

ulous honesty. At the same time Mr. Titman is also charitably inclined. He is vice-president of the Hebrew National Orphan Asylum, in which he takes an active interest and great pride. He is a thirty-second-degree mason, and is affiliated with various other institutions and organizations.

Benjamin Titman was born in Skepetowka Wolinsky Gubernia, Poland, July 4, 1885. He came to America in November, 1901. He first landed in Boston, where he started to work in a brush factory at \$3 per week. Evenings he used to sell newspapers, earning about 18 cents a day. Later he went to Lynn, Mass., where he worked in a shoe factory. He subsequently received employment with an egg dealer, and in 1907 he started out for himself in the same line in which he has attained renown.

Mr. Titman received a fair education in his young days. He studied Hebrew and Talmud, and had prepared himself to enter gymnasium. Having, however, scarce opportunities to pursue his studies in Russia, he came here with this end in view. Circumstances, however, have altered his decision, and he drifted into business instead.

In answer to the question, what are the requisites to success, Mr. Titman observed: "A clean, upright life, hard work, and, above all, to attain a good name."

On October 3, 1905, Mr. Titman was married to Sadie Gross. They live happily and harmoniously. Mr. Titman expressed great admiration for his wife. Seldom has the writer heard any one speak in so glowing terms about one's wife. At all times and under all circumstances, in poverty and in riches, in sorrow and joy, she stood steadfastly at his side, encouraging him with kind words and good cheer, uncomplaining, undemanding. Even today, when all her wants are fully satisfied, she takes an unusual interest in her husband's affairs whenever her motherly duties permit her to do so.

Three children have been born to Mr. and Mrs. Titman: Eva, Rosa and Athalia. The oldest, only ten years of age, shows great inclination for Jewish history.

On the sky of New York Jewry a new star has appeared, a star which augurs well and from which much may be expected. There is every reason to hope that this new star in our constellation will

**S. R.
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shed sufficient light among all of Judaism so that they will see each other and understand each other better, and thus do much more for Judaism than was heretofore accomplished. This new personality of such importance, who is now added to the Jewry of this, the greatest of all the great Jewish centers in history, is Mr. S. R. Travis.

Mr. Travis belongs to those men who are doing things and not talking about their accomplishments, and in the beginning he was rather reluctant to answer questions, but gradually the writer succeeded in interesting him sufficiently to answer at least some of the questions propounded, and from these answers and from material gathered outside this article was compiled.

S. R. Travis was born on April 9, 1882, in Dwinsk, Russia. He descends from a very prominent French-Jewish family, which has documents to prove that they are lineal descendants of the great

Rashi (Solomon Bar Isaac). The name Travis comes from Troyes, the town in France where Rashi was born in 1040 and where he died in 1105.

About a century ago, one branch of the family emigrated to Russia and there assumed the name of Rabinowitz. Other branches of the family remained in France, some of whom are known as Travis and others as Dreyfus. When Mr. Travis and his family came to America they readopted the old family name of Travis, discarding that of Rabinowitz. Mr. Travis' parents now reside in Kansas City. The family consists of five brothers and three sisters, all of whom are now wealthy, being heavily interested in the oil business. Dr. B. H. Revel, head of the Yeshibah Rabbi Isaac Elchanon, of this city, is Mr. Travis' brother-in-law.

On July 8, 1913, in Paris, France, Mr. Travis married Miss Julia L. Tedesco, daughter of Abraham Tedesco, who is a descendant of one of the most aristocratic French-Jewish families. Her grandfather emigrated to France from Venice, Italy. Her father was born in Paris and her mother came from a very prominent Jewish family in Germany. The firm of Tedesco Bros. of Paris for the last eighty years has been the most prominent French firm dealing in paintings and fine arts. Mrs. Travis is a remarkably charming young woman and the mother of three young children.

In the year 1906 Mr. Travis organized the United States Oil and Gas Company in Oklahoma, where he made a wonderful success in the production of crude oil. In 1911 he disposed of his interests in the business to the family and organized the Oklahoma Petroleum and Gasoline Company, of which he is the president and practically the sole owner. The company, located at Tulsa, Okla., is in the business of producing and refining oil, in addition to controlling an extensive crude oil production, and is one of the largest independent producers of gasoline in the section.

Mr. Travis has come to settle in New York for good, and he came here not in the interests of his business, but in those of Jewish affairs, in which he is deeply interested. He has taken up two great and noble undertakings which he wants to carry through in New York and which he considers the aim of his life. First, he is extremely interested in the Rabbinical problem. Mr. Travis is strictly orthodox and has been affiliated with the Orach Chaim Congregation of this city for some years past despite the fact that he lived in Tulsa. He is a strict Sabbath observer and all his various enterprises are idle on the Jewish Sabbath. He is a great lover of the Jewish lore contained in the Torah and the Talmud, which he considers a priceless Jewish heritage and through centuries and generations the crystallized production of Jewish master minds. He considers Jewish learning the source of science and philosophy for the learned and faith and ethics for the average man. It is his firm belief that in order for traditional Judaism to be unhampered in its development in this country it is absolutely essential that we should have an entirely different Rabbinical system than we now have.

Mr. Travis believes that as conditions are at present the rabbis have not sufficient influence. The rabbis of the old school, who have not the necessary modern education, cannot gain the respect of the younger generation, and on the other hand, the modern rabbis, it seems to him, cannot command the respect of the older generation or of any Jew who is an authority on Jewish learning.

Mr. Travis believes that in order that a rabbi should be a real leader of Judaism, or at least in his own community, he must not only be a man who will deliver a good address and instruct the young, but he must be an authority on everything that is Jewish, and only then will he have his influence. In other words, we need Jewish leaders and not merely men to teach children and enjoy a title. A rabbi therefore must not only have a modern education, but he must be a real scholar and have *Smicha*, and he must not only be a Jewish scholar, but an intellectual giant and command the respect of all intellectual people.

Mr. Travis admires the work that the Jewish Theological Seminary does, for he is one of those who believe in construction and not in destruction. He therefore wants to see the seminary introduce a course for real Jewish learning which would enable the candidate to obtain *Smicha* of the old school. He has affiliated himself with the Yeshibah Rabbi Isaac Elchanon to see that this college shall give its pupils a deeper and more modern worldly education.

Mr. Travis' second ambition for which he has settled in New York is the war relief fund. He justly believes that the prosperous Jews of New York are not giving enough for that fund, which he does not consider as a charity, but as a duty.

Mr. Travis being orthodox, would like to see orthodox Judaism play the part and have the influence in New York that it deserves, but he appreciates that it is the Reform Jews who give and who, in his opinion, would gladly share their power and influence with the Orthodox Jews if they would only give or participate as their large numbers require. He wants to see that every middle class Jew should give a sufficient sum monthly—not at once—but as long as the war continues or as long thereafter as may be necessary, and to this work he will devote his time, his energy and his remarkable ability. Mr. Travis not only has no personal ambitions in this field of activity, but he is determined to accept no office or honor in any shape or form, for this work which he wants to do is only to satisfy his conscience and in order to serve the Jewish people.

At the conclusion of the interview, speaking about success in life, Mr. Travis expressed his viewpoint in a few very strong words which are full of meaning. He said: "The secret of success is, in addition to energy, system, order and law. The universe is governed by law, system and order, and in order that a man should be successful in life he must live in conformity with the law of the universe, which is system and order."

Mr. Travis in general makes a striking impression. His is a sympathetic nature, and the complete sincerity and determination which are manifested by his conversation and his highest idealism give one the conviction that one has to deal with a personality that promises much and of whom Judaism can expect a lot, and that he is the figure which New York Jewry has for a long, long time required.

