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The Commercial =

Future of Palestine.



DEBATE AT THE ARTICLE CLUB,

Opened by Mr. ISRAEL ZANGWILL.

NOVEMBER 20, 1901.

The Rt. Hon. LORD SUFFIELD, G.C.V.O., K.C.B., P.C., in the Chair.



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The Commercial Future of Palestine.



MY LORD SUFFIELD, YOUR EXCELLENCIES, AND GENTLEMEN,—

Despite the kinds words I have just blushed under, I am sure that some of you are as shocked to find the commercial future of Palestine opened up for debate as others are to find the theme attacked by a professional purveyor of imaginative wares. Commerce, however, is not necessarily divorced from imagination. And I am not here thinking of trade advertisements by pen and pencil. Doubtless the ordinary routine of business makes scant call upon the imaginative faculty, but the creation of new business certainly demands it. (Laughter).

"The commercial future of Palestine," Mr. Augustine Birrell writes me, "I trust it has none." No doubt many of you have a lurking sympathy with Mr. Birrell's sentiment, and having myself tasted the charm of the life in tents, having seen Laban driving his flock afield as he did four thousand years ago, having watched Rebecca tripping from the well with her pitcher on her shoulder, having made the Oriental salutation on breast and brow to Arab sheiks jogging along on camels, or dangling one-sided from their slow Arab steeds, having plodded the ruined cities and the desert dead as the moon, I can understand the desire to keep unchanged this primitive historic world, the cradle of religion. Mr. Birrell doubtless fears that Jeremiah will cease his lamentations and start jerry-building. (Laughter).

This danger must be risked, for if, as half the world believes, Palestine is to have a glorious future, it is impossible that this future can lack an industrial basis. Elijah was fed by ravens, but the bread they brought him must have been baked by someone, and we know the raven's habits. There is no warrant in Holy Writ for imagining that Holy Land is synonymous with Lazy Land. The holy Sabbath itself depends on the six working days.

And Palestine is not only a dream-place. In these picturesque ruins people have to live. And these ruins are not, as is imagined, the ruins of a primitive pastoral country, but the ruins of a great civilised State. To rebuild the roads would only be to restore the great Roman roads of the second century A.D. The researches of the Palestine Exploration Society have shown us ancient Jerusalem, "glorious with its palaces, its gardens, its citadel, its castle, its courts, and its villas," welcoming at the Passover two million visitors. And it is not only the

Roman Jerusalem that lies below the present soil: there are three Jewish Jerusalems, besides the Herodian, the Byzantine, the Saracen, and the Jerusalem of the Knights of St. John. The society, by its explorations and exhumations, has demonstrated the vast population, the fertility and riches of Palestine, and the greatness of the cities which had been considered small and unimportant. When Jesus wandered among the hills and valleys of Galilee He did not wander in a rustic world. "The land," says the late Sir Walter Besant, "was densely populated; there were schools in every town; there was a wealthy society; there was a Romanising section; there was a Judaising section; there were everywhere Rabbis, merchants, centurions, legionaries, townsmen, and peasants." It was a country that even Rome could not easily hold. The great Jewish leader, Bar Cochba, actually won the Kingdom back for a period, and to quell his revolt, the Roman Bobs or Kitchener, Julius Severus, was summoned by Hadrian from suppressing the less formidable rebellion of the savage, wood-stained Britons. (Laughter and cheers.)

But many centuries earlier, while Rome itself was an obscure village, Isaiah was denouncing the luxury of his people.

It is not a primitive, pastoral people whose ladies are lashed by Isaiah for "walking with stretched-out necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet." Peasants have not these changeable suits of apparel, the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping pins, the glasses and the fine linen, the hoods and the veils.

Even considered as a pastoral country, Palestine is no longer the "land flowing with milk and honey." "Consider the lilies," said Jesus, and, indeed, there are still wonderful wild-flowers and patches of marvellous fertility. But where are the beautiful fruit-gardens, which Josephus mentions around Cæsarea? Buried three hundred feet beneath sand-dunes. Where are the olives of the Mount of Olives? Jericho, the land of palms, has not a single palm, and there is no balm in Gilead. The artificial water system—for Palestine, with its few rivers, depends largely on irrigation—has decayed; the springs are choked up; the trees felled, Arab women wrench off what branches remain, while goats, to keep which was considered by some Rabbis as damnable as to conceal armed robbers, wander everywhere, eating away the vegetation; deforestation has diminished the rainfall: "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briars," said the prophet Isaiah. "Lebanon is ashamed and hewn down, Sharon is like a wilderness, and Bashan and Carmel shake off their fruits."

Under this curse Palestine has slept for centuries. But now its sleep must end. The great Powers are awake—not only Russia and Germany, but the greater powers of steam and electricity. A hundred years ago the "Times" could record with open mouth: "There is to be a railway through the whole of Surrey." Now there is a railway through the whole of Siberia, and we have just reached the jubilee of the submarine cable. Can Palestine escape? Palestine, the very centre of the earth round which group themselves Europe, Asia, and Africa!

It forms the Eastern shore of the Mediterranean. It is near the Suez Canal, it leads to the fat land of Mesopotamia and the coveted Persian Gulf. It is strange that as yet it seems to be omitted from the problem of Asia. It is never mentioned in statesmen's year-books, or newspaper leaders, or magazine articles. This is the more strange that, historically, Palestine has always been a coveted country. "The very earliest monumental information which we possess," says Major Conder,

“shows us how the powers of Egypt and Chaldea strove for its possession. . . . And this contest between the Powers of the north and the south for the possession of Palestine has gone on ever since, with intervals of independence when the combatants had for a time ruined each other. The latest recurrence of such events was witnessed when Napoleon failed to conquer Palestine.”

Writing of his people at the beginning of the Christian era, Josephus says: “We neither inhabit a maritime country nor do we delight in merchandise, but, having a fruitful country for our habitation, we take delight in cultivating that only.” It is true the ancient Jews were a fighting pastoral people, like the Scotch Highlanders, and that Sidon and Tyre, the great ports on the N.W., were left in the hands of the Canaanites, the Phœnicians; yet how vast a commercial development would accrue to a modern Palestine from its central position, may be gauged from the ancient glories of Sidon, so nobly pictured in the Recessional of the Prophet Ezekiel.

Let me read you one-third of his 27th chapter, which I recommend to you in bulk:—

“Tyros, O thou that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles, Tarshish was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of all kinds of riches; with silver, iron, tin and lead, they traded in thy fairs.

Javan, Tubal and Meshech, they were thy merchants: they traded the persons of men and vessels of brass in thy market.

They of the house of Togamah, traded in thy fairs with horses and horsemen and mules.

The men of Dedan were thy merchants: many isles were the merchandise of thine hand: They brought thee for a present horns of ivory and ebony.

Syria was thy merchant by reason of the multitude of the wares of thy making: they occupied in thy fairs with emeralds, purple and brodered work, and fine linen and coral and agate.

Judah, and the land of Israel, they were thy merchants; they traded in thy market, wheat of Minnith, and Pannag, and honey, and oil and balm.

Damascus was thy merchant in the multitude of the wares of thy making, for the multitude of all riches; in the wine of Helbon, and white wool.

Dan also, and Javan going to and fro, occupied in thy fairs; bright iron, cassia and calamus, were in thy market.

Dedan was thy merchant in precious clothes for chariots.

Arabia, and all the princes of Kedar, they occupied with thee in lambs and rams, and goats; in these were they thy merchants.

The merchants of Sheba and Raamah, they were thy merchants: they occupied in thy fairs with chief of all spices, and with all precious stones and gold.

Haran, and Canneh, and Eden, the merchants of Sheba, Asshur, and Chilmad were thy merchants.

These were thy merchants in all sorts of things, in blue clothes, and brodered work, and in chests of rich apparel, bound with cords and made of cedar among thy merchandise.

The ships of Tarshish did sing of thee in thy market; and thou wast replenished, and made very glorious in the midst of the seas. . . .

Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that are in thee, and in all thy company which is in the midst of thee, shall fall into the midst of the seas in the day of thy ruin.”

We may be sure that politicians will soon wake up again to the importance of Palestine, and again the struggle will revive. For “the future,” as the Second Mrs. Tanqueray says, “is only the past entered by another gate.” (Laughter and applause.)

That the terrible Eastern Question is not dead but sleeping was vividly brought home to us the other day by the Franco-Turkish episode. I have tried hard to get a clear view of how the great game stands now;

for with the fate of Turkey the future of Palestine is of course bound up. But diplomatists disagree, and you cannot even rely upon their lying. (Laughter and "Oh!")

It would appear that Russia, its unwieldy bulk at length unified by its Siberian and Trans-Caspian Railways, is bound to absorb not only Manchuria but most of Central Asia. When she has swallowed Persia—and Iran is already surveyed for Russian railways—Turkey will come dangerously near her maw, and Turkey is already in pawn to her through the unpaid war debt.

France and Russia kiss each other on both cheeks, yet their interests clash in the Levant, where France has an ancient interest in Syria, which land she expects for her share when Turkey comes to be carved out. Here her Catholic missionaries jostle the Russian, and through Russian influence, French schools and institutions have been getting the worst of it. Hence the recent demands of France upon the Porte.

Germany, which, according to the British Consul, is the only country that seriously makes an effort to push her trade in Palestine and her commerce in the Persian Gulf, has already successfully challenged the claim of France to be the protector of the Christians of the East. England is necessary to her as a counterpoise to Russia. She tried to make her profit of the recent trouble, and by a loan of four millions to get the concession of the Bagdad railway out of the hands of France. Although nominally at strife with France, Turkey secretly prefers these concessions should fall to the French capitalists; whose demands have less political grab in them than those of Germany, the devouring advance of which Turkey is beginning to feel. At the moment, however, Germany is impeded by her own economic crisis.

Austria, herself threatened by Pan-Slavism, threatens to insist on the autonomy of Macedonia, in which the Sultan's rule is said to be nominal, and meantime makes strong demands concerning compensation and the founding of schools and institutions. But the Sultan has a high regard for the Emperor of Austria, and does his best to meet his views.

Italy left out of it quietly quintuples her shipping to Palestine, and puts on a line of steamers, while Belgium assumes the control of the Customs of Persia and establishes her officials at the chief ports on the Persian Gulf.

England would really be the best ally of Turkey against the all-sweeping advance of Russia, for if the Holy Cities of Islam should ever fall into the hands of Russia, India and Egypt would be threatened by the influence Russia would thus obtain over the fifty million Mussulmans of India, and the ten millions of Egypt. England therefore rather makes up to Turkey; but Abdul Hamid unreasonably hates England, so he prefers to lie low and say nothing.

For myself, as an English citizen, I can say there is no country under whose sphere of influence I would more willingly see Palestine fall, and the warning of Laurence Oliphant in 1880 is still seasonable:—

Political events in the East have so shaped themselves that Palestine, and especially the provinces to the east of the Jordan, owing to their geographical position, have now become the pivot upon which of necessity they must ultimately turn. Situated between the Holy Places at Jerusalem and the Asiatic frontier of Russia, between the Mediterranean and the Red Sea, between Syria and Egypt, their strategic value and political importance must be apparent at a glance; and the day is probably not far distant when it may be found that the most important interests of the British Empire may be imperilled by the neglect to provide in time for the contingencies which are now looming in the immediate future.

Watching the great game can anyone doubt that whoever wins and whoever is overlord of Palestine, there is one sphere of influence Palestine cannot escape falling under—and that is the sphere of modern industrial civilisation. (Hear, hear.) And as to what will be the paramount Power practically my own opinion is that the Turkish Empire will long remain to the Turk, for before the holy places of Islam could fall into the hands of the infidel, the countless millions of Islam, black, white, and negroid, in North Africa, in India, in China, in the Sahara, in the Sudan, already secretly organised, would unite in one of the bloodiest Holy Wars in history. The Sultan will always be at least the suzerain of Palestine, and I can say positively the present Sultan is in sympathy with its inevitable development.

We have seen the political signs of this development. Are there any commercial symptoms?

“Has oil been struck in Ephraim?” Mr. Andrew Lang writes me, “or do the gleanings of the grapes of Eshcol make a sound Burgundy?” No, oil has not been struck in Ephraim, but it has been squeezed from olives, and the value of the export rose from £1,350 sterling to £9,110 in 1900, a rise by weight of over half a million pounds. Some of the oil is very rough, but it goes to France, where it is mixed with the French oil, and under the name of French olive oil goes all over the world. (Much laughter.)

As for the grapes of Eshcol, they may not make a sound Burgundy, but they make an excellent Sauterne, which received the gold medal at the Paris Exposition last year. These grapes also go out as Malaga muscatels in chests painted with Spanish bull fighters and bewitching Señoritas. (Laughter.)

The greatest export of Palestine is, strange to say, soap, which was in 1899 more than a third of the total exports, £125,750 out of a total of £316,158, while in 1900 it fell to £44,550. The Consular Report does not explain. The only possibility is that the number of the Jews in the country had increased, and that they used up the soap themselves. This soap, by the way, is chiefly made at Nablous, the ancient Shechem, the most fanatical Mohammedan town in Palestine—which maintains the connections between cleanliness and godliness. (Great laughter.)

In the unexplained wobbliness of soap, the staple export of Palestine is oranges, worth about £75,000 a year. Jaffa oranges, which are sometimes as large as ostrich-eggs, are superior to the Spanish fruit, and command a higher price; but the recent over-stocking has led to a fall in price. The gardens have also suffered from hailstorms, and the value of orange gardens has recently fallen; but the growers are extending their plantations in the hope of better times. The orange development was due mainly to the rapid and direct communication by steam vessels with Liverpool, established in 1892. Last year was the first to show a loss in the trade.

The other exports in the order of their importance are water-melons, sesame, lupines, and a small amount of maize, wool, hides, colocynth, bones, etc. Quite a new vegetable export was started last year, when Palestine gave the world beans (laughter), though only 520 quarters, valued at £575.

The imports for the last two years remain stationary—approaching £400,000. The balance of trade was against Palestine last year to the tune of nearly £120,000.

Where does the money to pay come from? Partly from the 14,500 pilgrims who came to Palestine during the year, and—mark the distinction—the 3,000 tourists, mainly American. As pilgrimages and

commerce are not entirely unconnected, it may be worth stating that there were 500 Germans, 550 Austrians, 650 Egyptian Copts, 1,100 Armenians, 1,500 Greeks, 6,700 Russians, and 3,500 other pilgrims.

These pilgrims, besides their expenditure for food and lodging, purchase in the bazaars cruciform flowers, mother-o'-pearl mementoes, and olive-wood carvings. One of the largest items of the national income is baksheesh—(great laughter)—together with huge sums received in charity by the Jewish inhabitants from all parts of the world.

The chief need of Palestine, judging by the imports of Jaffa, seems to be cotton goods, and after that coffee, sugar, rice and flour.

Last year there was an enormous rise in the importation of cotton goods from £61,500 to £115,050. This seems to be another index of a rising population—a soap-using population, clothed in cotton and addicted to coffee. (Applause.)

The best customer of Palestine is England. England, however, only sells to Palestine half as much as she buys from it. France, on the other hand, sells to it about as much as England buys, while buying considerably less.

As regards shipping, there were more Turkish vessels entered and cleared at the port of Jaffa in 1900 than all the others put together. But 421 of these 443 Turkish vessels were sailing, and the whole 443 only amounted to 25,998 tons.

The best index that Palestine is going ahead is that there were 148 more ships last year than the year before, with an additional tonnage of nearly 100,000. And the best index that England is going back in these waters is the decrease of her shipping by 27 vessels and over 11,000 tons, while every other great Power increased hers. Germany doubled her shipping, sold 4.5 per cent. more, and bought 20 per cent. more; while her line, the Deutsche Levante Line, has done better business than the new Italian line through the wine exported to Germany by the Jewish colony at Rischon-h le-Zion, the great depôt of which is at Hamburg.

In fact, though the actual relations with France are the most important all round, though the Messagerie boats are of the largest tonnage navigating the coast, and France has railway interests in Syria, it is Germany that is now pushing her way most markedly in the Holy Land. It will be remembered that the Kaiser himself was a pilgrim. (Laughter and cheers.)

A new German bank, the Deutsche Palästina, was established in Jaffa a short time ago, and has attracted many clients by facilitating their business transactions more than any other bank in the place.

The Germans have also introduced oil engines for irrigation. But the British engines are now coming more into request. Otherwise our country seems to be neglecting her opportunities and her future political necessities.

There are German wine settlements at Jaffa, Saron, Jerusalem and Chaifa.

It is doubtful, however, whether, despite the optimism of Consuls and the Gold Medal of the Jewish colonies, Palestine has a future as a wine country. The competition is too keen. It might do better to produce raisins, in the production of which it could almost rival California. The Arabs themselves are a great raisin-consuming people.

Lately, a start has been made in the Jewish colonies with tobacco, with the assistance of an expert who, beginning on a small scale, achieved highly successful results, the planters earning 20 times as much as for their land sown with corn. Should the development continue, factories

will be built, and the poverty-stricken population of Safed would find employment in sorting, manipulating, and fermenting the tobacco.

Many similar developments are doubtless possible; the sugar-cane might be restored to the Jordan valley, and camphor to the slopes of the Engedi. Sugar could be made from the figs of the wild cactus. The ruins of sugar-mills show that the crusading Christians cultivated it successfully. The olives, which are half wasted by the crude process of extracting the oil, might be scientifically treated, and, moreover, soap could be made from the refuse.

Hides are at present exported to France, and re-imported as saddlery, etc., twice eight per cent. being paid for duty. This leather might be made in the country.

Then there are mineral treasures, the newly-discovered deposits on both sides of the Jordan and the Dead Sea. "The salt deposits of the Dead Sea could be developed into an industry," says a German mining engineer. There are also the bitumen springs of Nelic Musa, containing 30 to 40 per cent. of asphalt; there is petroleum in great quantities; but the most important of all deposits is phosphate. "The Dead Sea is a mine of unexplored wealth," said Laurence Oliphant, twenty-two years ago. And now our German engineer rediscovers that "the immense fields of phosphate to the East and West of the Jordan need only better means of traffic and communication to ensure their development."

Ah, yes, here indeed we touch the spot. The great hindrances to the commercial future of Palestine are the almost total absence of roads, railways, harbours, and water power. But even here, note the development "by leaps and bounds." Ten years ago, there were practically no roads. Now there are half-a-dozen. The most ambitious road now building, only begun in 1900, is that between Jerusalem and Nablous, a thoroughfare which, despite the vast amount of traffic, has been only a camel path for centuries. It has been built as far as Bireh, about 29 miles, 19ft. 6in. at its extreme width, at a contract price of £5,000. There were only two bidders, both Armenians, which seems to show that the Armenian does get something out of the Turk. (Laughter.) Mahomedans do not engage in such work.

As for the railways, there is the Jaffa-Jerusalem railway, the French Beyrout to Damascus line, while a projected British line will, unless the opposition to it of the French line be successful, make a connection with the Persian Gulf, opening up the valley of the Euphrates and Tigris, the richest of the ancient world. Then there is the Sultan's project of a railway from Damascus to Holy Mecca, to which Mahomedans are everywhere subscribing, and for which a Belgian firm has already a contract for rails. The Russian railways which almost skirt North Persia, and which are already planned through Persia, must ultimately send out branches to meet those of Asiatic Trukey. With more internal railways in Palestine, the scattered villages would become towns again.

Some of Palestine is still amazingly fertile, and has borne unaided the same crop for forty centuries. Canon Tristram, who championed for colonisation the rich arable land of Moab, reported that its ancient reservoirs and conduits were still practically unimpaired. Laurence Oliphant, in whose Jewish Colonisation Schemes the then Prince of Wales was interested, as well as the Princess Christian, was enraptured with the land of Gilead, the sub-tropical country east of Jordan, amid which the hot springs of Callirrhoe and the romantic scenery would furnish a hygienic resort. The entire Plain of Sharon, according to Thompson, seems to cover a vast subterranean river, and this inexhaustible source of wealth underlies the whole territory of the Philistines. But even the bleaker portion can be redeemed.

With the re-afforesting, the re-cultivation of the hill-terraces, the planting of eucalyptus trees in the marshy districts so as to allay fever, and the complete repair of the system of aqueducts and cisterns, with the construction of roads, railways, harbours—Jaffa can only be approached in small boats—and last, but not least, with the improvement of law and order, Palestine would regain its ancient prosperity, and, reaping the profit of its central position, become again the emporium of the Levant. Yes, the Promised Land is still a land of promise. But, for all this development, two factors are necessary, labour and capital. Where are these to come from?

Even given capital, we know how the dearth of labour cripples the development of even such countries as Canada or Rhodesia. Palestine has but a small population of Arabs and fellahin and wandering, lawless, blackmailing Bedouin tribes. Is there any likelihood that labour in sufficient quantities would be attracted to Palestine? Yes, there is a people to the masses of which Palestine is the only attractive country (hear, hear), a people so bowed down by ages of suffering that it only demands a field in which to labour, and to work out its own destinies, safeguarded from the terrible persecution which has been its lot for centuries. Now or never it may come to its own again, for soon Palestine, which has been "To Let" for so many centuries, will have the board taken down, and the opportunity of regenerating in one and the same process the ancient land and the ancient people will be lost forever. I have sketched the state of the land, may I beg your patience, while I sketch briefly the state of the people. (Great applause.)

Forget the rich Jews of the great capitals whom you may know, and think of the Jewish masses. The total Jewish population of the world is $11\frac{1}{4}$ millions.

Of these six millions are in Russia, that is to say, considerably more than half.

The centre of gravity of the Jewish problem is therefore in Russia. There are 1,800,000 in Austro-Hungary, over a million in the United States, over half-a-million in Germany, nearly half-a-million in European and Asiatic Turkey, and over a quarter of a million in Roumania.

The Jewish population of Great Britain and Ireland is insignificant, about 150,000, so that British Jews do not count in the great problem; and all the fears of the well-to-do that they will be hustled out of Piccadilly into Palestine are unfounded. (Much laughter.) We know the stock joke that if the Jews returned to Palestine, Rothschild would apply for the post of Ambassador at Paris, but in those dark Dreyfus days when "*mort aux Juifs*" was scribbled on the walls, the post could scarcely have been so enviable.

In all the countries of the earth then, Jews are living—not as parasites, but in that other form of biological union known as symbiosis (living together for mutual profit). An animal and a plant, or a bird and a beast, may contribute to each other's existence. Thus the crocodile is said occasionally to open its jaws to allow a small bird to fly in and pick its teeth, and destroy the parasites. This will serve for a rough image of the history of the Jew in Gentile environments, if we imagine the crocodile frequently snapping down its jaws at an unfair moment, and then shedding tears over the accident. (Great laughter.) I propose to concentrate attention on Russia, the greatest Jewish centre, and Roumania, the unhappiest.

As throughout, I shall avoid Jewish witnesses. There was staying at Sandringham the other day, the guest of His Majesty, Prince Demidoff de San-Donato, who, himself a great employer of labour in Russia, has

consecrated a book to the study of the Jewish masses. In passage after passage he dwells upon the lamentable economic position in which the Jews are placed by their artificial enclosure in the Pale.

The Jew is unfortunately prolific. It is a principle of his religion. And so he multiplies by an improvident reliance on Providence, without this expansion being permitted any outlet. Russia, that vast continent of famine-stricken peasants, with fatal folly, clogs the circulation of the best industrial blood in the country. With the rouble-purchasing power gone down ten per cent., the peasant population, which is fed by the harvests, increased ten per cent., Russia herself is a land of paupers. How terrible then to be that pauper of paupers, the Jew! The Pale is already the portion most thickly populated.

While the average of persons to the square mile in Russia is fifteen, in certain provinces of the Pale, there are 2,730 Jews to the square mile.

By the May laws of 1882, 50,000 Jews were driven back from villages to the towns, and there the race is prisoned, as Professor Mandelstamm puts it, like "the dumb animal of Mephisto, led around by a bad spirit in a circle of waste land, whilst all around flourish beautiful green pastures." And there the physique of the race is corroded, and the Jew becomes nothing but "skin, bone, and brain." Of course there is a comfortable minority of millionaires, manufacturers, and professional and commercial men, but the overwhelming majority consists of small tradespeople whose profits hardly cover their taxes, artisans, factory hands, and seekers of odd jobs.

Again, I take my facts not from a Jewish source, but from a general source, and not from a British publication, but from a French, from the current number of *La Revue Blanche*.

The average earnings in the workshops and factories of the Pale may be considered famine wages; the best are only 3½ to 4 roubles a week, or to translate into English money, 8s. to 9s. a week. The most frequent wages are from 5s. 8d. to 6s. 9d., inferior wages from 3s. 4½d. to 4s. 6d. for men; women and children rarely earn more than 13s. 6d. to 18s. per month, generally half this, and sometimes a quarter this.

The weavers of Dubrovno work twenty hours a day for 75 kopecks, or a rouble (2s. 3d.) per week, and support families of from six to eight persons.

There are 4,000 weavers, and slack times are frequent.

The shop-keeping classes are often content with 4s. 6d. to 5s. 8d. a week.

At Berditchev the commercial profits have fallen to 2 per cent.

In Elisabetgrad, at Odessa, there are wooden huts in which, in a single room 9 feet square, live two families, of six persons, without any door of separation. The sanitary inspectors have counted 5,087 houses occupied by Jews absolutely destitute. One thousand of these houses were cellars, and more than two thousand without windows.

Forty-one per cent. of the Jewish families have only a single room, often occupied by a dozen persons.

In 1897, of 60,000 patients in the hospitals, 33,000 were Jews.

The ditches of Homel contain 120 of these hovels, open to all the winds, inhabited by more than 2,000 persons.

At Wilna thousands live in cellars two flights below the level of the streets.

At Sklov, out of 8,000 Jews, 7,000 are reduced to public charity. Jewish workmen accept everywhere the roughest and most dangerous tasks; everywhere they carry burdens.

In Lithuania they are masons. It is the Jews who make rafts out of tree trunks. On the banks of the Dnieper may be seen Jewish dock labourers, sometimes 60 to 65 years old, who pass 13 to 14 hours a day in the water up to the waist, unloading the boats, and only too happy to earn in the summer season 6s. 9d. per week.

At Wilna are the Vachevniki, whose work consists in untying the trunks of the rafts to make piles of them. They operate on horseback, and their occupation, which requires considerable courage and dexterity, is extremely dangerous. There are 480 Vachevniki at Wilna, and they are all of them Jews.

The workers at Minsk are cobblers, bakers, and linen-makers. They have

9s. to 11s. 3d a week for working 15 to 17 hours a day. Here are also 250 masons who get 4s. 6d. a week, and are idle nine months of the year.

The women are also at work in the tobacco and cigarette factories, where they are nearly all Jewesses. They work 12 hours a day; in the match factories of Homel 13 and 14 hours. They compete bitterly with men for 25 to 30 kopecks a day.

At Wilna the stocking industry is nearly entirely in the hands of Jewesses. These gain an average of 18s. per month, with frequent slack seasons, and a tax of 6s. 9d. a year for using a machine.

To sum up, the restrictive laws which paralyse the economic and intellectual activity, the intolerance of officials and magistrates, the fanaticism of the population, avenging their own misery upon their poorer neighbours, the hostile measures, the crises of idleness, the famines, make the Russian Jew's life intolerable. Hence the vast immigration to the States and other countries—800,000 have left Russia in the last 19 years. Here, then, is a vast labour force that might regenerate Palestine. (Hear, hear.)

Let us glance more briefly at our other example:

It is the artificial factor that is almost entirely responsible for the terrible condition of things in Roumania.

There the Jew cannot be a lawyer (decree of 1864), nor can he take part in contracts for public works (1868), nor for lands sold by the State (1869), nor may he be a chemist (1869), or a railway employee (1871), or sell tobacco (1872), or be a money-changer (1881).

As many Jews were thus reduced to pedlars, peddling was forbidden in 1884, and 20,000 Jews deprived of their means of livelihood. In 1887 they were excluded from the management of tobacco factories. In 1893 public schools were closed to them. They could still be in some factories and workshops and timber-yards, but the latest law decrees that in every enterprise whatever 75 per cent. of the employees must be of Roumanian nationality. Hence a wild, disordered exodus in 1900 of starving thousands, with which the Jewish bureaux of charity throughout the world have been unable to grapple. By the Treaty of Berlin Roumania agreed to give its Jews equal rights; but the Powers look on unmoved.

I am happy to say that Servia, whose Minister we have here to-night, has done its duty. (Hear, hear.)

The agent of the "Alliance Israelite" gives some heartrending reports. I take only one paragraph:

In the city of Jassy (the writer is M. Astruc, director of the schools at Roustchuk), which contains more than 35,000 Jews, two-thirds, at least, are in need of help. The deaths from starvation may be counted by the dozen, and the number of graves in the cemetery is frightful. Enter into the first house, and you will be told that for several days there has been not a bit of bread. For over two weeks or more they are living on green fruit gathered in the environs. Mount the worm-eaten stairs, you will perceive old men immovable, stupefied, haggard, who listen to you without understanding, and who shed tears as they take the loaf of bread you hold out to them. Descend into the cellars, where the walls ooze, where breathing seems impossible, where the atmosphere is deadly, and you will feel the tears come into your eyes at the sight of a dozen children, belonging to different families, clothed in a single shirt of the colour of earth, emaciated, lifeless, groaning, but calmed suddenly by a morsel of bread. To sum up again, while these pariahs are victims not only of the economic crisis, but of the laws of boycotting, of exile and contempt, the professors excite the Anti-Semitic students by speaking in their lessons and lectures of the blood-suckers, vipers, and traitors of the Jewish race.

Finally, let me quote you from the private letters of an English engineer:

Our coachman suffered much often at the hands of the Roumanian peasants, who would not sell hay or corn for the horses until we insisted. In fact, a Roumanian Jew engineer lived for a week on onions and nuts, as he could not get anything else to eat in the Pruth Valley, the peasants refusing to sell.

We always employed Jews, as they were the most honourable and industrious of the two, besides the advantage of language, for all Roumanian Jews talk a certain amount of German mixed up in their Yiddish.

The Jews do most of the work and trade, says the same writer, under date November 12, 1901. The Roumanians are a lazy, gambling lot.

As far back as 1879 a Committee of Roumanian Jews wrote: "Our powers of endurance are exhausted—let us leave the country and journey to Palestine."

This then is the willing and patient labour force waiting the magic pass-word to Zion. (Hear, hear.) Cheaper than coolies or Chinese (applause)—for what other people would rush to a ruined land and take part of their wages in religious emotion?

And not only is this labour force available for Palestine, every other channel is being gradually shut to it. Even that famous statue of Liberty in New York harbour is beginning to frown at the Jewish immigrants, while England, to touch whose soil is to be free, grows restive at the congestion and rack-renting in the East End of London. It is as if the very finger of Providence pointed once more to Palestine. How are the Jews of this country to grapple with the new problem, save by deflecting the stream of immigrants Zionwards?

True Palestine is tiny, yet—and this is, I think, a new point—a hilly land, whose slopes can be cultivated and inhabited, is really much larger than its nominal area, just as New York, with its sky-buildings, is far larger than Manhattan Island. Yes, the land is good enough. Is the labour good enough?

The present Jews of Palestine are satisfied so long as they can pray their way. Can Jews become agriculturists? Are not the colonies of Baron Rothschild and Baron Hirsch failures? How will the Jews live when they get to Palestine? These and countless other objections are made by so-called practical Jews, who remind me of an old lady I know, who has been house-hunting for years, but who can never suit herself because the houses are always so dirty and unfurnished, or workmen are always hanging about. She is unable to picture them swept and garnished; and peopled not by paperhangers, but by her own family.

The praying Jews will be supplemented by Jews to whom labour is prayer. If the present agricultural colonies are a failure, it is because the millions have been spent in idealistic unpractical ways. The attempt was made to produce a special breed, the Jewish peasant, regardless of everything else.

Baron Hirsch's colonies in Argentina were put far from railways, water and markets. How to sell the agricultural products no one seemed to consider. Baron Edmond de Rothschild and Baron Hirsch have spent more than a hundred million francs in their endeavours to produce tableaux-vivants of Jewish peasants. These noble-minded Barons are the greatest Art-Patrons the world has ever seen. Pauperisation, on however magnificent a scale, can never be regeneration. Thus, the word was suddenly given to all the colonies to grow roses, and make attar of roses. The most expensive machinery was at once supplied, but where are those roses now? Had the perfume-makers commenced like the Bulgarian peasant with a small boiler, costing from £3 to £4, they might have gradually reaped success.

The Zionists have no such idyllic dream of a Jewish peasant population. Although there must be a proportion of agriculturists, and although in many parts of the earth Jews have proved themselves successful agriculturists, the future of the Jews will not be exclusively

pastoral. The peasant has always been the butt of the townsman. Now the Jew, a townsman for generations, is exhorted to sink to the level of the peasant, whose poetry is more in the eye of the cultured observer than in himself.

Zionism, in my conception, proposes to make neither peasants nor paupers, but to help the people as a whole by the regeneration of the land, and the creation of industries and railways, all of which should in the long run pay for themselves. (Hear, hear.)

In Egypt the great engineering works of Sir William Garstin have already doubled the cotton crop. The cost was seven million pounds, but the annual gain is five millions.

But where is the capital to do such things in Palestine to come from? Here is our last—alas, not our least—question. I cannot recommend the Gentile capitalist to lock up his millions in the gigantic enterprise of exploiting Palestine. The only possible method is a huge national subscription of the children of Israel. For just as Palestine can only be exploited by Jewish labour, so too only a Jewish Chartered Company, ready to take its percentage in religious and race feeling and the joy of a people's salvation, can declare a satisfactory dividend for many years to come. This subscription has passed beyond the stage of fantasy. Walk down Walbrook, pass the door through which you go to banquet with the Lord Mayor, and you will see a building as substantial and practical as an alderman, with solid mahogany counters and green baize doors. This is the office of the Jewish Colonial Trust, surely the most remarkable financial movement the world has witnessed, a company with 120,000 Hebrew shareholders, drawn from every country on earth, the latest shares being taken up by Algiers, Tunis, Argentina, Cuba, and India. After some four or five years' agitation by the great Zionist leader, Mr. Herzl, of Vienna, a quarter of a million pounds has been amassed, and this has enabled the Trust to declare itself ready to begin work. But, alas! how little it is compared with the two millions Dr. Herzl demanded, or the seven millions which the Hirsch trustees are frittering away; or compared with the millions which the Jewish millionaire minority is well able to supply.

Mr. Rider Haggard, witnessing recently the wailing of the Jews at the Temple wall in Jerusalem, asked: "Why do they wail, when a few of their financiers could buy up the country?" Mr. Pinero, in his latest play, has defined the financier as a pawnbroker with imagination. (Much laughter.) Alas, our Jewish pawnbrokers have no imagination. And so they are leaving it all to the poor. Seventy-five per cent. of the shareholders are in Russia—imagine, in Russia!—a dozen of these wretched families clubbing together for a £1 share! Of the remaining 25 per cent. Roumania supplies ten. You see how justified I was in selecting these two countries as supplying the future labour market. The man in the street, ignorant of the part the Jew has played in the world's history, imagines that the world owes the Jew nothing but money. At any rate, he always speaks of "going to the Jews!" I am afraid we Jews shall now have to go to the Christians. Not so much for their money as for their sympathy. (Hear, hear.) We must appeal to them to be true Christians, and help to end this tragedy of the Wandering Jew.

The Sultan is with us—I say it boldly—ready to treat with us and help us—has he not given lengthy audience to Dr. Herzl? But even if he actually restored us our ancient land, we should not have the means of regenerating it since our millionaires stand aloof, and Baron Hirsch's gigantic bequest is spilt in a hundred different directions—a Niagara

turned into garden fountains. No wonder the trustees shrink from publishing a balance-sheet.

The legend says that the Wandering Jew wanders because he refused to allow Christ, bowed down with the burden of the Cross, to rest a moment at his door. Now the Jew, fainting from his long wanderings, under the weight of *his* cross, turns to the followers of Christ. What he asks is so little. He demands just one morsel of the earth for his own, a country no larger than Wales, that could be tucked away and forgotten in the United States. "Restore," he begs, "restore the country without a people to the people without a country." (Hear, hear.) For we have something to give as well as to get. We can sweep away the blackmailer—be he Pasha or Bedouin—we can make the wilderness blossom as the rose, and build up in the heart of the world a civilisation that may be a mediator and interpreter between the East and the West; for we have wandered in every land, and are rich with every human experience. "Help us, then," he cries, "in a project which shines like a star over the welter of materialistic politics, help us to our national redemption, so that, perchance, once again the law shall go forth from Zion, and the Word of righteousness and justice from Jerusalem." (Sustained applause, amid which Mr. Zangwill resumed his seat.)

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