

# *Grip* Magazine and “the Other”: The Genteel Antisemitism of J. W. Bengough

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*J. W. Bengough of Toronto began an “Independent Political and Satirical Journal” called Grip in 1873. A grab-bag of commentary, cartoons, and satire, Grip was virtually required reading for the Canadian elite, including politicians, scholars, business leaders, and journalists. Today Bengough is regarded largely as a reformer. Yet his commitment to progressive causes did not deter him from publishing antisemitic, anti-Catholic, and other racist views. An analysis of Bengough’s antisemitic words and images demonstrates how, through Grip, antisemitism gained respectability in late-nineteenth-century Canada.*

*J. W. Bengough de Toronto a lancé une « revue politique indépendante et satirique » intitulée Grip en 1873. Pot-pourri d’opinions, de bandes dessinées et de satire, Grip était de lecture pratiquement incontournable pour l’élite canadienne, politiciens, lettrés, chefs d’entreprise et journalistes compris. Aujourd’hui, Bengough est généralement considéré comme un réformateur. Pourtant, son engagement envers les causes progressistes ne l’a pas dissuadé de publier des opinions antisémites, anticatholiques et à d’autres penchants racistes. L’analyse des écrits et des images de Bengough démontre comment, par l’entremise de Grip, l’antisémitisme a gagné en respectabilité au Canada à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle.*

MODERNIST HEIRS of the radical Enlightenment are apt to assume that progressive or reformist political movements are, by definition, progressive on all fronts, simultaneously challenging the inequalities of class, race, and gender. Yet, as historians of popular movements are well aware, progress for one subaltern group may sometimes be advocated at the expense of other oppressed groups. For example, gains in political and economic power for non-elite white males might be predicated on

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the exclusion from the social polity of other groups that have been marginalized because of their race, religion, or gender. The progressive philosophy of the Canadian periodical *Grip* magazine (1873–1894) under the editorship of J. W. Bengough is a case in point. *Grip* used weapons of ridicule and satire to demonize immigrants to Canada of disparate races, religions, and ethnicities. Whatever their differences from each other, all were targeted because they failed to fit the white, Protestant, Canadian-born ideal promoted by *Grip*'s editor. A selection of literary and pictorial images of Jews, as presented in the pages of *Grip*, illustrates the magazine's general attitude to different representatives of "the Other" in late-nineteenth-century Canada.

### ***Grip*'s Mission**

A new "Independent Political and Satirical Journal" called *Grip* appeared on the streets of Toronto on May 24, 1873. The magazine was named for the raven in Charles Dickens's novel, *Burnaby Ridge*. As *Grip*'s editor pointed out, however, unlike Edgar Allan Poe's raven, which was a bearer of ill omens and squawked "Nevermore", *Grip*'s raven had a cheerful message: "Never Say Die." A grab-bag of social and political commentary, cartoons, and satire, *Grip* appeared every Saturday morning for almost 21 years. During that time, it was virtually required reading for the Canadian elite. As Carman Cumming, the author of *Sketches from a Young Country: The Images of Grip Magazine*, remarked, politicians, scholars, business leaders, and journalists were all reared on *Grip*.<sup>1</sup> At its peak of popularity, *Grip* may have had as many as 7,000 subscribers, but its readership may have been as high as 50,000.<sup>2</sup>

The founding spirit of *Grip* was a Toronto-born autodidact, John Wilson Bengough (1851–1923).<sup>3</sup> Lacking the funds to acquire a university education, Bengough turned to printing.<sup>4</sup> As an admirer later wrote, "His best education was received in that modern university, the printing

1 Carman Cumming, *Sketches from a Young Country: The Images of Grip Magazine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. xiv.

2 Ramsay Cook, *The Regenerators: Social Criticism in Late Victorian English Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), p. 123. Even though most goods and services advertised in *Grip* were centred around Toronto, the magazine was read far and wide. To boost sales, Bengough initiated a contest in which John McCole of Moosomin, Northwest Territories, won a watch for selling 100 copies in a two-week period. Other winners came from Windsor, Winnipeg, and Calgary. On *Grip*'s actual readership, see Christina Burr, "Gender, Sexuality, and Nationalism in J. W. Bengough's Verses and Political Cartoons", *Canadian Historical Review*, vol. 83, no. 4 (December 2002), p. 514.

3 For biographical information, see Burr, "Gender, Sexuality, and Nationalism", pp. 510–516, especially p. 510, n. 16.

4 See Carl Spadoni, "*Grip* and the Bengoughs as Publishers and Printers", *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada*, vol. 27 (1988), pp. 12–37.

office.”<sup>5</sup> Although Bengough put various names and pseudonyms on *Grip*'s list of editors, essentially the magazine was his, and it is almost impossible to disentangle the voices of other contributors from Bengough's own.<sup>6</sup> As Ramsay Cook concluded, for two decades Bengough almost single-handedly “edited, drew, versified, and punned outrageously for a growing audience.”<sup>7</sup>

Bengough's audience, like the editor himself, was predominantly white, Anglo-Saxon, and Protestant. Judging from some of the luxuries advertised in *Grip* (steamship trips from Vancouver to Alaska, perfumes and corsets from England, and notices from the Ontario Ladies' College in Whitby), we can infer that at least some readers had a comfortable amount of disposable income. Although it cannot be claimed that George M. Grant (1835–1902) was a typical subscriber, in some ways he was *Grip*'s ideal reader.<sup>8</sup> An ordained clergyman in the Presbyterian Church of Canada and Principal of Queen's University, Grant was frequently depicted in the pages of *Grip*, both as the butt of mild jokes and as the object of genuine reverence.<sup>9</sup> On May 13, 1882, Grant appears on the front page of *Grip* dressed in his academic robes, carrying a book entitled *Loyalty to Canada* and lecturing two pint-sized politicians. One is Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald. In an editorial, Bengough writes approvingly of a public stand Grant had taken in a speech at Queen's University: “Principal Grant's watchword is ‘Loyalty to Canada’, and if that sentiment were sincerely adopted by our political leaders tomorrow, present party lines would inevitably melt away. But selfishness and not loyalty is the ruling force at present.”

As a superb caricaturist, Bengough recorded the foibles of his own society for the amusement of his readers.<sup>10</sup> Yet, to him, the entertainment value of *Grip* was secondary. Bengough did not see himself merely as a

5 Quoted in Cook, *The Regenerators*, p. 123. For references to further biographical information, see p. 258, n. 2.

6 Between mid-August 1892 and the end of December 1893, Bengough did not serve as editor of *Grip*. That task was taken over by Phillips Thompson (though his name does not appear on the masthead). Since it is difficult to distinguish between Bengough and Thompson on the subject of “the Other”, all publications from the Thompson era are marked here with an asterisk. See Fraser Sutherland, *The Monthly Epic: A History of Canadian Magazines, 1789–1989* (Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1989), p. 71.

7 Cook, *The Regenerators*, p. 123.

8 See Daniel Chandler, *Semiotics: The Basics* (London: Routledge, 2002): “In order to communicate, a producer of any text must make some assumptions about an intended audience” (p. 180).

9 George Munro Grant also wrote for periodicals and was the author of *The Religions of the World in Relation to Christianity* (London: Black, 1894).

10 Every issue of *Grip* with which Bengough was associated contained vignettes (usually unsigned) and cartoons (often signed by Bengough). There were usually no fewer than six cartoons per issue, varying in size from 50 square centimetres to front covers (400 square centimetres) and centrefolds (800 square centimetres).

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humorist; in his own eyes, he was a moralist and reformer. As he explained in 1888, *Grip*'s view was that:

the legitimate forces of humour and caricature can and ought to serve the state in its highest interests ... the comic journal that has no other aim than to amuse its readers for the moment falls short of its highest mission. *Grip* has sought to play the part of educator, though dressed in the motley, and upon questions with a distinct moral bearing he has always striven to be on the right side.<sup>11</sup>

For more than 20 years, Bengough used *Grip* to advance the causes he espoused. The issue of April 25, 1891, for example, enumerated the following planks of *Grip*'s platform: national independence with an offensive and defensive alliance with Great Britain, the United States, and other Anglo-Saxon communities; goodwill toward all other nations; free trade with the world; revenue to be obtained by the taxation of monopolies; state control of monopolistic business (railways, telegraphs, telephones); abolition of liquor traffic; universal male suffrage (provided the citizen could read and write); equal rights before the law to all citizens and religious sects; one official language (English); and one Canadian flag.<sup>12</sup>

Bengough's collection of causes was not gathered randomly. Many can be traced to the views of the American social critic Henry George (1839–1897), whose major work, *Progress and Poverty*, had almost brought Bengough and Principal Grant to blows. The core of George's philosophy, his notions of single tax and free trade, were particularly attractive to *Grip*.<sup>13</sup> George's message was that, despite substantial material gains, the modern world suffered from an increasing burden of poverty and misery. "All over the world," George wrote, "the private ownership of land has been the great cause of serfdom .... I hold that an equal right to land is an inalienable right that attaches to every human being that comes into the world." As a solution, George advocated a taxation policy that would give back to the people the "unearned increment" that now belonged to landlords.<sup>14</sup>

11 *Grip*, January 7, 1888.

12 On the basis of these causes, some scholars have seen Bengough as a progressive thinker. I do not view Bengough in this light; nor does Burr, who concludes that Bengough's "vision of Canadian nationalism was organized around a series of gender, class, and racial hierarchies that empowered Anglo-Saxon men and continued to marginalize women, Native groups, European immigrants, and French Canadians" ("Gender, Sexuality, and Nationalism", p. 554).

13 Stephan Collini, *Liberalism and Sociology: L. T. Hobhouse and Political Argument in England, 1880–1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), notes that the "ideas of Henry George, [were] widely perceived at the time [1880s] as Socialist, though in fact [they were] based upon an extreme kind of individualism" (p. 33). See also Avner Offer, *The First World War: An Agrarian Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 155.

14 Cook, *The Regenerators*, p. 108.

Bengough was so committed to Henry George's political and economic philosophy that he even attacked his own Canadian idols when they challenged George's ideas. In 1891, for example, Bengough expressed strong disagreement with a speech in which George M. Grant had attacked Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* (1879). For the issue of January 31, 1891, Bengough produced a cartoon entitled "The Schoolmaster Schoolmastered", in which Principal Grant is being switched by the irate author who says, "I'll teach you [Grant] to criticize *Progress and Poverty* before you know the first thing about its contents" (see Figure 1).<sup>15</sup> The tone is one of bantering good humour and respectful dialogue between Bengough and Principal Grant.<sup>16</sup>

The remainder of Bengough's thought seems to have been derived from a broader group of contemporary social reformers and religious dissenters. Although Bengough was a "thoroughgoing Georgeite", he also agreed with those who argued that industrial society produced a systematic pattern of inequalities, including monopolies, poverty in the midst of plenty, child labour, slum housing, low farm produce prices, and discrimination against women.<sup>17</sup> The general impression created by *Grip*'s radical platform is that of a classic advocate of universal social and economic reform. Cumming supports this assessment of Bengough's political views: "Overall, [Bengough] comes through as an earnest and well-meaning Christian who believed that the world could be made better by right-thinking people who would take charge, destroy corrupt government and monopoly, curb drunkenness, and bring in fair taxation."<sup>18</sup> Bengough did indeed cast his lot with those who sought to reform society. The problem with this picture, however, is that, despite a public platform calling for "equal rights before the law to all citizens and religious sects", Bengough was apt to limit the benefits of his reforming zeal to the white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant Canadians with whom he identified.<sup>19</sup>

Cumming is well aware that Bengough could be labelled a "racist chauvinist bigot".<sup>20</sup> This, Cumming argues, would be unfair, because Bengough "often was supportive of Native people and sometimes of blacks, Jews, and orientals".<sup>21</sup> Perhaps because immigration was not a factor, Bengough did indeed speak out for the rights of indigenous

15 For background regarding the controversy over Henry George, see *ibid.*, pp. 117–118.

16 See Cook, *The Regenerators*, p. 149.

17 *Ibid.*, p. 115.

18 Cumming, *Sketches from a Young Country*, p. 24.

19 Also see "He Had Studied the Sex" (*Grip*, September 18, 1888) and "A Proud Darkey" (*Grip*, September 3, 1892), which is reproduced here as Figure 14.

20 Cumming, *Sketches from a Young Country*, p. 24.

21 *Ibid.*, p. 208. On February 13, 1892, *Grip* managed to ridicule two minority groups at the same time by suggesting that the term "sheeny" comes from the Chinese.



**Figure 1:** The Schoolmaster Schoolmastered. Henry George (to Principal Grant) — “I’ll teach you to criticize ‘Progress and Poverty’ before you know the first thing about its contents!” (*Grip*, January 31, 1891).

peoples.<sup>22</sup> As for the other minorities mentioned by Cumming, a brief survey of the magazine’s output of cartoons demonstrates *Grip*’s bias against most of the ethnic and religious groups that had immigrated to Canada in the recent past. Though Bengough did not have the

<sup>22</sup> On April 14, 1888, for example, the front cover and two articles in *Grip* were devoted to Canada’s Native problems. Bengough bitterly attacked the “Christian” government of Sir John A. Macdonald for allowing Indians to starve.

terminology to call “the Other” by that name, he used ridicule and satire to perpetuate the view that orientals, blacks, Irish Catholics, and Jews belonged to a lower order, with the unstated implication that these groups did not qualify for inclusion in the political nation.<sup>23</sup>

### Interpreting *Grip*'s Cartoons

To understand the impact of *Grip*'s cartoons on a contemporary audience, we should interpret Bengough, as a semiotician would, in terms of codes and conventions that were dominant in *Grip*'s socio-cultural world.<sup>24</sup> Bengough's jokes and cartoons, like his political platform, were not created in a vacuum or in a random fashion.<sup>25</sup> By looking “behind or beneath the surface of the observed”, we can discover the underlying cultural message.<sup>26</sup> As Stuart Hall wrote, “Certain codes may ... be so widely distributed in a specific language community or culture, and be learned at so early an age, that they appear not to be constructed ....”<sup>27</sup> Yet constructed they are, and as social historians it is our task to decode what Bengough embedded in his words and images.

Bengough's satirical stock-in-trade was the stereotype.<sup>28</sup> As Teresa Perkins has pointed out, stereotypes are social rather than individual phenomena, hence their usefulness in socialization, “which in turn adds to their relative strength”.<sup>29</sup> Perkins's analysis challenges several assumptions traditionally associated with stereotypes.

First, are stereotypes always erroneous in content? Perkins argues that stereotypes often point to a “kernel of truth”.<sup>30</sup> To presuppose that stereotypes are always pure fantasy strips valuable historical material of social meaning. From a historical perspective, *Grip*'s presentation of Jews and

23 Because Bengough's primary concern was his Georgeite agenda, not every issue bristles with bias against blacks, Jews, or orientals. During periods of heightened attention to social and political follies, months might pass without reference to minority groups. When the Georgeite crisis had passed, *Grip* would return to Canada's minorities. Usually, a single issue would not contain more than one major cartoon devoted to blacks, Jews, or orientals. Satirical stories or jokes at the expense of one of these minority groups also would appear on an irregular basis.

24 Chandler, *Semiotics*, p. 156. For a discussion about types of codes, see pp. 148ff.

25 As Chandler writes, no text is an island (*ibid.*, p. 199).

26 Chandler, *Semiotics*, p. 214.

27 Stuart Hall, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 157.

28 The wordsmith who coined the term “stereotype” and gave it its initial technical meaning was Walter Lippman (1922). According to Frank Felsenstein, Lippman “was the first to recognize that the tendency to perceive through stereotypes, indicative though it can be of our own prejudices, is in itself an essential part of our mental makeup”. See Frank Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660–1830* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p. 12.

29 Teresa E. Perkins, “Rethinking Stereotypes”, in Michèle Barrett *et al.*, eds., *Ideology and Cultural Production* (London: Croom Helm, 1979), p. 141.

30 *Ibid.*, p. 140. The fact that there are kernels of truth in stereotypes helps to explain their staying power as well as some of their innate dangers.

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other subaltern groups is not a total distortion. Some realistic aspects of Jewish life are depicted in *Grip*, especially in Bengough's portrayal of Jewish poverty. At the same time, as Perkins observes, cartoonists and comedians tend to focus on the most exaggerated version of a stereotype.<sup>31</sup> A nineteenth-century Jew, looking at the images of his co-religionists in *Grip*, might very well say that these illustrations "are about us, but from outside us".<sup>32</sup>

Secondly, are stereotypes exclusively negative or pejorative? As Perkins points out, there are stereotypes of structurally central groups characterized by class, race, gender, or age: males (the he-man), WASPs, heterosexuals, upper-class leaders. Thus those in the majority apply stereotypical thinking not only to minorities, but also to members of their own group, where these images play a crucial role in socialization. Dominant groups hold positive stereotypes about themselves. These stereotypes are important because they provide the context for the negative or oppositional stereotypes that characterize other groups.<sup>33</sup>

Much of what Bengough achieved as a humorist depended on negative stereotyping, which entails a "sense of difference" between the host group and outsiders. These images tend to grow out of the host group's need to defend its values and beliefs, presumed to be threatened from the "intrusion of an alien culture that it does not fully understand".<sup>34</sup> Because negative stereotyping is a complex psychodynamic phenomenon, such beliefs are apt to be riddled with contradictions. Bengough produced numerous cartoons (many accompanied by editorial commentary) that employed negative stereotyping to demonize immigrant minority groups, including orientals (particularly Chinese), blacks, Irish Catholics, and Jews. After briefly surveying *Grip*'s satirical treatment of the first three of these groups, I focus in more detail on the complex pictorial and literary imagery *Grip* utilized in its depiction of the Jews.

### **Oriental**s

For Bengough, oriental immigrants embodied not only the strangeness of the unknowable "Other", but a potential source of unlimited cheap labour that threatened all his Georgeite programmes for the benefit of native-born white Canadians. "The Chinese question", Bengough wrote in an editorial in 1888, "continues to agitate Anglo-Saxon communities in all parts of the world. It is hard to decide just what should be done about the almond-eyed strangers of the East." On the one hand, it seemed

31 Perkins, "Rethinking Stereotypes", p. 146.

32 Adapted from Jan Nederveen Pieterse, *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 10.

33 Paragraph based on Perkins, "Rethinking Stereotypes", p. 144.

34 Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes*, p. 15.



unchristian to “drive John [Bengough’s collective name for the Chinese] forcibly from Christian lands”. On the other, “unrestricted Chinese emigration means misery to our own working classes, at least so long as land-monopoly is permitted by law.” This was a conundrum, “a source of much political Confucion [*sic*]”.<sup>35</sup> Bengough’s solution to the problem (until the messianic end of all monopolies) was to oppose immigration to Canada from the East. Thus, while espousing “equal rights before the law to all citizens and religious sects”, Bengough adopted an immigration policy that bordered on exclusionist.<sup>36</sup> The opposition to Chinese immigration was in perfect harmony with the philosophy of Henry George, who told an anti-oriental meeting in 1869 that, unless Chinese immigration were checked, “the youngest home of nations must in its early manhood follow the path and meet the doom of Babylon, Nineveh and Rome”.<sup>37</sup>

Although Bengough’s anti-oriental output was perhaps not as large as his anti-black or antisemitic oeuvres, *Grip*’s cartoons reinforced the stereotype of the “inscrutable Oriental”. *Grip* ridiculed the sounds of oriental languages and the alleged sameness of oriental facial features. In 1894, *Grip*’s last year of publication, Bengough offered his readers two anti-oriental cartoons. In “A Cycle of Cathay”, we see a Chinese cyclist in native garb, peddling madly through a cloud of dust.<sup>38</sup> Bengough gave the cyclist a very long pigtail wafting in the wind. Even more prominent are the man’s darkened skin and his simian features. In the world of *Grip*, the humour is embodied in the alien quality of the image; no caption is necessary.<sup>39</sup> In “Overheard on Yonge St.”, two Chinese gentlemen discuss the current war between the Japanese and the Chinese. Ah Sin (pun intended) asks: “Foo choo kow shing Li Hung Chang?” His interlocutor, Sam Lee, replies: “King Shung Naniwa Jap alle samee!”<sup>40</sup> Here two Chinese men, depicted by Bengough as indistinguishable from each other, are complaining that to them all Japanese are the same. To Bengough, the most unnerving aspect of oriental otherness was its uncanny sameness.

## Blacks

*Grip*’s depiction of blacks is more complex and negative than his portrayal of orientals.<sup>41</sup> Almost every black portrayed in *Grip* has pronounced

35 *Grip*, July 28, 1888.

36 See Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *A Full-Orbed Christianity: The Protestant Churches and Social Welfare, 1900–1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 1996), p. 188.

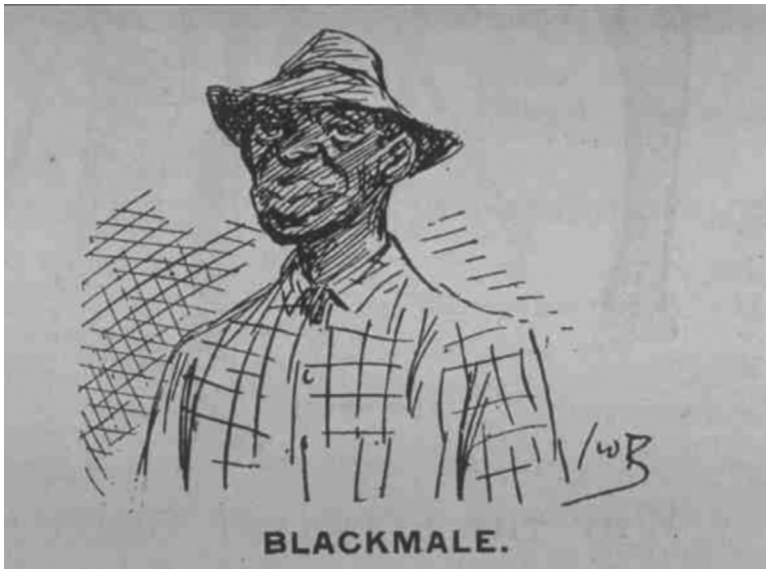
37 Quoted in Offer, *The First World War*, p. 171.

38 *Grip*, July 21, 1894.

39 On the “Negroization” of the Chinese, see Pieterse, *White on Black*, pp. 215–217.

40 *Grip*, August 18, 1894.

41 On the historical affinities between anti-black and antisemitic racism, see Pieterse, *White on Black*, p. 218.



**Figure 2:** Blackmale (*Grip*, December 15, 1894).

simian features, which are so distorted that they are barely recognizable as belonging to *homo sapiens*.<sup>42</sup> Bengough's sketch entitled "Blackmale" (Figure 2) is typical.<sup>43</sup> In Bengough's iconography, the lips of black people can be compared to the noses of Jews. Just as *Grip's* puns about Jews often turn on the word "sheeny", jokes about blacks revolve around the word "coon", a term that resonated with the derogatory associations of stealth and thievery applied anthropomorphically to raccoons.<sup>44</sup>

In social and cultural terms, blacks are depicted as illiterates who are naturally dishonest, cowardly, and stupid.<sup>45</sup> Black children victimize old

42 Theo van Leeuwen, "Semiotics and Iconography", in Theo van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt, eds., *Handbook of Visual Analysis* (London: Sage, 2001), quotes Georges Cuvier (1769–1832), the Swiss scientist regarded as the founder of palaeontology: "The Negro Race ... is marked by a black complexion, crisped or woolly hair, compressed cranium, and a flat nose. The projection of the lower parts of the face, and the thick lips, evidently approximate it to the monkey tribe ..." (p. 107). Also see Pieterse, *White on Black*, pp. 39–44.

43 Cartoonists seem to be quite taken with the comic possibilities inherent in the term "blackmail" (see Pieterse, *White on Black*, p. 171).

44 For instance, *Grip*, January 28, 1893.\* On the use of this derogatory word, see van Leeuwen, "Semiotics and Iconography", p. 107. Also see Pieterse, *White on Black*, pp. 135–136. During the nineteenth century, the term "coon" also meant "steal" or "pilfer".

45 In its last year of publication (1894), *Grip* (with Bengough firmly at the helm) published anti-black cartoons on February 24, May 5, June 30, July 21, July 28, August 11, October 13, November 3, and

and respected white folks.<sup>46</sup> When black adults are not stealing chickens (a recurrent theme), they are eating “possum an’ sweet taters”.<sup>47</sup> In August 1884, Bengough reviewed the question of admitting Jamaica as a province of Canada. That idea, Bengough wrote, “borders on the preposterous”. In an editorial, he referred to this option as tantamount to adopting “the little nig. [sic]” (Figure 3). Even black Christian ministers are portrayed as ludicrous creatures, as we see in a series of articles published during Bengough’s absence from the editor’s desk and featuring the Very Reverend Archdeacon Diaphonous Dixie, DD.<sup>48</sup>

### **Irish Catholics and Immigration *en masse***

In December 1883, *Grip* published a cartoon called “Heartless Desertion” displaying the magazine’s distaste for Irish Catholic immigrants.<sup>49</sup> The cartoon depicted the city of Toronto and a prelate of the Church rebuking Mrs. Britannia in these words: “You’ll have to take care of your own paupers!” (See Figure 4.) In the commentary to the cartoon, the editor explained,

Mrs. Britannia, who “rules the waves”, is a very fine woman in her way, but her way of dealing with pauper emigrants doesn’t suit us at all. Her patent short method is to dump these unfortunate wretches into Canada, give them enough money to carry them to the vicinity of Toronto, and then leave them to be supported by charitable organizations which have already as many claims upon them as they can attend to .... Archbishop Lynch has taken pains to state that he does not hold himself responsible for the well-being of these helpless people who happen to be Irish and Catholic; and Miss Toronto feels bound to emphatically echo the disclaimer. The New York policy of shipping paupers back to the Imperial authorities ought to be adopted.<sup>50</sup>

Occasionally, Bengough hit two targets with one cartoon. An example from 1894 pictures a pair of jailbirds shackled to each other hand and foot. McGorley, an Irishman, says, “‘Taint the bein’ locked up dthat I moind. But the disgrace av bein’ chained up wid a black nagur is more nor me feelin’s can shtand, entoirely.” To this, Johnsing, a black, replies,

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December 15 (Figure 2). In this particular year, Jews are hardly mentioned or pictured in the pages of *Grip*; blacks seem to have taken their place as objects of ridicule.

46 *Grip*, December 10, 1892\* (“A Note from Coffeetown”) and October 13, 1894 (“A Black Crook”).

47 *Grip*, October 10, 1892.\*

48 See *Grip*, November 19\* and December 10,\* 1882; March 11,\* March 25,\* April 29,\* June 10,\* and July 15,\* 1893. It is relevant that a minister was seen as a “desexualized figure” (Pieterse, *White on Black*, p. 177).

49 For a brief history of the depiction of the Irish in cartoons, see Pieterse, *White on Black*, pp. 213–214.

50 Editorial in *Grip*, December 1, 1883.



**Figure 3:** “Massa, don’ you want to ’dopt a culled chile?” (*Grip*, August 30, 1884).

“Ise sorry now dat I stole dat watch. Ef I’d a knowed dat dey’d a-chained me long wid a common white trash Irishman, I wouldn’t a done it!”<sup>51</sup> What is really going on in this cartoon? Members of two subaltern groups are depicted as themselves expressing racist perceptions of each other. The implication is that everyone in this society (including the objects of bigotry) had good reason to affirm the collective stereotypes applied to

51 *Grip*, July 7, 1884.



**Figure 4:** Heartless Desertion. “Here, you, Mrs. Britannia! You’ll have to take care of your own paupers!” (*Grip*, December 1, 1883).

immigrant groups; therefore it was acceptable and appropriate for *Grip* to perpetuate such stereotypes. Moreover, embedded in the logic of the cartoon is the underlying premise that each man is correct in his contempt for “the Other” but mistaken in identifying himself with the dominant group. As a result, the reader, who is presumed to be a bona fide member of the dominant group, is invited to enjoy a guilt-free sense of superiority at the expense of two excluded groups.

Bengough’s general opposition to immigration took graphic form in his issue of January 31, 1891. Here an endless column of tattered men and women are on the march. The title of the cartoon is “Hark! Hark! The Dogs Do Bark, the Beggars are Coming to Town”. In taking this position, Bengough conformed to the views of his mentor Henry George. Across the Atlantic, others joined the chorus. In 1892 Arnold White published a major work entitled *The Destitute Alien in Great Britain: A Series of Papers Dealing with the Subject of Foreign Pauper Immigration*. The civilized world was reacting with alarm to the barbarians at the gate. During the 1880s and 1890s, most of those knocking at the gate were Jews.

### Negative Stereotypes of Jews

For Canadian-born white Protestants, the collective vision of the “otherness” of Jews was a complex and sometimes contradictory phenomenon. Different ways of categorizing the alien qualities of the Jewish “race” operated simultaneously on multiple levels and in diverse social and economic contexts. A tribe set apart by their own incomprehensible beliefs and

traditions, Jews practised an archaic religion with bizarre customs that appeared primitive, obsessive, or meaningless to Christian onlookers. It was generally assumed that Jews belonged to a separate race with distinctive physical, psychological, and sexual characteristics. In economic terms, Jews were portrayed as occupying the extreme ends of the spectrum: either they were capitalist plutocrats in the Rothschild mould, or indigent pedlars, as evil-smelling as the old clothes they hawked. At either end of the social scale, Jews were depicted as miserly, dishonest, and generally obsessed with money.

With so many different stereotypes to choose from, Bengough was able to deride Jews for their alleged negative attributes in a variety of different contexts without appearing to mock them simply because they were Jews. The resulting multiplicity of images that *Grip* imposed on the Jews of Canada bears a striking resemblance to the complex and contradictory stereotypes applied to their counterparts in Eastern Europe. As Konstantyn Jelenski described the predicament of the Jews in his native Poland:

Poles have never come out against Jews “because they are Jews” but because Jews are dirty, greedy, mendacious, because they wear earlocks, speak jargon, do not want to assimilate, and *also* because they *do* assimilate, cease using jargon, are nattily dressed, and want to be regarded as Poles. Because they lack culture and because they are overly cultured. Because they are superstitious, backward and ignorant, and because they are damnably capable, progressive, and ambitious. Because they have long, hooked noses, and because it is sometimes difficult to distinguish them from “pure Poles” .... Because they are bankers and capitalists and because they are Communists and agitators. But in *no* case because they are Jews.<sup>52</sup>

For the first seven years of its existence, *Grip* devoted little space to Jews or Judaism. The relative silence of *Grip* during this period may have been related to the negligible number of Jews living in Toronto. In 1871 there were only 1,333 Jews in all Canada. Even though that number almost doubled between 1871 and 1881, Jews still formed only 0.06 per cent of the total population of the country.<sup>53</sup> Between 1881 and 1891, however,

52 Konstantyn Jelenski, *Kultura* (Paris, 1968), cited by Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes*, pp. 13–14.

On the “multiplicity of identities and of positions within an apparent identity”, see Lawrence Grossberg, “Identity and Cultural Studies: Is That All There Is?” in Stuart Hall and Paul du Gay, eds., *Questions of Cultural Identity* (London: Sage, 1996), p. 91.

53 For the statistics in this paragraph, I have drawn on Louis Rosenberg, *Canada's Jews: A Social and Economic Study of Jews in Canada in the 1930s*, ed. Morton Weinfeld (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993), pp. 9–20. In 1881 Jews in Canada were “exceeded in number and percentage not only by people of French, British, German, Dutch, Negro and Scandinavian origin but also by those of Chinese origin” (p. 10).

the Jewish population almost doubled again so by 1891 there were 6,503 Jews in Canada, comprising 0.13 per cent of the total population, with the greatest concentrations in the urban centres. If Jews were ever an invisible minority in Toronto, they could no longer lay claim to that distinction. This development was directly related to what was happening to the Jewish population of Russia.

Under Czar Alexander II (1858–1881), Russian Jews had made some progress in civil rights. Hoping that Jews would assimilate, the Czar enacted milder policies than his predecessors. New rights were given to selected groups of “useful” Jews.<sup>54</sup> Because of these and other similar measures, the reign of Alexander II was a relatively good time for the Jews. This atmosphere changed dramatically after the assassination of Alexander II and the ascension of Alexander III in March 1881. Conditions for the Jews in Russia began to deteriorate almost immediately. Not coincidentally, during the 1880s and 1890s, Jewish immigration to Canada increased. The years 1881, 1882, and 1891 were particularly difficult: “a mass exodus of Jews had begun.”<sup>55</sup>

During these years, *Grip* took notice of events in Russia on two occasions. On March 18, 1882, a cartoon depicted Czar Alexander III censuring one of his generals: “Thanks to *you* Russia feels herself derided, hooted at and utterly isolated amongst the Nations.” Beneath this quotation, Bengough added his own remark: “‘Which’, as the general might have replied, ‘is very much like what the Jews feel amongst the Russians.’” Eight years later, on August 30, 1890, Bengough again published a cartoon on Russian Jewish life. In this one, a dog labelled “Persecution” runs after a dishevelled, hook-nosed man. In the middle of the cartoon is a large sign that begins with the words, “The Seven Edicts”. The first edict, “No Jew shall own or rent land”, makes the context clear. At the bottom of the sign we read, “in force 1890 by order of the Czar”. Clearly, Bengough is responding to the very conditions that drove many Jews from Russia during the reign of Alexander III. Below the cartoon, Bengough added his own comment: “Dedicated to the Czar of Russia, with assurance of *Grip*’s profound contempt.”

These two cartoons indicate some awareness of alarming events taking place in Russia. They should not be read, however, as an expression of philo-semitism on Bengough’s part. As a reformer, Bengough was outraged at the regressive steps Alexander III had taken. When Nicholas II succeeded his father in 1894, Bengough took a similar line, publishing a cartoon in which he urged the new Czar to give his people “a slight

54 *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem, 1971), vol. 14, pp. 441ff.

55 Stephen A. Speisman, *The Jews of Toronto: A History to 1937* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1979), p. 70.

taste of constitutional freedom”.<sup>56</sup> What appears to have animated Bengough was the hope that an improvement of conditions in Russia would result in fewer foreigners being driven to emigrate to the shores of North America. As immigration increased, Bengough’s treatment of the Jews in the pages of *Grip* grew more strident. In this regard, *Grip* may be seen as a barometer of social change.

### **An Alien Tribe**

On September 23, 1882, *Grip* published a poem entitled “Benrabbi’s Wife: A Doleful Legend”.<sup>57</sup> A satire on the philo-semitic poems of Robert Browning, especially the latter’s “Rabbi Ben Ezra” (1864), to which it bears some telling resemblances,<sup>58</sup> “Benrabbi’s Wife” relates the story of Jacob Raphael Benrabbi, “a Jew of large estate”, and his wife, who is known simply as “Mrs. Jew”. As the poem begins, Benrabbi realizes that his wife’s health is failing. Not resigned to the doctor’s bills — the stereotypical Jew is depicted as miserly even when it came to caring for his own wife — Benrabbi decides to take her on a voyage on a clipper ship (Figure 5). The fresh air does not improve Mrs. Jew’s health. Far from land, Mrs. Jew dies, and Benrabbi considers his options. At this point, the poem’s author offers a brief exposition of Jewish burial customs, noting that

[I]n the learned books you’ll see  
     That Jews are all agreed  
 The burial of their dead at sea  
     By no means suits their creed.

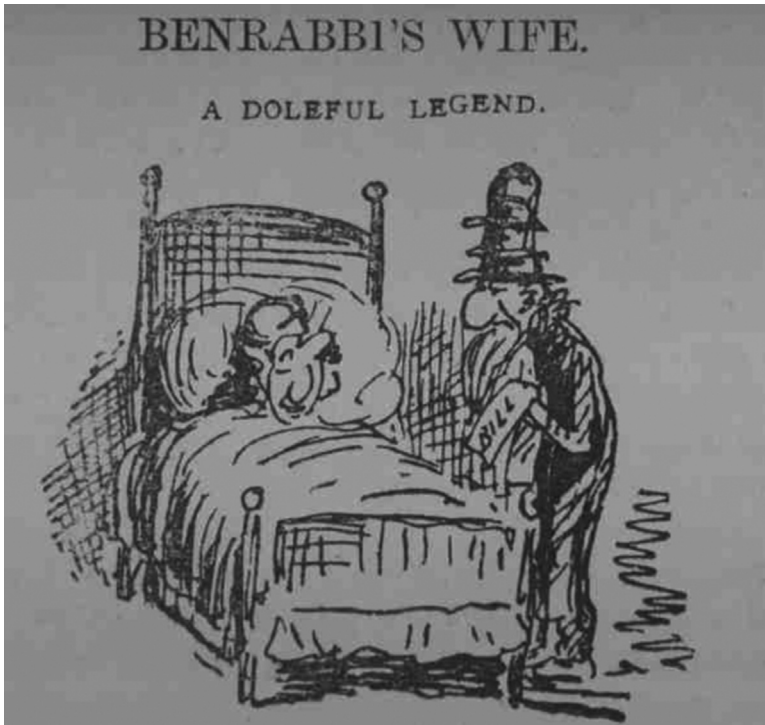
Although there is no indication of which “learned books” the satirist had in mind, Benrabbi’s situation allows *Grip* to invoke stereotypes of Jewish legalism and otherness. After some thought, the grieving Jew decides that his best course is to pickle his wife’s body in a barrel of rum (Figure 6). But, as he sleeps, members of the ship’s crew grow restless. Having a body on board is contrary to their mores, so the seamen take matters

56 *Grip*, November 10, 1894. A month later, Bengough wrote that Nicholas II had a choice before him — “whether he will accept the love and devotion of his subjects, and take his place as the greatest of all the Czars, or whether he will take a dose of dynamite” (*Grip*, December 8, 1894).

57 As John J. Appel points out in “Jews in American Caricature: 1820–1914”, *American Jewish History*, vol. 71, no. 1 (September 1981), “dearth of live Jews . . . did not mean that Americans lacked an already well established stereotype of Jews-in-the-abstract, formed by centuries of Christian, European involvement with them” (p. 108).

58 Edward Berdoe, *The Browning Cyclopaedia: A Guide to the Study of the Works of Robert Browning* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1902), points out that Browning “had a great sympathy with the Jewish spirit” (p. 235). Abraham Ibn Ezra (1089–1164), who is the butt of *Grip*’s satire, was a poet, grammarian, biblical commentator, philosopher, astronomer, and physician. He was one of the brightest lights of the Jewish Middle Ages.



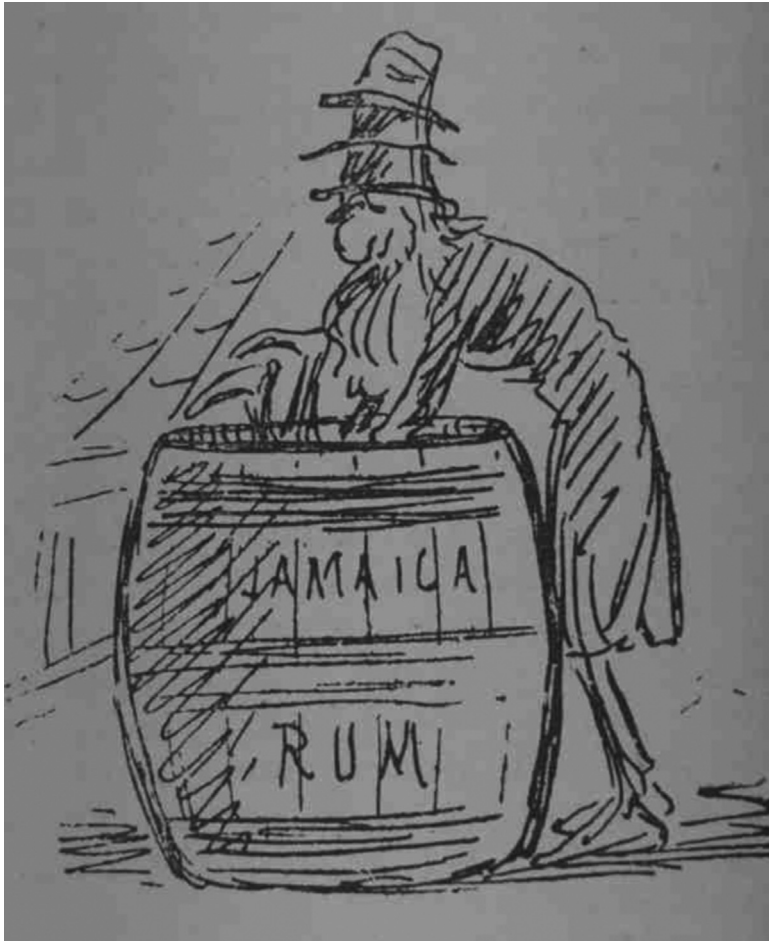


**Figure 5:** Benrabbi's Wife. A Doleful Legend (*Grip*, September 23, 1882).

into their own hands. They drop the barrel containing Mrs. Jew overboard and, to make the cabin “look the same”, they replace the sepulchral barrel with another containing pork.<sup>59</sup> “And the Jew”, we are told, “never twigged the game.”<sup>60</sup>

59 On the subject of Jews and pork, see Alfred Rubens, *A Jewish Iconography*, rev. ed. (London: Nonpareil, 1981), items 991 and 1028. Item 991 is described as follows: “[A] very stout man with a long nose [is] seated at a table. His face is framed in a Jew’s harp and he is holding a suckling pig on a fork in his left hand.” Also see the exhibit catalogue, *The Jew as Other: A Century of English Caricature, 1730–1830* (New York: Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, 1995), pp. 58–64. The authors of this publication remark that consciousness of the Jewish prohibition against pork “provided a habitual target for jocular allusion to the Jews and a means of taunting or humiliating them” (p. 58).

60 Consider George Eliot’s rhetorical question in her letter to Harriet Beecher Stowe, dated October 29, 1876: “Can anything be more disgusting than to hear people called ‘educated’ making small jokes about eating ham, and showing themselves empty of any real knowledge as to the relation of their own social and religious life to the history of the people they think themselves witty in insulting?” Bengough made Jewish aversion to pork part of his repertoire. For instance, one cartoon begins with Levi saying to Moses: “I say, Moses, vat is de matter mit you? You look shoost [just] so like your grantmother have some Hamilton salt pork eat” (*Grip*, August 20, 1892).



**Figure 6:** Benrabbi's Wife. A Doleful Legend (*Grip*, September 23, 1882).

The legend of a carcass pickled for later burial has been traced back to the fifteenth century, at which time the victim of the story was not Jewish.<sup>61</sup> By the beginning of the nineteenth century, however, the story had acquired a Jewish protagonist and antisemitic overtones. In this reincarnation, the tale concerned a Jew living abroad who preserves the remains of his dead brother for burial by having the carcass cut up and pickled before shipping it home in a barrel marked "pork". During the voyage, the hungry sailors open the barrel and consume its

61 The tale has been traced back to Poggio Bracciolini (ca. 1451) by Gershon Legman, *No Laughing Matter: An Analysis of Sexual Humor* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968–1975), p. 555, cited in exhibit catalogue *The Jew as Other*, p. 60.

contents. The tale recurs during the nineteenth century in broadside ballads.<sup>62</sup> The point of this fantasy as adapted by *Grip* is to ridicule Jewish religious practices. The barrel Benrabbi treats with reverence contains nothing but pork; thus the miserly Jew is hoist by his own petard.<sup>63</sup> Benrabbi is portrayed as gullible, superstitious, and a practitioner of strange customs. The illustrations that accompany the text in *Grip* show him wearing three hats, a sure sign that, despite his “large estate”, in the iconography of the times, he was still a pedlar at heart.<sup>64</sup>

### ***Grip*, Goldwin Smith, and the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel**

Goldwin Smith (1823–1910) was a remarkable man. Born in England, educated at Oxford, and named Regius Professor of History at the same institution, Smith seemed destined for a successful academic and political career in his native country. In 1866, however, for reasons probably related to the suicide of his father, Smith resigned his chair and started a new life in North America.<sup>65</sup> One of the founders of Cornell University, Smith ended up in Toronto, where he lived in an old brick house called the Grange.<sup>66</sup> Here he pursued the life of North American intellectual-at-large, journalist, editor, and controversialist of independent means. He contributed to most of the major journals and newspapers of the English-speaking world, and, when they did not seem sufficient, he published his own periodicals or financially supported those he found congenial.

It has been said that there were two houses that “no distinguished man left Toronto without visiting”: one of these was the Grange.<sup>67</sup> As the writings of two young men (William Lyon Mackenzie King and Vincent Massey) attest, a guest at the home of Goldwin Smith was not likely to forget the event.<sup>68</sup> All the burning issues of the day were discussed at

62 Exhibit catalogue, *The Jew as Other*, p. 60.

63 Connecting the Jew with pork is a traditional ploy of the caricaturist. See Joseph Grego, *Rowlandson the Caricaturist* (New York: Collectors Edition, 1970), vol. 1, pp. 324–325, which describes Rowlandson’s work: “Jews at a Luncheon, or a peep into Duke’s Place” (1794?). Here Jews with goat-like beards are feasting on a suckling pig with “greedy avidity”.

64 As early as the eighteenth century, Jewish dealers in old clothes were depicted as wearing a tier of three hats. I discuss this stereotypical depiction below. Appel argues that cartoons depend on “immediately recognizable symbols” (“Jews in American Caricature”, p. 106). In support of his argument, Appel cites art historian E. H. Gombrich.

65 In *Candid Chronicles: Leaves from the Note Book of a Canadian Journalist* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1925), Hector Charlesworth remarked that Smith had “a curious obsession” with the death of his father, feeling that “it had debarred him from a public career in Great Britain” (p. 114).

66 The Grange, built in 1818, served as the first home of the Art Gallery of Ontario and has now been restored.

67 John Willison, *Sir George Parkin: A Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1929), p. 141.

68 For instance, on November 18, 1904, the future prime minister of Canada and his father were invited to dine at the Grange. Regarding this occasion, King reflected in his diary, “It was one of the happiest evenings I have ever spent.” Vincent Massey got his chance some five years later.

the Grange, among them Smith's all-consuming hatred for Jews and Judaism. His original target was Benjamin Disraeli, with whom he first sparred in 1848.<sup>69</sup> Although Disraeli had been baptized at age 13 and had received a Christian upbringing, Smith missed no opportunity to revile Disraeli in print for his Semitic blood and his "oriental" character. Long after Disraeli's death in 1881, Smith continued to heap calumny on Jewish life, customs, beliefs, and history. Smith's antisemitic pieces were published in the most esteemed periodicals of the day.<sup>70</sup> Known by his contemporaries as the "Sage of the Grange", Goldwin Smith has since earned another appellation bestowed upon him by historian Gerald Tulchinsky: "Victorian Canadian Antisemite".<sup>71</sup>

*Grip* was well aware of Smith's role as a controversialist. On the front page of the issue for November 14, 1885, Bengough offered a caricature of Smith debating a second caricature of Smith. The subtitle of the cartoon was "Goldwin the Scholar, and Goldwin the Crank" (Figure 7). In an editorial, Bengough elaborated on the idea that there was a Smith *doppelgänger*, Smith the crank, who was "not in reality the erudite *littérateur* of the Grange, but a sort of emanation ... a materialization of the cranky and crotchety and antagonistic elements of a nature that is ... not all sweetness and light". What the professor thought of this depiction has not been recorded for posterity. Nor can we tell how he reacted to the following piece of doggerel published by *Grip* in 1893:

When I think of the ten lost tribes of Jews;  
Do I wish they were found again?  
No, sir; but I wish the remaining two  
Had been lost with the blooming ten.<sup>72</sup>

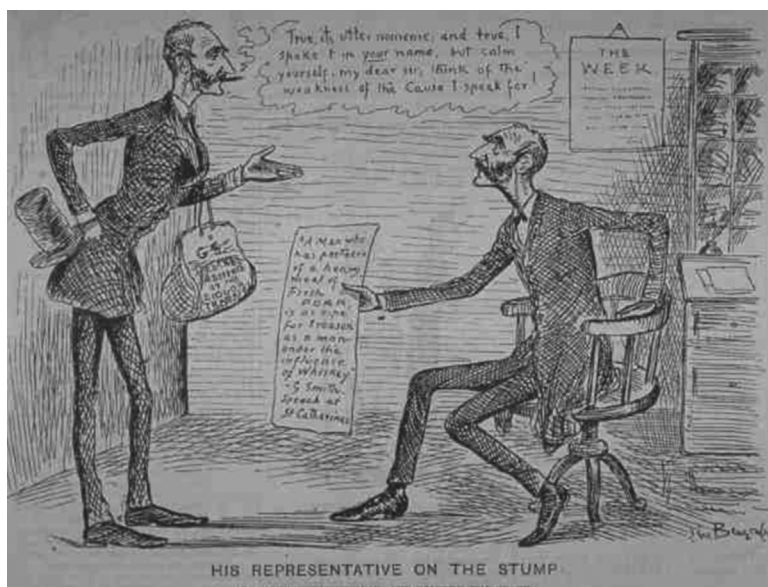
What we do know is that four years later, writing in the *Weekly Sun*, Smith took up where *Grip* had left off. The discovery of the Ten Lost Tribes, Smith wrote, "is another religious fancy of which we ought to have heard the last. 'I am very much out of funds,' was the reply of one who had been asked to subscribe for that object, 'and I really cannot afford at present to give any thing to your association for finding the Ten Tribes, but if you have an association for losing the Two Tribes, poor as

69 See Gerald Tulchinsky, "Goldwin Smith: Victorian Canadian Antisemite", in Alan Davies, ed., *Antisemitism in Canada: History and Interpretation* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1992), pp. 67–91. As Tulchinsky points out, in 1848 London's *Morning Chronicle* carried a series of articles written by Goldwin Smith; the target of these articles was Benjamin Disraeli (p. 71).

70 Although he did not limit himself to one periodical, Smith published a number of antisemitic articles in *Nineteenth Century*: "Can Jews be Patriots?" (May 1878); "The Jewish Question" (October 1881); "The Jews: A Deferred Referrnder [*sic*]" (November 1882).

71 Tulchinsky, "Goldwin Smith", pp. 83–85.

72 *Grip*, April 22, 1893.\*



**Figure 7:** His Representative on the Stump: or, Goldwin the Scholar, and Goldwin the Crank (*Grip*, November 14, 1885).

I am, I will try to contribute.’<sup>73</sup> Thus one of the most distinguished essayists in the English-speaking world lent his prestige to an antisemitic ditty he may have first seen in the pages of *Grip*.

### Noses and Other Organs<sup>74</sup>

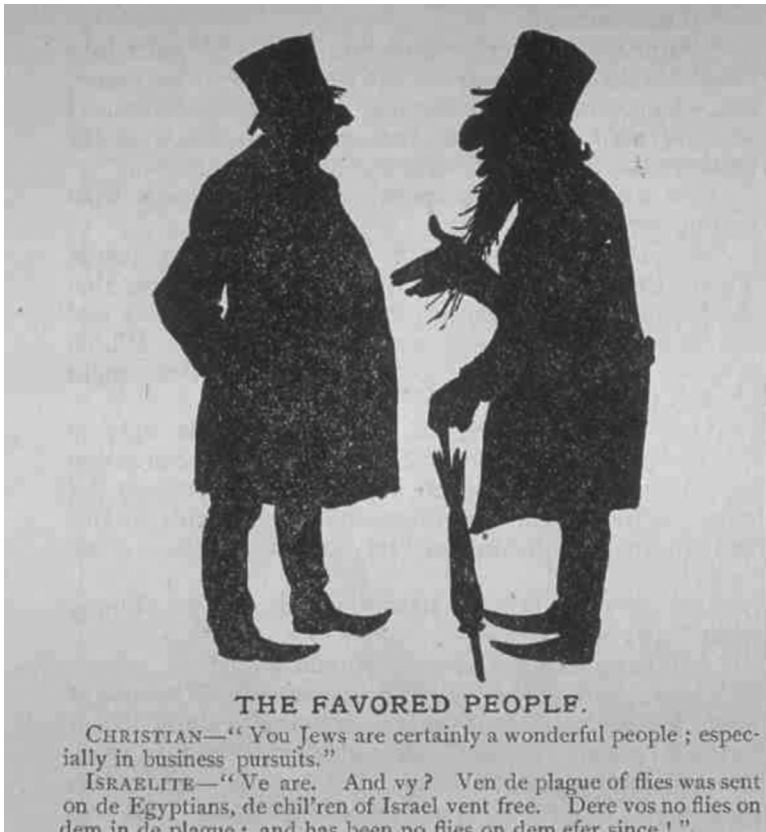
Between 1882 and the demise of *Grip*, the magazine published many cartoons about Jews.<sup>75</sup> In almost every one of them, the Jew is portrayed as having a very prominent nose (Figure 8), and, in several cartoons, the Jew’s nose is the main subject. For example, in one representation, a young Jewish man is depicted as having the following conversation with his traditionally dressed, rabbinic father:

[Father:] And so you’re goin’ to marry a Christian and disgrace your poor old father.

<sup>73</sup> *Weekly Sun*, July 15, 1897, quoted in Tulchinsky, “Goldwin Smith”, p. 78.

<sup>74</sup> The reader is encouraged to find a copy of Andy Warhol’s satirical commentary on noses in “Before and After (I)” (1961). This work of art is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

<sup>75</sup> In the United States, the high point of emerging antisemitic images in illustrated journals is given as the period between 1885 and 1905. See Appel, “The Jews in American Caricature”, p. 104.



**Figure 8:** The Favored People.  
Christian —“You Jews are certainly a wonderful people; especially in business pursuits.”  
Israelite —“Ve are. And vy? Ven de plague of flies was sent on de Egyptians, de chil'ren of Israel vent free. Dere vos no flies on dem in de plague; and has been no flies on dem efer since!” (*Grip*, January 31, 1891).

[Son:] Yeth, but I'm goin' to change my name to Smith.  
[Father:] But what are you goin' to do with *that* nose?<sup>76</sup>

In another cartoon, called “A Physiognomist”, two business men are talking. Mr. Fox, a Christian, says to his Jewish counterpart, “You must admit, Mr. Goldstein, that it were better for you to go into this venture than to have your money lying idle.” To this, Goldstein, pointing to his

76 *Grip*, May 14, 1892.\*

proboscis, replies, “Mine friendt, did you ever see a man with a nose like that who let his money lie *idle*?”<sup>77</sup>

In July 1883 Bengough published a cautionary tale entitled “Septimus Spofforth’s First Love; or Lost by a Nose”. The story involved a sincere lover, Septimus; the object of his affections, the adorable Melinda; and Herr Konk, “a Teutonic gentleman” with Jewish features. Learned biblical references to the Israelites at Jericho or to the Hebrews as slaves, making bricks in Egypt, confirm the links to Jewish stereotypes. In this story, Melinda is lured away from Septimus by a fascination with Konk’s nose, “which threw its protecting shadow over his whole face”. The author provides a full description of Konk’s proboscis:

In most men the nose is *a* feature, in Konk it was *the* feature. In gazing upon it she forgot the low, retreating forehead, the blinking eyes set too near each other, and the full sensual lips, all speaking of vulgarity, cruelty and vice; she only noticed the nose, and as the walls of Jericho fell down before the trumpets of his ancestors, so she bowed herself and her pure young heart before his awe-inspiring organ. She did not disguise her feelings towards this long-nosed child of the ancient brickmakers.<sup>78</sup>

Faced with this competition, Septimus, whose nose was “effeminate and commonplace”, could only beat a hasty retreat. Konk the Jew is not only a repulsive figure, a seducer of young, innocent Christian maidens; he is also a threat to the Christian family and Christian order of things.<sup>79</sup>

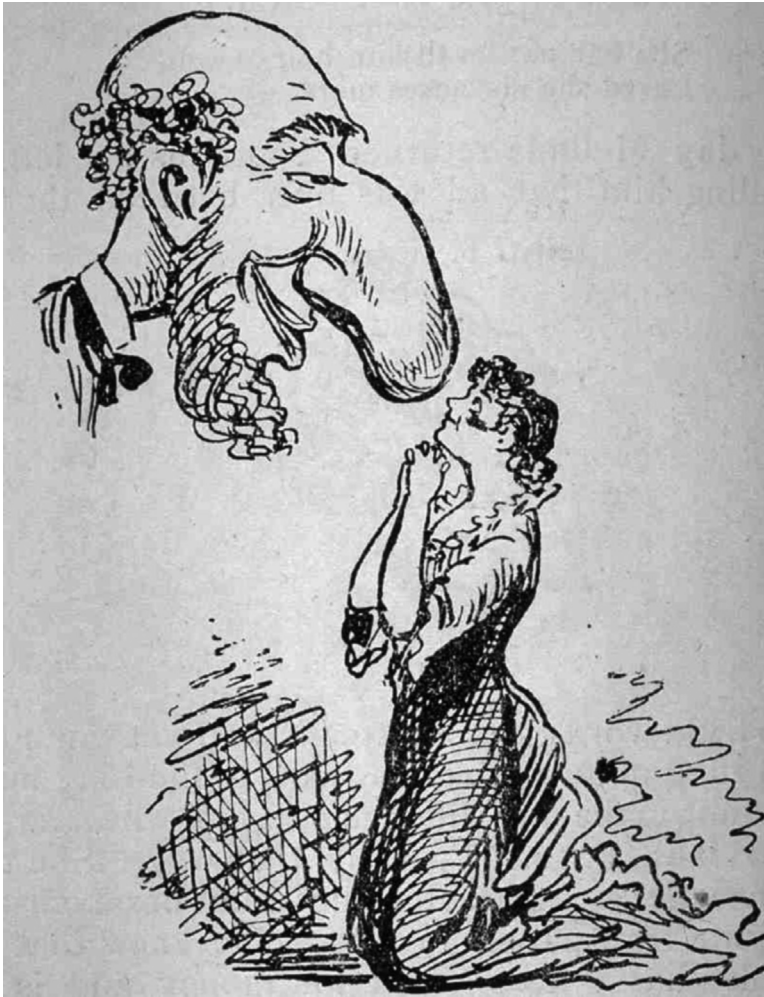
To underline the blatant phallicism of the tale about Konk and his “awe-inspiring organ”, *Grip* offered its readers an illustration that drove the point home even more forcefully (Figure 9).<sup>80</sup> In the text, we find a compendium of antisemitic stereotypes: the Jew’s retreating forehead; his blinking eyes set too close together, like a snake’s; his sensual lips; and

77 *Grip*, November 21, 1891.

78 *Grip*, July 1883. The story was written by T. Seymour; the issue as a whole was edited and illustrated by Bengough.

79 On Jews and sexual violence in London (England) in the 1880s, see Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of Dreadful Delight: Narratives of Sexual Danger in Late-Victorian London* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 203–204.

80 Cf. Sander L. Gilman, *The Jew’s Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp. 188–189: “... there was, and had long been, a direct relationship drawn in popular and medical thought between the size of the nose and that of the penis .... The link between the Jew’s sexuality and the Jew’s nose was a similarly well-established one [at the end of the nineteenth century].” The association between the organs was noted by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* and celebrated by Laurence Sterne in *Tristram Shandy*, chap. 31–37. For an overview of this subject, see Ross Woodrow, “Nasology and Technology: The End of the Nose” [online article], [www.central.com.au/artmed/papers/wood.html](http://www.central.com.au/artmed/papers/wood.html).



**Figure 9:** From “Septimus Spofforth’s First Love; or Lost by a Nose” (*Grip*, July 1883).

above all his rapacious sexuality, soon to have its way with pure-hearted Melinda.<sup>81</sup> “Septimus Spofforth’s First Love” thus conforms to the eighteenth-century English stereotype of Jews as “demonic lovers”. As the authors of *The Jew as Other* explain:

81 Illicit Jewish sexuality is depicted in Rubens, *Jewish Iconography*, item 900. This etching by Thomas Rowlandson, entitled “Ladies Trading on Their Own Bottom” and dated 1800, is described thus: “A Jew seated on a settee with a woman on each knee is handing each a [money] bag marked 100.” On the congenital ugliness of the Jews, see Christopher E. Forth, *The Dreyfus Affair and the Crisis of French Manhood* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), p. 39.



The reputation in eighteenth-century England of Jews as demonic lovers accords with traditional fears of the outsider or “Other” as a threat to the *mores* of the “host” group. It was widely supposed that Jews were willing to use any method to entrap innocent Christian women into becoming their mistresses, ultimately intending to convert them to Judaism. The charge of Jewish lasciviousness may be traced back to ancient times, though its combination with the calumny that they actively employ their sexual prowess for the purpose of “Judaizing” is a later refinement. Because the charge is so impossibly far-fetched — Judaism not being a proselytizing religion — it is almost always presented in a manner that is non-specific, more a general libel against the Jews than necessarily a particular accusation against an individual.<sup>82</sup>

The Jewish nose continued to be a constant source of frivolity for Bengough. Under the headline “Trouble in the Synagogue”, *Grip* relates to its readers the following incident that occurred in Winnipeg on October 12, 1891: “The Jews of this city had a free fight at the opening of the new tabernacle yesterday, over the question of whether it was right to stand or sit during ceremony. It was a most disgraceful row.” *Grip*’s commentator wrote, “here’s a pretty how-dye-do, or rather, ‘how you vash, anyway?’ ” He continued:

If the difference of opinion as to the correct posture could not have been settled any other way, it would have been better to take a vote on it than decide it by a rough-and-tumble fight in the sanctuary. Come to think of it, though, that scheme could hardly have worked, as, in whatever shape the question was put, the “nose” would have been sure to carry it.

In addition to his joke about the Jewish nose, the commentator pointed out that a “free” vote should have appealed “irresistibly” to the members of the synagogue because of “the economical trait of the Hebrew character”.<sup>83</sup>

82 Exhibit catalogue, *The Jew as Other*, p. 65; section VIII of this publication (pp. 65–71) is devoted to Jews as lovers. Sander L. Gilman, “The Jew’s Body: Thoughts on Jewish Physical Difference”, in N. L. Kleeblatt, ed., *Too Jewish: Challenging Traditional Identities* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996), writes: “[T]he inherent nature of Jewish sexuality was corrupt and corrupting. The definition of the Jew as a member of the covenant — one who is circumcised — places a focus on Jewish male sexuality in a unique manner. The Jewish male’s psyche, like that of his body, is different. This is an ancient *topos* harking back to Tacitus’s description of the Jews as the *projectissima ad libidinem gens* — the most sensual of peoples” (p. 67). The classical reference is to Tacitus, *Histories*, V, 5. On Jewish lasciviousness, also see Allen Edwardes, *Erotica Judaica: A Sexual History of the Jews* (New York: Julian Press, 1967), pp. 27, 222–226; Pieterse’s discussion of *amor et timor* in *White on Black*, pp. 172f.

83 *Grip*, October 24, 1891.

### Shylock on Bay Street

Money is the source of much of *Grip's* humour regarding the Jews.<sup>84</sup> Although Jewish immigrants' poverty undoubtedly contributed to the perception of Jewish frugality, the magazine ascribed an obsessive concern with financial matters to all Jews, rich or poor. Moreover, in *Grip's* view, Jewish love of money transcended both family loyalty and good taste. In one cartoon, two bearded Jews are talking. Kusenheimer asks Hisenbuttel why he has cut his son's hair so short. Hisenbuttel replies, "Oh, mein vife vant dot hair to shtuff a billow [pillow] mit. Und anyway, I ton't vant dot poy to grow oop a Samson."<sup>85</sup> A haircut also figures in a conversation between two "Israelites" (Figure 10).<sup>86</sup> Another cartoon pictures two Jews immersed in conversation. Levi Solobsky says to his friend, Moses Weinstein, "I ab subrised ad Goldsmid hafing such berrybaken [merrymaking] id his house wid his wife laying dead id de dext room." To this Weinstein replies, "Oh dot celebrashun was nod because his wife was dead alreaty, bud because dey had a five dousand dollar insurance bolicy od her life."<sup>87</sup> In a similar vein, two Jews negotiate over the monetary value of a bride-to-be:

Moses: "Mine daughter vos a pearl of gread price."

Aaron: "Den you vas give her to me in a gold setting."<sup>88</sup>

In another cartoon about the supposed Jewish obsession with money, we find Isaacstein upbraiding his son for having spent "dree cents" for a fancy stud.<sup>89</sup> (At this time, an issue of *Grip* cost five cents.)

The characteristic of Jewish miserliness even survives conversion to Christianity. In a cartoon from August 13, 1892, during the editorship of Phillips Thompson, a minister talks to Goldstein, a "wealthy converted Hebrew on his deathbed". The minister reminds his quarry that a rich man cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, to which Goldstein replies, "Dot ish all right. I haf put mine broberly in my vife's name." Here Bengough reflects the antisemitic stereotype that a convert from Judaism will nevertheless retain the offensive characteristics of his race.<sup>90</sup>

84 A nineteenth-century Englishman said, referring to the Jews, "They are fond of money, and will do almost anything to get it. Jews are the most money-loving people in all England." See Peter Quennell, ed., *Mayhew's London* (London: Bracken, 1984), p. 290. (Quennell's edition is an abridgement of Henry Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor*, published in three volumes in 1861.)

85 *Grip*, December 17, 1892.\*

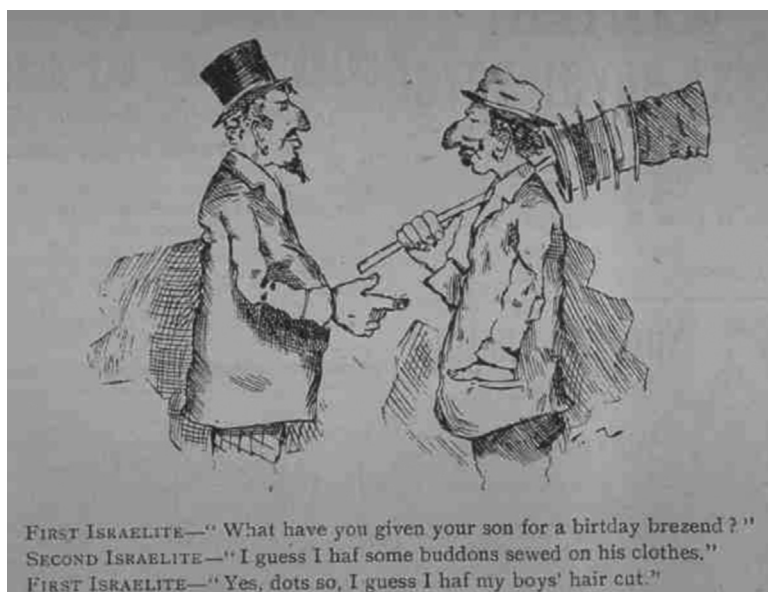
86 Like Benrabbi (Figures 5 and 6), the social status of this Israelite (pedlar) is indicated by his many hats; also see Figure 13.

87 *Grip's Comic Almanac for 1893*,\* p. 18.

88 *Grip*, May 13, 1893.\*

89 *Ibid.*

90 The failure of conversion to turn the heart of the Jew is a well-known theme in the antisemitic arsenal. Gilman records that in the 1920s an antisemite made the following comment to



**Figure 10:** First Israelite —“What have you given your son for a birtday brezend?”  
Second Israelite —“I guess I haf some buddons sewed on his clothes.”  
First Israelite —“Yes, dots so, I guess I haf my boys' hair cut.” (*Grip*, October 11, 1890).

Behind this cartoon, of course, is the fear (for which there were historical precedents) that converts from Judaism might revert to the religion of their birth.<sup>91</sup>

A Jew's misguided attempt to get a bargain is also behind the following satire, published on September 11, 1889:

#### AT THE C.P.R. TICKET OFFICE

Solomon Jacobs: “Mein friendt I wants to go mit Ottawa. If I dravels mit your road dot vash cheaper ash der Grand Trunk, hey?”

Ticket agent: “No; just same price.”

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German-Jewish writer Jacob Wassermann: “[W]hether, after conversion, they cease to be Jews in the deeper sense we do not know, and have no way of finding out. I believe that the ancient influences continue to operate. Jewishness is like a concentrated dye: a minute quantity suffices to give a specific character — or, at least, some traces of it — to an incomparably greater mass” (Gilman, “The Jew's Body”, p. 63). This remark only puts in graphic terms a paradox faced by Jews who were willing or eager to assimilate: conversion to Christianity was no guarantee of acceptance.

<sup>91</sup> For a discussion of fictional and historical precedents for Jewish reversion in the early modern period, see James Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 156–165.

Jacobs: “Hey — how vash dot? But your road vash efer so mooch shorter ash der Grand Trunk?”

Ticket agent: “Why, cert. Saves you about three hours. Want a ticket?”

Jacobs: “Vell, no. Dot vash a fraud. I goes mit der Grand Trunk, ven I gets efer so mooch a longer ride for dot money.”

How far would a Jew go to strike a good bargain? Sam Jones, a cartoonist for *Grip*, apparently thought a bargain was more dear to the Jew than life itself. In “A Keen Eye for a Bargain”, Isaac, an old Jew, is on his knees (Figure 11). Behind him, in the centre of the cartoon, is a treasure chest from the firm of “Shylock & Co. Unlimited”. Isaac is about to be run through by the sword of a looming crusader with a large cross on his chest. The crusader, Baron Front de Bœuf, is the first to speak: “Ha, dog of an unbeliever! I must have of thy gold, for I ween thou has gotten by thy usury ample store of moidores [gold coins of Portugal] and rose nobles [gold coins of England]. Give it up, or by my halidom [holy relic, formerly used in oaths] ....” To this challenge, Isaac, not understanding the archaic term *halidom*, replies, “Ah, dot vas beesness! Haf you got dot halidom mit you? S’elp me fader Abraham, I haf no monish, but auf dat halidom vas cheap perhaps I vinds a gustomer.” (*Grip*, December 3, 1892).



**Figure 11:** A Keen Eye for a Bargain.  
 Baron Front de Bœuf — “Ha, dog of an unbeliever! I must have of thy gold, for I ween thou has gotten by thy usury ample store of moidores and rose nobles. Give it up, or by my halidom—”  
 Isaac the Jew — “Ah, dot vas beesness! Haf you got dot halidom mit you? S’elp me fader Abraham, I haf no monish, but auf dat halidom vas cheap perhaps I vinds a gustomer.” (*Grip*, December 3, 1892).

got dot halidom mit you? S'elp [so help] me fader Abraham, I haf no monish, but auf [if] dat halidom vas cheap perhaps I vinds a gustomer."<sup>92</sup> Moments away from death, but still ready to haggle, Isaac is eager to find a customer for a non-existent commodity.

In many of these dialogues featuring Jewish characters, *Grip* resorts to what may be called linguistic ridicule.<sup>93</sup> Jews were almost always depicted as speaking some kind of fractured language.<sup>94</sup> In a dialogue entitled "It Hurt His Feelings", illiteracy again leads inexorably to misunderstanding:

Solomon Moses: "Say Lichtenstein, I no readt dot Engliche lenkvage [language] ver' goot. Vot vos id dot sign ennerhow [anyhow]?"

Lichtenstein (*spelling*): "N-o-s nose m-o-k-i-n-g a-l-l-ow-e-d allouad — Nose mocking allouad, ain't id?"

Solomon Moses: "Nose mocking allouad. By grashus [gracious], dot vos a shame ... I don't like beebles [peoples] to make voolishness mid mein nose."<sup>95</sup>

The implication here is that, if only Jews would learn to read and speak proper English, they would save themselves a lot of grief.

Another *Grip* cartoon reinforces the same idea while harping on Jewish miserliness. In it a Jew is outraged when he discovers that he paid the "news-poy a penny insthead of a shent". He tells his wife that he will either find that newsboy "or I informs the bolice".<sup>96</sup> Again the message is that Jews had only themselves to blame for the mistaken and ignorant conclusions they drew. Of course, once the Jews did learn how to speak and dress the way the "host group" spoke and dressed, new obstacles appeared on the horizon. In a cartoon by Bengough entitled "A Heavy Fall of Jew", an obese, hook-nosed character in fancy dress finds the rug pulled out from under his feet (Figure 12).<sup>97</sup>

92 *Grip*, December 3, 1892.\*

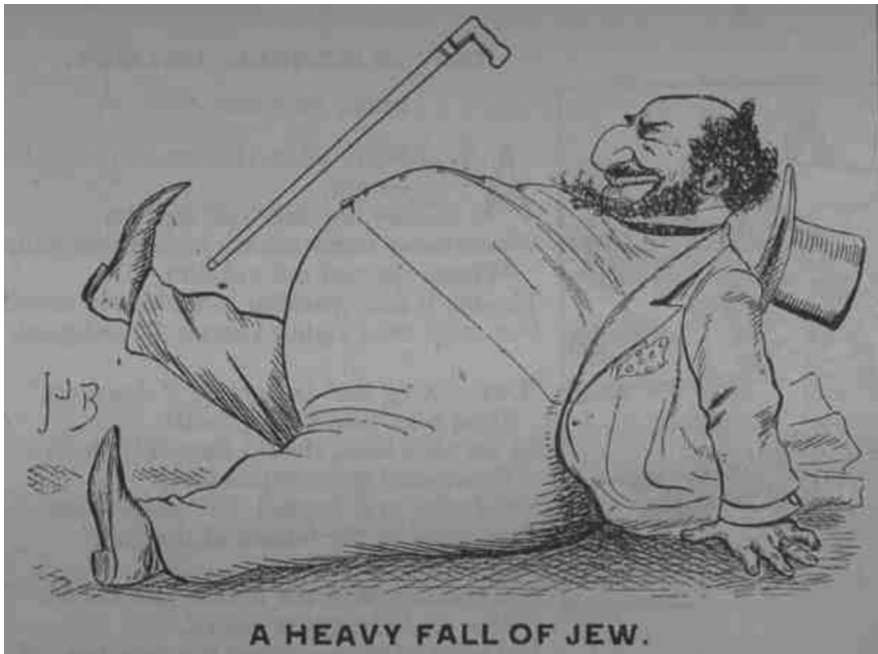
93 On linguistic ridicule, see Gilman, *The Jew's Body*, p. 20: "Jews are the product of language and language becomes like the anti-Semite's image of the wandering or cosmopolitan Jew. The language of the anti-Semite here defines the nature of the Jew and his/her discourse. Thus the Jew becomes the agent who uses corrupt language, while the corrupt discourse becomes the embodiment of the nature of the Jew."

94 Although Mayhew imitated the sound of a Yiddish speaker trying to speak English, he did not ridicule it; cf. Quennell, ed., *Mayhew's London*, p. 213.

95 *Grip*, October 5, 1889.

96 *Grip*, March 7, 1891.

97 *Grip*, October 13, 1894.



**Figure 12:** A Heavy Fall of Jew (*Grip*, October 13, 1894).

From Jewish parsimony, it is a short step to shady or sharp practices attributed to Jews.<sup>98</sup> Who was hurt the most by prohibition? According to Bengough, it was the Jew, whose greed fed upon the misery of others. In a cartoon published on March 21, 1885, a Jew stands disconsolately in a doorway as he sees his trade in alcohol wither before his eyes (Figure 13). The Jewish pedlar in this cartoon, clearly distinguished by the hats, is “the one that will suffer most by prohibition!” To this Bengough adds sarcastically, “*Compensation for Solomon!*” The implication is that Jews were responsible for the sins associated with the consumption of alcohol; now they had the gall to ask that their lost income be compensated. Since Bengough was a strong advocate of

98 Mayhew was well aware that Jews were often mistakenly taken as petty criminals: “They [the Jews] were considered ... as an entire people of misers, usurers, extortioners, receivers of stolen goods, cheats, brothel-keepers, sheriff’s-officers, clippers and sweaters of the coin of the realm, gaming-house keepers; in fine, the charges, or rather the accusations, carrying on every disreputable trade .... That there was too much foundation for many of these accusations, and still is, no reasonable Jew can now deny; that the wholesale prejudice against them was absurd, is equally indisputable” (Quennell, ed., *Mayhew’s London*, p. 284). In the period discussed here, Jews in Canada were seen by their detractors in similar terms.



**Figure 13:** The Chief Victim (*Grip*, March 21, 1885).

prohibition, this was another arena in which he regarded the Jew as an adversary.

Cartoons highlighting the sharp practices of the Jews abound. For instance, in September 1892, *Grip* published “A Proud Darkey” (Figure 14), in which the stereotypical black customer confronts the stereotypical Jewish petty merchant. The pedlar simultaneously lies to



**Figure 14:** A Proud Darkey (*Grip*, September 3, 1892).  
Sam Johnsing —“Look heah, Mistah Schaumberg, I got caught in a shower yesterday, and dis suit is done shrunk so I kin hardly breeve.”  
Schaumberg —“You vas mistaken, my friend. My goots never shrink. Dot suit was a little tight, perhaps, because you vas all swelled mit pride because you vas so elegantly dressed.”

and flatters his customer.<sup>99</sup> In December of the same year, *Grip* returned to the theme of exploitation by Jews. This time a “hayseed” confronts the Jew:

Isaacs: “Let me sell you dat flannel shirt. It will lasht you forever.”

Hayseed: “But it will shrink when it is washed.”

Isaacs: “Vell, don’t you vash it, den.”<sup>100</sup>

<sup>99</sup> *Grip*, September 3, 1892.\*

<sup>100</sup> *Grip*, December 10, 1892.\*



The issue of *Grip* published on October 10, 1891, carried the story of another shady Jew named Podsham who “changed his name from Levi or something of that sort after he got ... out of jail”. Podsham, from the East End of London, is described as follows:

[O]f all the low, tricky, mean-spirited old skinflints, he was about the worst, and he made his money by note-shaving and selling cheap jewelery .... I know these people you see, and how they got their money and that’s what makes me indignant when I see them putting on such airs and swelling around like as though they were born lords and dukes, and had a right to look down upon and despise honest people that are not up to all such cunning artful schemes.

### **Jews Without Money**<sup>101</sup>

Images of Jews in *Grip* range over the entire social spectrum, from the rich banker to the immigrant pedlar. The wealthy Jew is depicted in a cartoon dated August 12, 1882. He is an obese man with a huge nose who wears a crown bearing the name “Rothschild” and sits in a scene of oriental splendour. His feet rest on a hassock bearing the word “Egypt”. This image was inspired by the revolt of Arabi Pasha, which, according to Bengough, “represented the protest of the Egyptians against the grinding tyranny of the Jewish money-lenders”.<sup>102</sup> Here, then, is the Jew who has grown rich and fat through usury (Figure 15).<sup>103</sup>

The great majority of images, however, are of Jewish poverty, particularly the stereotypical pedlar carrying his sack of old clothes. On February 6, 1892, in response to the election of Robert J. Fleming as mayor of Toronto, *Grip* published a cartoon in which Fleming, who was seen by contemporaries as a puritan reformer, is dubbed “The New Cromwell”. As he casts away his top hat and fancy scarf, he cries, “Take away these baubles!” Behind Fleming stands an old, stooped Jew, dragging a sack marked with the words “Old Clothes”.<sup>104</sup> Fleming is exuberant and full of energy; the Jew, waiting for the mayor’s discards, is gaunt, feeble,

101 This heading is the author’s tribute to Michael Gold’s novel, *Jews Without Money* (New York: H. Liveright, [1930]).

102 The original cartoon appeared in *Grip* on August 12, 1882. Bengough later republished it in *A Caricature History of Canadian Politics: Events from the Union of 1841, as Illustrated by Cartoons from ‘Grip’ and Various Other Sources* (Toronto: Grip Printing and Publishing, 1886). Bengough’s explanation of “Egyptian Bond-age” appears in vol. 2, p. 317.

103 *Grip* revisited the Rothschilds on August 25, 1894, at which time Bengough made the following sarcastic remark: “Of course these honest people have worked and given value for every dollar they possess.” I discuss the obesity of this figure below.

104 As van Leeuwen points out, a stooped posture suggests subjection (“Semiotics and Iconography”, p. 106).



**Figure 15:** Egyptian Bond-age; or, History Repeated the Other Way On. (*Grip*, August 12, 1882).  
Egyptian to the Jew — “Let My People Go.”

and world-weary (Figure 16). This is typical of *Grip*'s depiction of poor Jews, especially pedlars, in the late 1880s and early 1890s.

Chandler's observation that the horizontal and vertical axes of a pictorial representation are not neutral parts of the image is relevant here. If we follow the convention that cartoon images should be “read” from left to right, then it is perhaps significant that the Jewish poor appear on the right side of Bengough's frame, the side reserved for the unknown, “the



**Figure 16:** The New Cromwell at the City Hall.  
Mayor Fleming — “Take away these baubles!” (*Grip*, February 6, 1892).

surprising, problematic or contestable”.<sup>105</sup> “The New Cromwell at City Hall” is thus a good example of Bengough’s use of the horizontal axis in which the “problematic” Jewish pedlar skulks on the right edge of the image.<sup>106</sup>

Jewish pedlars had long been the object of pictorial and literary ridicule, both in Europe and North America. In his important book, *A Jewish Iconography*, Alfred Rubens catalogued numerous prints of Jewish pedlars. Jewish dealers in old clothes were depicted as wearing a tier of three hats as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century.<sup>107</sup> Prints

105 Chandler, *Semiotics*, citing the work of Kress and van Leeuwen, argues that the left side of the image is reserved for the “already given”, that is, something “familiar, well-established and agreed-upon point of departure — something which is commonsensical, assumed and self-evident” (pp. 87–88).

106 The only image of a Jew that does not follow this pattern is Figure 11, in which the Jew takes the place of the old and familiar and is at the point of death. The new and surprising element on the right is Baron Front de Bœuf, who represents a revitalized, virile Christianity. Bengough appears to have reversed his customary horizontal axis to convey that hopeful message.

107 See Rubens, *A Jewish Iconography*, item 1065 (dated 1709). Also see print of an old clothes man “offering to buy clothes from convict about to be hanged” (item 1086) and other multi-hatted pedlars such as items 1101, 1110, and 1124.

featuring them were created by famous artists like Thomas Rowlandson and George Cruikshank, as well as by anonymous cartoonists. One image in Rubens's collection shows a Jewish dealer in old clothes who has fallen over, much to the amusement of those present.<sup>108</sup> In others, he is chased by a bull or, to drive the point home, by pigs.<sup>109</sup>

The written word was also used to portray the Jewish pedlar. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, Edmund Burke (1729–1797) published an open letter to a member of the National Assembly in which he evoked the following picture of urban Jewry: “the whole gang of usurers, pedlars, and itinerant Jew-discounters at the corners of streets.”<sup>110</sup> Half a century later, the poet and writer Robert Southey (1774–1843) described the contents of the Jewish pedlar's box as follows: “haberdashery ..., cuckoo clocks, sealing wax, quills, weather glasses, green spectacles, clumsy figures in plaister of Paris ..., or miserable prints of the king and queen ....” Southey continued, “You meet Jew pedlars every where [they will do] any thing for money.”<sup>111</sup> Writing of London in the middle of the nineteenth century, Henry Mayhew remarked, “Now, as in the last century, he [the Jew] traverses every street, square, and road, with the monotonous cry, sometimes like a bleat, of ‘Clo!’ ‘Clo!’ ”<sup>112</sup>

In *Grip* magazine, Jewish pedlars are easily recognizable by the back-breaking loads they carry. In one cartoon, a “cracker” asks Peddler Levy, “How in thunder d’ye fellers kerry sich loads on yer backs?” Levy replies that it is an “heirloom” (Figure 17). Asked to explain what that means, Levy replies:

Vell, you see, mein frient, ven Fader Abraham [Moses?] brought him up der children of Israel out hof Egypt he forgots to take him some horses, and dey had to carry der gloding [clothing], and der goats [coats], und der synagogue and all on der packs [backs] for fordy years, so dey gets dem aggestomed to it, und it has always peen like dot.<sup>113</sup>

108 Rubens, *A Jewish Iconography*, item 1084.

109 *Ibid.*, item 1083.

110 Quoted by Felsenstein, *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes*, p. 3.

111 Passage quoted in exhibit catalogue, *The Jew as Other*, p. 20.

112 Quennell, ed., *Mayhew's London*, p. 289. Also see Cecil Roth, “The Jew Peddler: An 18th-Century Rural Character”, in Cecil Roth, *Essays and Portraits in Anglo-Jewish History* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1962), pp. 130–138; Rudolph Glanz, “Notes on Early Jewish Peddling in America”, in Rudolph Glanz, *Studies in Judaica Americana* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1970), pp. 104–121.

113 *Grip*, March 21, 1891. *Mayhew's London* contains an interesting vignette of Jewish street life. An elderly pedlar confides in Mayhew that, when he was young and strong, he could carry heavy loads: “I liked it then ... and didn't care to sleep twice in the same town.” When he grew older, he would only buy a few old hats and other light things. “I'm not able to carry weights as my breath is getting rather short.” Mayhew's comment on this state of affairs reveals the bias of the observer himself: “I [Mayhew] find that Jews generally object to the more laborious kinds of street-traffic” (Quennell, ed., *Mayhew's London*, p. 292).



**Figure 17:** An Heirloom (*Grip*, March 21, 1891).

Here is *Grip*'s presentation of the Wandering Jew.<sup>114</sup> Like the early Israelites, Levy carries all his worldly possessions on his back. The Jewish pedlar had a certain freedom of movement, but those with roots in the soil perceived this very characteristic as a threat to the social order. In the language of modern sociology, the pedlar was identified with vagrants or vagabonds. As Zygmunt Bauman explains,

The vagabond was *masterless*, and being masterless (out of control, out of frame, on the loose) was one condition modernity could not bear and thus spent the rest of its history fighting .... What made vagabonds so terrifying was their apparent freedom to move and so to escape the net of heretofore locally based control. Worse than that still, the movements of the vagabond are unpredictable; unlike the pilgrim the vagabond has no set destination .... Wherever the vagabond goes, he is a stranger; he can never be "the native" ....<sup>115</sup>

114 On the trope of the Wandering Jew in the early modern period, see Shapiro, *Shakespeare and the Jews*, p. 39.

115 Zygmunt Bauman, "From Pilgrim to Tourist, or a Short History of Identity", in Hall and du Gay, eds., *Questions of Cultural Identity*, p. 28. Bauman's sociological description of the vagabond is remarkably similar to Norman Levine's fictionalized description of the Jewish pedlar, quoted below.

In *Grip* the Jewish rag-picker was a shadowy character, although the type was instantly recognizable:

His coat was rusty-black and long,  
 Long was his nose and slightly pendant;  
 Across his arm was thrown a sack,  
 And in its wake a cart attendant.

His eye was darkly keen, in fact,  
 At the first glance you quite concluded  
 Its owner was a German Jew,  
 Old clo' and usurer included.<sup>116</sup>

In economic terms, as Beverly Lemire has shown, Jewish participation in the “lower clothing trades” filled an important niche in the trade as a whole.<sup>117</sup> Indeed, the social utility of the phenomenon was noted by Henry Mayhew in the middle of the nineteenth century in words attributed to an “intelligent shoemaker”:

People should remember that such places as Rosemary-lane [a London centre for the second-hand trade] have their uses this way. But for them a very poor industrious widow, say, with only 2*d.* [tuppence] or 3*d.* [threepence] to spare, couldn't get a pair of shoes for her child; whereas now, for 2*d.* or 3*d.*, she can get them there, of some sort or other. There's a sort of decency, too, in wearing shoes. And what's more, sir — for I've bought old coats and other clothes in Rosemary-lane, both for my own wear and my family's, and know something about it — how is a poor creature to get such a decency as a petticoat for a poor little girl, if she'd only a penny, unless there were such places?<sup>118</sup>

Although Lemire's study focuses on the period before 1800 and the shoemaker reflects conditions in London of the 1850s, *Grip* bears witness to the fact that the association of Jewishness and the second-hand clothing trade was strong in Canada in the late nineteenth century. Of importance in this context is that Bengough denigrates both the traders and the trade. *Grip*'s representations of Jewish peddlars show them to be crafty, haughty, and unhygienic.<sup>119</sup> Like most of Bengough's Jews, these men scramble to

116 *Grip*, May 28, 1887. The title of this ditty, “Jew Billee – A Tragedy”, is a pun on the word “jubilee”. (Queen Victoria, of course, was celebrating her Jubilee in the year of its publication.) The Jew in this piece is named Moses Lumpenpackee.

117 Beverly Lemire, *Dress, Culture and Commerce: The English Clothing Trade before the Factory, 1660–1800* (London: Macmillan, 1997), p. 93.

118 Quennell, ed., *Mayhew's London*, p. 221.

119 One of *Grip*'s assumptions was that Jews were dirty. On April 21, 1888, Bengough published a utopian poem that began as follows: “In the land of Cathay, so travellers tell,/ All people

earn their daily bread. Poverty (both in *Grip*'s cartoons and in reality) was the immigrant's constant companion.

The social and economic marginalization of the Jewish pedlar in Ontario in the first half of the twentieth century is one of Norman Levine's concerns in *Canada Made Me*. His subjects were originally shopkeepers, small business men, and scholars who had been driven out of Eastern Europe by persecution. Here is Levine's nostalgic depiction of the arrival of a Jewish immigrant in Toronto:

[Mr. Morgenstern] likes to tell stories against himself. How he arrived in the Union Station in 1921, with a yellow label tied around his neck. How someone who met him, from a Benevolent Society, gave him a small leather case with shoelaces and boxes of matches and told him to go from street to street knocking on doors. The only English words he was told were: Please. Two for a nickel. Thank you. No change.<sup>120</sup>

Jewish pedlars were among the weakest and most vulnerable members of society; they were outsiders among outsiders, even more isolated from the Canadian mainstream than other marginalized groups: "[T]hey knew nothing about fruit, vegetables, rags, or horses. From the very beginning it was a question of survival. It did not take much money to buy a second-hand horse, a secondhand harness, a wagon .... And they remained pedlars' .... They had little ambition. They lived life instinctively. They didn't belong to Ottawa or to Canada."<sup>121</sup> Reinforced by antisemitic barbs in the media, the stereotypical image of the Jew as pedlar had a surprisingly long life in Canada. Well into the twentieth century, immigrant Jews found their ways into peddling; caricature followed them wherever they went (Figure 18).<sup>122</sup>

### **Patterns of Jewish Stereotypes**

Although *Grip* magazine offered diverse and sometimes contradictory images of Canadian Jews, these images shared some common features. With the exception of the moribund "Mrs. Jew", who plays a minor role in the tale of her burial at sea, the butts of Bengough's jokes and cartoons were overwhelmingly male. While different bodily types were assigned to disparate socio-economic groups, all Jewish males can be recognized by their large hooked noses and their far from ideal physiques. Two of

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together in amity dwell;/ And the Jews that are there wash their feet every day;/ For all men are clean in the land of Cathay."

120 Norman Levine, *Canada Made Me* (n.p.: Deneau Publishers, 1982), p. 41.

121 *Ibid.*, pp. 46–47.

122 "Notre futur Santa Claus" (Figure 18) is taken from J. Charlebois's pamphlet entitled *Montréal-juif* (Montreal: Imprimerie Bilaudeau, 1912).



**Figure 18:** Notre futur Santa Claus (J. Charlebois, *Montréal-juif*; see note 122)

Bengough's cartoons depict obese Jews (Figures 12 and 15), a mark of effeminacy in this context. Commenting on contemporary caricatures from France, Christopher Forth has persuasively argued that there is "an inverse relationship between obesity and manliness".<sup>123</sup> Bengough's depiction of poor Jews, on the other hand, moves to the opposite extreme; they are portrayed as lean and hungry. Whether fat or thin, Jews depicted in these ways were "far removed from the normative masculine standards of the day".<sup>124</sup> When it came to the manly art of the duel, the powerless

123 Forth, *The Dreyfus Affair*, p. 191. Forth's analysis of the Drefusard imagination in France applies *mutatis mutandis* to the obese images Bengough drew: "When controlled through a rigorous dietetic regime, the appetites of the belly might testify to self-mastery .... Allowed to roam freely, however, the belly's appetites threatened to subvert the whole completely, subordinating the masculinized rationality of the self to its own unruly passions" (p. 177).

124 Forth, *The Dreyfus Affair*, p. 191.



Jew found himself at the business end of a sword (Figure 11).<sup>125</sup> Like their brethren in *fin-de-siècle* France, Bengough's Jews were marked by "muscular weakness, and diseases of the will".<sup>126</sup> Their burdens, whether material or psychological, were literally too heavy for them to bear (Figure 17). As with other subaltern groups, the effect was to feminize Jewish men, in both sexual and social terms, and render them powerless.<sup>127</sup>

Why should *Grip* consistently depict Jews (and other immigrants to Canada) as negative stereotypes? Some modern historians have suggested that derogatory images of Jews were simply an inescapable feature of contemporary discourse. In his book on the Dreyfus Affair, Forth asserts that "there was no visual language available [in the late nineteenth century] that might have allowed one to construct an image that was at once recognizably Jewish and positive".<sup>128</sup> In similar fashion, Cumming insists that we must place Bengough in context. Anticipating the charge of antisemitism on the part of modern readers, Cumming argues in defence of Bengough that *Grip*'s stereotyped Jews were not the only ones to be singled out for ridicule: "Although Bengough's cartoon image of Jews was certainly negative, it was not notably more cruel than his stereotypes of other groups — snobbish British 'dudes', for instance, quarrelsome Irish, and shrewd Yankees."<sup>129</sup> Yet no representative of the dominant group received the multi-faceted, unrelenting hostility that *Grip* meted out to Jews and blacks. Jewish cheapness, for instance, was not just an accidental characteristic: it defined the Jew as a Jew, with strong resonances going back to the money changers in the temple and the usurers of the Middle Ages. Jewish cheapness was an irredeemable quality; neither conversion nor the approach of death altered this characteristic.<sup>130</sup>

125 Forth refers to "an emerging focus on physical force as the guarantor of manliness" in late-nineteenth-century France (*The Dreyfus Affair*, p. 179).

126 Forth, *The Dreyfus Affair*, p. 191. Because stereotypes often encompass opposite extremes, there is no real contradiction between Jews presented as sexually impotent and Jews presented as sexually voracious. We have seen both images in examples here. Referring to the early modern period in England, Shapiro makes a comment that has an uncanny relevance to this subject: "Contemporaries apparently saw no contradiction between ... effeminized portraits [of Jews] and those that depicted Jewish men as rapacious seducers. Indeed, when it came to the Jews, the boundaries between male and female were often seen as quite slippery" (*Shakespeare and the Jews*, p. 38).

127 Joan Wallach Scott, "On Language, Gender, and Working-Class History" in her *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), pp. 63ff.

128 Forth, *The Dreyfus Affair*, p. 42.

129 Cumming, *Sketches from a Young Country*, p. 209.

130 A comment from Kevin Robins is apropos here: "When it is declared that the other is marked by an insurmountable particularity, and consequently can never be assimilated (converted) into our culture, then we have the basis of racism" ("Interrupting Identities: Turkey/Europe", in Hall and du Gay, eds., *Questions of Cultural Identity*, p. 66).

Moreover, while racism and antisemitism may have been common features of contemporary discourse, there were notable exceptions to the rule, some of them clearly familiar to both writers and readers of *Grip* magazine. Robert Browning (1812–1889), whose poem “Rabbi Ben Ezra” was well enough known in Canada for Bengough to ridicule, made a sincere effort to enter the spiritual world of the Jews. So, too, did George Eliot (1819–1880), whose work was read on both sides of the Atlantic. Writing to Harriet Beecher Stowe, Eliot explained that she consciously strove to describe Jews “with such sympathy and understanding as my nature and knowledge could attain to”.<sup>131</sup> In the same letter, Eliot denounced the “inability to find interest in any form of life that is not clad in the same coat-tails and flounces as our own” as “the worst kind of irreligion”.<sup>132</sup> In North America, Samuel Clemens (1835–1910), the foremost humorist of the day, eschewed antisemitic stereotypes. Indeed, “in both his public and private utterances and in the writings of Mark Twain, [Clemens] sedulously combatted anti-Jewish prejudices.”<sup>133</sup> These three authors played distinguished roles in the world of English letters in the late nineteenth century.

A more persuasive explanation for *Grip*’s resort to negative stereotypes is the effectiveness of these satirical weapons in Bengough’s campaign to promote certain positive ideals for the Canadian-born lower middle class. When subordinate members of the dominant group seek to legitimate their own social and political identity within the group (in this case, the Anglo-Saxon Protestant world to which Bengough belonged), a common strategy is to demonize or ridicule the Other.<sup>134</sup> Bengough portrayed Jewish men as ugly,<sup>135</sup> dirty, greedy, mendacious, cowardly, superstitious, ignorant, illiterate, and sexually voracious — yet lacking the positive attributes of true masculinity.<sup>136</sup> Members of Bengough’s world saw themselves

131 Letter of George Eliot to Harriet Beecher Stowe, dated October 29, 1876. This letter was published and circulated widely after Eliot’s death.

132 *Ibid.* In a letter of December 16, 1876, Eliot expressed her relief that members of the Jewish community found her depiction of Daniel Deronda faithful to reality. See letter of George Eliot to Abraham Benisch, editor of *The Jewish Chronicle*, reproduced in C. Roth, *Anglo-Jewish Letters (1158–1917)* (London: Soncino Press, 1938), pp. 310–312.

133 J. R. LeMaster and J. D. Wilson, *The Mark Twain Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1993), p. 413. In his essay “Concerning the Jews” (1899), Twain wrote that he had “no color prejudices nor caste prejudices nor creed prejudices .... I can stand any society. All that I care to know is that a man is a human being — that is enough for me; he can’t be any worse.” See C. Neider, ed., *The Complete Essays of Mark Twain* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1963), p. 236.

134 For an example of this phenomenon in a completely different historical context, see Mihoko Suzuki, *Subordinate Subjects* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2003), especially chap. 2 and 4.

135 Ugliness is part of the negative stereotyping of the Jews. For a fictionalized portrayal of this idea, see Philip Roth, *I Married a Communist* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1998), p. 152.

136 The same combination of sexual voraciousness and effeminacy may be seen in later depictions of Chinese men. As Madge Pon notes, “The Myth of the Yellow Peril was distinctly tailored to fit

as possessing the inverse of these qualities. They were civilized, principled, altruistic, truly religious, strong, and virile — yet sexually restrained. Presenting individual Jews in a carnivalesque manner had the effect of discrediting the assimilationist struggles of Jews as a group, but at the same time it promoted the upwardly mobile aspirations of *Grip's* loyal readers. Bengough's jokes and cartoons were powerful ammunition in the culture wars of late-nineteenth-century Toronto.

How seriously did *Grip's* readers regard the puns, cartoons, and caricatures that fostered racist and antisemitic stereotypes? Other contemporary North American periodicals, when challenged for their antisemitism, claimed that they were only joking and that the objects of their satirical sallies were far too sensitive. When the New York satirical magazine *Puck* found humour in the persecution of Russian Jews in 1881, the editor of the New York *Jewish Messenger* protested, arguing that *Puck* had used events in Russia to excite “derision” against the victims of pogroms. In response, *Puck's* editor defended himself:

Our Hebrew friends must not be so sensitive; and ... must take a joke as their neighbors take one. If they do not wish to be made fun of, they should not intensify the traditional peculiarities that so often make them the subject of ridicule. They are clannish, and cling to their antiquated puerile Oriental customs and mummeries as a Chinaman clings to his pigtail. They should become Americans.<sup>137</sup>

In other words, if the Jews did not enjoy being ridiculed, they should give up their antiquated customs and make more of an effort to adopt the beliefs and behaviour of the majority.<sup>138</sup> Meanwhile, as Appel points out, the endless repetition of ethnic caricatures “confirmed and made believable situations which in many respects were not humorous at all for the people who experienced them”.<sup>139</sup>

There is no doubt that Bengough played the part of educator for Canadians of his own generation. In the last quarter of the nineteenth

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the western construction of Oriental Chinamen as cunningly deceitful, morally dangerous, and particularly feminine. Co-existing with the idea of ‘yellow’ and ‘unmanly’ Chinamen was the contradictory belief that Chinese men posed a moral and sexual threat to white women.” See Madge Pon, “Like a Chinese Puzzle: The Construction of Chinese Masculinity in *Jack Canuck*”, in Joy Parr and Mark Rosenfeld, eds., *Gender and History in Canada* (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1996), p. 88. *Jack Canuck* was a muckraking popular newspaper that first appeared in September 1911.

137 *Puck's* reply was published on December 14, 1881; quoted by Appel, “The Jews in American Caricature”, p. 122.

138 As Disraeli learned, giving up Jewish customs was not always enough.

139 Appel, “The Jews in American Caricature”, p. 107.

century, *Grip* commanded the attention of the Canadian elite. Through its words and images, Bengough helped to convince a generation of Canadians of the need for social and economic reform. In 1966, in anticipation of Canada's centennial year, McClelland & Stewart published a popular book entitled *Great Canadian Writing: A Century of Imagination*, an anthology edited by Claude Bissell. On the dust jacket of Bissell's volume is a photograph of a bucolic scene: a young woman, with her back to the camera, is lying in a grassy field. Her head is propped up by a pile of eight Canadian literary classics, including W. O. Mitchell's *Who Has Seen the Wind* and Donald Creighton's biography of the young John A. Macdonald. In the reader's hand is a copy of *Grip* magazine. The title *GRIP* is the most clearly visible word in the photograph — silent testimony to the position *Grip* still holds in Canada's literary mythology.

In his own day, Bengough was admired by distinguished Canadians like George M. Grant, who was as generous to *Grip* as *Grip* was to him. In 1886 Bengough published a collection of his cartoons which he entitled *Caricature History of Canadian Politics*. Principal Grant provided the preface, which contained the following glowing tribute: "*Grip* is impartial, in a country where it is very hard to be impartial, and harder still to have your impartiality acknowledged .... You may not agree with the means he proposes, but you must always sympathize with the end he has in view. He is scrupulously clean. He never sneers. In the best sense of the word, he is religious."<sup>140</sup> Yet, while Bengough was firmly committed to various schemes to ameliorate society, his work implicitly sanctioned two socially divisive propositions: first, the conviction that negative stereotyping of subaltern groups was a harmless or even a constructive form of humour;<sup>141</sup> secondly, the assumption that antisemitism expressed in a genteel way was intellectually and morally defensible. Bengough may not have been an antisemite of the gutter, but he traded in racist and antisemitic words and images. His influential magazine helped to legitimate those words and images, making them part of the general intellectual currency of the Canadian elite.

140 George M. Grant's preface to Bengough, *A Caricature History*, vol. 1, p. 8.

141 In his preface to Bengough's *A Caricature History*, Grant was remarkably sanguine about the possible effects of a "disagreeable" illustration: "A picture, too, has this unspeakable advantage over verbiage, that you can take in the situation at a glance, and if it is not agreeable, you can pass on. You condemn the representation as unfair, but, at any rate, your time is not lost" (vol. 1, p. 7). What is lost to the persons ridiculed is more valuable than time.