

Bashe Sarasohn, the Good Silk Afternoon Gowns in New Models



BASHE SARASOHN

Passing of Her Who Lived for Others, and in Whose Honor Mourning Thousands Walked the Streets as Her Funeral Passed.

THROUGH the streets of the east side of New York City there passed not many days ago one of the most remarkable funerals ever seen. It began like most ceremonies of the kind, with a hearse and a few smug, stately living carriages. Looking at them you would not have been wherein a differed from the majority of funerals. You would have given it a casual glance and, according to your superstitions or your reverence or the urgency of the business upon which you were engaged, either waited for it to pass or broken hastily through.

If you had waited—and you might have done so, for it was Sunday and the probabilities are you would not have been in great haste—you would have seen tolling along behind the last of the stately carriages a strange procession. You would have perceived that it was made up for the most part of thousands on thousands of old men and women, every one of them foot-sore from their weeping, all wearing the quality of a great grief. Surging above the heads of their feet you would have heard a solemn, tremendous chant of sorrow waiving from the slow-moving ranks like the voice of a December wind. You would have watched them as they passed, thousands by thousands, chanting their grief to the brick walls and the vacant tenement windows.

The funeral was that of an old woman named Mrs. Bashe Sarasohn, a woman who if she had been born in the time of tradition instead of to-day, and in the Christian Church instead of the house of a rabbi would have been immortalized as a saint.

The thousands who walked in the wailing procession were her friends. Many of them had never seen her, but they were Russian Jews who had come to America without a friend or a helper and in the woman who lay silent beyond the stately carriages they had found both.

It was forty-seven years ago that the Sarasohns came to America. Kasryyal H. Sarasohn was a rabbi; his wife was the daughter of one. Both were from Buczak, in Russian Poland. They had two sons, one five, the other thirteen. The rabbi Sarasohn founded a synagogue in Syracuse, stayed there until 1871, then with his family went to New York City and started the first Jewish newspaper in America, the Jewish

Gazette, now the Jewish Daily News.

At that time the Russian Jew was a new factor in American life. There were a few German Jews and some, fewer yet, Spanish Jews, the latter belonging to families which had been in America for centuries. The flood of Russian immigration had just begun to arrive. The rabbi Sarasohn, familiar with political events in Russia, could foresee the deepening oppressions which before many years were going to drive his people of Poland to America at the rate of many thousands a year. The Weekly Gazette was a preparation.

Mrs. Sarasohn was then forty-seven years old. She was of a type which is fast vanishing from Hebrew history. The daughter of a rabbi, she was orthodox, not as a modern Jew is orthodox, but with the fervent orthodoxy of a devotee. It was not enough that she attend synagogue every day, not enough that she never appear with her head uncovered, not enough that she keep holy days with the unwavering loyalty of an ascetic. Mrs. Sarasohn had another of the deepest injunctions of the Jewish religion—charity.

"The door shall be open to the stranger." This was the great precept of the Jewish religion which Mrs. Sarasohn was to put to work.

Russian immigration, which before 1866 had been virtually nil, began to grow larger each year. It was not the immigration of to-day, though. Today ninety-nine immigrants in every hundred know before they leave the boundaries of their own city exactly what they are going to do after they get here. Friends or relatives are ready to take care of them, to find them jobs, to lend them money, to teach them English, to initiate them into the New World. A million of their own people are waiting a few blocks beyond the wharf. They are hardly coming to a strange land.

In the seventies the conditions were far different. There were only a few thousand Russian Jews in New York. Nearly all of them were poor. There were no Russian Jewish employers. The Sadovskys of the cloak industry, the Phillips of shirt-making, the Rosenthal of the clothing business, the Fischels of real estate were newly arrived immigrants themselves, with jobs to get instead of to give. There were no free schools to teach English, no employment bureaus, no charities. From the moment he arrived at Castle Garden the Russian Jewish immigrant was alone.

This was the condition when the Sarasohns came. After that every Russian immigrant had a friend. The door at the Sarasohn home on Canal street was always open to the stranger. Downstairs the rabbi Sarasohn, now become an editor, labored with the task of printing a newspaper in a language for which the foundries had

hardly begun casting type. Upstairs Mrs. Sarasohn kept house, cooked dinners, taught English, dispensed encouragement and as day succeeded day saw further into the needs of these, her people, the multitudinous call for hope.

Well it was for the Jews that some one labored so. The day was coming when Russia, to divert attention from the main issue, was to revenge the assassination of Alexander II. upon the Jews. The day came. The butchery began. In the spring of 1881 the vanguard of the greatest Jewish immigration since the days of Ferdinand and Isabella arrived.

There were thousands of them. The majority had barely enough money to comply with the immigration laws. They were ignorant of the language, of the customs, of everything in this strange, new land. With few exceptions they were friendless. Left to themselves their ultimate fate would have been problematical. Survived they probably would have, but the struggle would have torn families apart, broken hearts, killed hundreds and, in all probability, made many others remain in Russia rather than trust themselves to the dangers of a new and strange land.

It was at this time that Mr. Sarasohn, with his newspaper, and Mrs. Sarasohn, with her personal effort, started the first organized Jewish charity. Previously they had done a great deal toward founding free schools for teaching English, but the actual work of aiding immigrants had simply been taken care of in an informal manner at the Sarasohn home. There were too many now for that. An organized bureau was needed. The Sarasohns formed one. When the refugees reached Castle Garden they found themselves in the competent hands of the Hebrew Sheltering and Immigrant Aid Society. Those who had no money were taken care of until they found jobs. Those who had relatives were put in touch with them. The situation, in short, was saved.

This was the first of Mrs. Sarasohn's endeavors on a large scale. The society, now grown to such proportions that its disbursements are more than \$40,000 a year, still exists. Nearby its organizer has made another institution, the Hebrew Home for the Aged. Among its occupants, for every one cannot succeed, are some of the men and women who found aid from the sheltering society thirty years ago. As sisters and brothers it can name the Jewish Maternity Hospital, several schools for teaching English and, in a lesser way, nearly every other Hebrew charity in New York City. Mrs. Sarasohn did not found them all, but there was never one in which she did not help.

Mr. Sarasohn died eight years ago.



A Striking Example of the Parisian Rage for Two-Color Effects.

Regina Badet, one of the most popular danseuses of Paris, in a Bechoff-David costume of black crepe melcor draped over champagne charmeuse, with a slit skirt and a full train. The low-lying front sash is a feature.

A Fad of the Moment in Paris. The New Transparent Waist of Tulle.

An afternoon gown of dark blue moire silk with draped skirt gathered over the left hip, trimmed with blue ribbon of a contrasting shade. The transparent waist is of blue tulle with white lace around the neck and at the elbows.

One of his sons became an attorney and the other his successor as editor of the paper—now with a circulation of 70,000. Mrs. Sarasohn, despite her eighty years and falling health, kept up with her myriad branches of charitable work. She had a regular list of fifty pensioners, old men and women, who had visited her in the days when the Sarasohn home was the sole star she had taught to read, some of them she had clothed, some she had put in touch with work. They had failed, but the charity of their helper was not exhausted. The gates were still open.

Mrs. Sarasohn spent little on herself. She dressed very plainly, ate abstemiously and indulged in no costly pleasures. It is said by her children that from the day she arrived in America she went to the theatre only twice and to a dance never. Her money was spent in a different way.

Until two weeks before her death she never missed a day in synagogue. She died with her head still covered by the "shetel" or wig she had worn since her marriage, the symbol of the Jewish wife's indifference to all men save her husband. Some idea of what it means to the orthodox may be gained from the fact that until her death the two sons had never seen their mother's hair.

The funeral started from One Hundred and Thirtieth street and Mad-

ison avenue. It stopped first at the Machzikey Talmud Torah, One Hundred and Eleventh street and Lexington avenue, one of the outgrowths of the educational system Mrs. Sarasohn and her husband started more than forty years ago. To-day the Talmud Torah alone has two thousand pupils. From that the procession moved on to the synagogue, to the sheltering house, the maternity home, the home for the aged and then to the cemetery. At every corner it grew larger.

"Who is it?" some one would ask. "Mrs. Sarasohn, the good." The answer would come in a low tone. Somewhere on the sidewalk a man or woman would shriek. There would be a flood of voluble Yiddish. Ah, the

good Mrs. Sarasohn. She had taken care of Morris when he was sick. And now she was dead! A good woman, a holy woman! The speaker would separate from the crowd on the sidewalk and join the cortege, adding her wails to those of the other thousands who walked behind. Thus it was that by the time it reached the sheltering house on East Broadway the funeral had established itself as an unprecedented event. Such honor had never before been accorded a Jewish woman. In the Hebrew religion the place of woman is not high. This made the departure doubly extraordinary. It was the passing of her who waited outside the limits of