sent me for Damascus, and to procure from him if possible a similar declaration as was made by Soliman that of his disbelief of the charge made against the Jews religion and if Damascus should in a short time fall under his Government I should go there before my return to England, if that event should not appear, probably I should return to England and thus we parted, I imagine he intends remaining in Egypt to watch political events
as he is in correspondence not only with all our friends of the family R.¹ but with most of the Editors of the French and English press and writes in favour of the French and the Pasha."²

Crémieux remained in Egypt a few more weeks and then returned home by means of a triumphal progress across Europe. In Corfu, Venice, Trieste, Vienna, Fürth, Nürnberg, Frankfurt, Mayence, wherever he stopped he was received with acclamation by all classes of the Jewish community. Poems were written in his honour, distinctions conferred on him. Addresses and gifts came in showers. In Vienna he was received by Prince Metternich and other statesmen. The Jews of the Upper Rhine proposed to strike a medal in his honour, but he asked that the money should be devoted instead to the maintenance of the Jewish schools he had founded in Cairo. In America, Asia, and other parts of Europe the success of the Mission was celebrated with enthusiasm. Only in Paris was Crémieux’ reception a subdued one. There the result of the Mission was considered hardly a French success. The Government was by no means pleased and French Jewry had to take the line suggested by the official attitude. Crémieux’ arrival in Paris coincided with the fall of Thiers whose policy, that of support of Mehemet Ali against the Sultan, had fallen to pieces at the same time. A subsidiary part of this policy was the support of the French Consul in his charges against the Jews of Damascus and this also had completely failed. But French public opinion was sore and French Jewry did not want to irritate it. Crémieux’ report to his Committee in Paris was never published.

In the meanwhile Montefiore was in Constantinople. The war in the Levant and the treaty by which it was brought to an end definitely restored Damascus and Syria to the Sultan. Thus nominally, Montefiore had to resume his task almost from the beginning. But there were no difficulties in his way this time. The Sultan, Abdul Mejid, had already shown conclusively his attitude towards the Blood Accusation. The Rhodes Affair had been brought to a prompt and satisfactory conclusion. On the Damascus Affair the Sultan had expressed his opinion in his Firman of 24th August. Moreover French influence, from which the enemies of the Jews had drawn almost the whole of their support, had no footing whatever with the Porte. Montefiore arrived in Constantinople on 5th October, the eve of the Day of Atonement. The Jewish holidays and other minor incidents prevented an earlier audience of the Sultan, but Montefiore was received by him on the 28th. Attached to the party was George Samuel, a nephew of Lady Montefiore, who was also a member of the staff of the British Embassy. Montefiore was cordially received. On 6th November the Sultan’s Firman was issued. It runs as follows:—

A Firman addressed to the Chief Judge at Constantinople, at the head of which HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY THE SULTAN has written with his own hand the following words:—“Let that be executed which is prescribed in this Firman.”

An ancient prejudice prevailed against the Jews. The ignorant believed that the Jews were accustomed to sacrifice a human being, to make use of his blood at their feast of the Passover.

In consequence of this opinion, the Jews of Damascus and Rhodes (who are the subjects of our Empire) have been persecuted by other nations. The calumnies which have been uttered against the Jews, and the vexations to which they have been subjected have at last reached our Imperial throne.

¹ Rothschild.
But a short time has elapsed since some Jews dwelling in the Isle of Rhodes have been brought from thence to Constantinople where they have been tried and judged according to the new regulations, and their innocence of the accusations made against them fully proved. That therefore which justice and equity required has been done on their behalf.

Besides which the religious books of the Hebrews have been examined by learned men, well versed in their theological literature, the result of which examination is that it is found that the Jews are strongly prohibited not only from using human blood but even that of animals. It therefore follows that the charges made against them and their religion are nothing but pure calumnies.

For this reason and for the love we bear to our subjects, we cannot permit the Jewish nation (whose innocence of the crime alleged against them is evident) to be vexed and tormented upon accusations which have not the least foundation in truth, but that in conformity to the Hatti Sherif which has been proclaimed at Gulhane the Jewish Nation shall possess the same advantages, and enjoy the same privileges as are granted to the numerous other nations who submit to our Authority.

The Jewish nation shall be protected and defended.

To accomplish this object We have given the most positive orders that the Jewish nation dwelling in all parts of our empire shall be perfectly protected as well as all other subjects of the Sublime Porte, and no person shall molest them in any manner whatever (except in a just cause) neither in the free exercise of their religion, nor in that which concerns their safety and tranquillity. In consequence the present Firman, which is ornamented at the head with our "Hoomaion" (sign manual) and emanates from our Imperial Chancellerie, has been delivered to the Israelith Nation.

Thus you the above mentioned judge when you know the contents of the Firman, will endeavour to act with great care in the manner therein prescribed. And in order that nothing may be done in opposition to this Firman, at any time hereafter, you will register it in the Archives of the Tribunal; you will afterwards deliver it to the Israelith Nation, and you will take great care to execute our orders and this our Sovereign will.

Given at Constantinople the 12th Ramazan 1256 (6th November 1840)

A second Firman of the same date denounced without equivocation the suggestion that Jews practised human sacrifice in connection with the Passover.

Montefiore returned by sea to Italy. In Rome his attempts to see the Pope failed, but he saw Cardinal Rivarolo, the head of the Capuchin Order, from whom he received a promise that he would endeavour to get the inscription that had been placed in the Chapel of the Capuchin Order in Damascus, "Here repose the bones of Father Tommaso of Sardinia, Capuchin missionary assassinated by the Jews on the 5th of February 1840," removed, but as it had been placed there by the French, he had not the power to order its removal. The inscription was not removed, but both it and the chapel were destroyed in the Moslem anti-Christian outbreak of twenty years later. In Paris Montefiore was received by the King, Louis Philippe, to whom he presented a copy of the Sultan's Firman and received the King's congratulations. On the continent and beyond the seas, Montefiore and Crémieux had a joint triumph in absentia. In Germany it was proposed to substitute a new Purim in his honour. Montefiore's personal triumph was, however, perhaps greatest in his own country. Special services were held in the synagogues on his return and a day of thanksgiving appointed. He reported to Palmerston on his mission and presented a copy of the Firman to the Queen. The Queen herself joined in the triumph by granting Montefiore the exceptional honour of permission to add supporters to his arms, the patent that confirmed the grant, reciting Montefiore's efforts on behalf of his coreligionists in Damascus.