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THE HISTORY

OF THE

JEWISH QUESTION

IN RUSSIA

New Light on the Jewish Question in Russia

BY
C. A.

Preface by SAMUEL HINDS WILKINSON

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PREFACE

IN combating the evil of Antisemitism, we gain much by truthful and calm presentations of Jewish problems. Of all Jewish problems, that of the political and social condition of the Jew in Russia is admittedly the most acute. To have some intelligent and sympathetic grasp of it is of great advantage when surveying the Jewish question as a whole.

It would have been strange if the tragic story of Jewish persecution in Russia in the last few years had reached the civilized world with nothing of feverish excitement. The description of such brutal and unjustifiable outbreaks naturally stirred the blood of writer and reader alike. Concerned as we are to stem the tide of popular feeling, which renders such excesses possible, it behoves us now to utilize the comparative calm for a dispassionate review of the causes contributory to Jew-baiting. As we have shown in the first pam-

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phlet of this series,* these causes are nowhere quite absent, though they may find different forms of expression. Hence the subject is important to all, and the time for its discussion suitable.

Moreover, the Jewish question can only be unravelled in the light of Holy Scripture. Only those who accept the Bible *in toto* as the inspired utterance of God do we consider competent to handle the subject. We may safely go further and say that he who loves and reverences the Bible loves the Jewish race. *Bible-Christianity* will never be found on the side of Antisemitism, because *Bible-Christianity* has rightly-adjusted conceptions of the past, present, and future of the Jewish nation.

As it is my privilege to know the writer of this paper as my personal friend, and as being myself for many years a student of the Jewish question in Russia, I am able to say that no man, in Russia or out of it, is better fitted and equipped than he to instruct English readers upon the subject.

Large numbers of professing Christians have an *antipathy* to the Jews. This is displeasing

* "Antisemitism, its Causes and its Cure," by Samuel Hinds Wilkinson and Sir Andrew Wingate, K.C.I.E. Same publishers as of this pamphlet.

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in God's sight (Isaiah liv. 17). Still larger numbers are in a position of *apathy*. This calls forth even greater disapproval (Zech. i. 15). May this and kindred efforts tend to evoke true *sympathy* with the race, who have already given the world a knowledge of God, a Bible, and a Saviour, and who are yet to blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit.

SAMUEL HINDS WILKINSON.

Brentwood,

Essex.

January, 1908.

NEW LIGHT ON THE JEWISH QUESTION IN RUSSIA.

DEAR MR. WILKINSON,—On receipt of your very kind letter of October 13, I at first thought that it would not be very difficult for me to write a short article on the subject suggested in the allotted time. But when I applied myself to the task, I soon perceived that if I confined the work to general features my point of view would be quite incomprehensible to English readers, to whom the A B C of our circumstances is *terra incognita*.

But a longer treatise, clearly sketching as an introduction the historical development of the position of the Jews here, would have made large claims on my time, for parallel with it I would have been obliged to explain in detail the gradual development of our legal status. I therefore confined myself to those points which were absolutely needed to give a clear understanding of the subject.

When the Polish provinces were incorporated in our Empire we received the Jews in a condition which can be compared to that of the Pariahs of India when that country was conquered by England.

At the commencement of the nineteenth century the Jews in Poland had fallen to so low a level, legally, morally, and socially, that a true conception of this can only be formed by one who has travelled among the small hamlets of Lithuania or the Jewish colonies of the remote villages of the Carpathians in Austrian Galicia.

In annexing Poland, Russia took over her whole political equipment, obligations and privileges alike, including the Jewish question, undoubtedly a very heavy burden for a State just awakening to civilization. It should be pointed out that at the beginning of the nineteenth century the majority of about 20 million subjects, transferred from Poland, were peasant serfs. The Jews formed an entirely separate class, whose interests, confined in excessively narrow legal limits, were centred in a fierce struggle for existence, and whose mental capacities were so low that they could only exercise themselves in the Synagogues in the most absurd controversial hair-splitting ("Pilpul").* Moreover, there was a vivid recollec-

* Talmudical Dispute.—S.H.W.

tion among this isolated Jewish community of the terrible persecutions the nation had had to endure from *all* Gentile nations, the frightful massacres of the Middle Ages, the unjust expulsions from all countries of Western Europe, wherein they had been despoiled of all the worldly wealth which they had acquired, and to a certain degree of their spiritual wealth.

Thus, when a large proportion of the Jews of the whole world passed under the rule of Russia, it was but natural that the majority of them should be compelled to take a very subordinate position. They had more freedom than the serfs, but were effectually shut out from the life of the civilized classes, thrown upon their own resources and upon such gains as could be made by exploitation of the few lines of trade open to them. The Jews were poor, wanting in education; their interests were centred in gaining a subsistence within very restricted bounds, where the temptation to transgress the laws of morality would be almost irresistible to any man, be he Jew or Gentile; they suffered, moreover, from a feeling of isolation in the midst of a population of different blood and of even antagonistic faith. From all this it can easily be understood that, from a purely political point of

view, the Jews were rather a danger than a desirable element for the development of a young political organization as Russia then was. I am persuaded that this explains the vacillations that can be traced in the history of our legislation on the Jewish question.

The leading statesmen instinctively felt, from the moment that almost three million Jews were added to the Empire, which then numbered about sixty million subjects, that they had not to deal with an insignificant race like the Kalmucks or other newly-conquered tribes.

Consequently, there are to be traced in the legislation two currents, a negative and a positive, continually interchanging and sometimes opposing one another.

In the eye of the law the Jews, when they were joined to Russia, were a class resembling the castes of the population of India ; they had both the advantages and the disadvantages of the caste system. The English Government in India has had experience how hard it is to fight against caste, and forcibly to suppress or reform the old notions which are antagonistic to the State.

The Middle Ages had made the Jews a State within a State. There can be no accurate conception of this characteristic of the Jews in Western Europe, because the Jews who

emigrate from here are naturally obliged to take their place in firmly established jurisdictions, and are, moreover, a vanishing minority in comparison with the rest of the citizens, so that the forming of a State within a State is quite out of the question. In Russia, however, it has been a standing problem, since the annexation of Poland, to break through the caste system of the Jews in order to assimilate them.

I cannot assert that the means to this end have always been humane and happily chosen ; yet in one sense the disintegration of caste has on the whole made great progress. It might by this time have advanced further than it actually has, had not the vacillations in legislating, above referred to, often rendered the results obtained ill-assured. Has not England, in a sense, had the same experience with castes in India ?

At first, at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, many attempts were made by the Legislature with the object of freeing the Jews from the legalized isolation and oppression which had originated in Poland. Indeed, it cannot be denied that in comparison with their condition before the annexation, especially in Lithuania, they enjoyed a marked amelioration when they be-

came Russian subjects. This also explains the fact that up to almost the end of the last century, in the wars waged by Russia and in the Polish insurrections, the great majority of the Jews were true to Russia. But the difficulty of assimilating in real citizenship a mass of Jews, benumbed by centuries of the caste spirit, presented itself at a very early period after the annexation. When one considers that until then the only possible way for a Jew to rise socially was by acquiring as much money as possible, and that he only succeeded in this in such trades as usury, sale of brandy, smuggling, procuration, &c., it is easy to understand that the first hesitating attempts to give them greater liberty brought to light characteristics which had till then been hidden in the narrow streets of the Ghetto or manifested in the exploitation of the lowest classes of the Gentile population, then as bare of legal status as the Jews themselves.

These characteristics called forth periodical renewals of ever enhanced legal restrictions upon the Jews. I have not space here to go into the details of these laws. I can only state the result, that, as every lawyer knows, all exceptional laws can be evaded ; it is therefore quite natural, in the struggle for existence, that when a law deprives a whole class of people

of one means of livelihood, all kinds of means, lawful and unlawful, will be invented to evade that law.

The authorities who had to administer those laws soon became accustomed to look on the Jews as experts in the evasion of law, and the leading statesmen gradually acquired the conviction that Jews would submit only to such laws as were convenient to them, and that all the rest, applying to all citizens, were obnoxious to them. The consequence was that a deep-rooted aversion to Jews was formed in the minds of all the officials who had to do with them; and this, again, generally produced an unfavorable application of the laws relative to the Jewish question. No one who has not had to deal with these questions can imagine the feelings of an official anxious to fulfil his duties, when he has to work in the Jewish Pale of Settlement, and has day by day to deal with Jewish evasions and transgressions of the law. In those districts the greater proportion of smugglers are Jewish; the greater proportion of forgers, receivers of stolen goods, procurers, and, latterly, thieves are likewise Jewish. I will not specify the special offences occasioned by the exceptional laws, such as evasion of excise duties and avoidance of military service. The reason

for this phenomenon lies, of course, in their age-long estrangement from all that State duty and public spirit command, produced by the exceptional laws and their artificially acquired skill in evading those laws. But, however that may be, no State can shut its eyes to such phenomena, and the means employed in times past to counteract them have, as I said before, alternated between severity and leniency; measures, wise and unwise, have been adopted, which have produced some good, but alas! also some very bad results. I reckon to the first the efforts during the last century for the assimilation of the mass of the Jews by schools and education, and also the encouraging of them to form an artisan class. It seems as if the legislators of the last century had instinctively made it their guiding principle to grant full citizen rights only to those Jews who were distinguished from their co-religionists in a state of barbarism, either by their higher education or by the practice of a useful trade which might guarantee an honest livelihood.

From the statesman's point of view one cannot find fault with that principle. History shows that in no country do races of a lower grade in a conquered province immediately receive the rights which natives of the conquering State possess.

As I said, the Hebrew inhabitants of the Polish provinces were not placed in a more unfavorable position after the annexation than they had occupied before. It is true they might not, with the exception of the educated and the more important mercantile people, and, at a later date, artisans also, reside permanently in the original provinces of Great Russia; but within the large district which they had till then inhabited they had more freedom than the whole peasant class, and might by industry raise themselves to a higher social grade. Moreover, the opportunity they had not before had of crossing the borders of the old Polish kingdom, and settling in the provinces of Great Russia, by means of higher education, learning a trade, or large mercantile business, was gradually given to them by the law. For the first half of the nineteenth century this was a situation which did not, in the circumstances of those days, involve hardship, when one takes into consideration the fact that the Jewish Pale of Settlement occupies a territory comprehending nearly half of Russia in Europe.

At the same time we see the State providing for the education of the Jews, establishing Rabbinic and other schools, and even assigning

large tracts of land in South Russia for the purpose of training the Jews in agriculture.*

Whilst taking these measures, the State also took steps to break up the political isolation of the Jews inherited from Polish times. The special taxes paid by the Hebrews from time immemorial had produced a peculiar autonomous fiscal organization, called the Kahal ; † this was gradually done away with, and subordinated to the general authority. There remained only the taxes which were levied upon them for the special benevolent institutions and schools of the Jews. Hardly any restrictions were placed upon the practice of the Hebrew religion, that is to say, in the internal organization of the community, choice of the Rabbis, teachers, &c. There was less control exercised by the State on the building of synagogues, schools and meeting-houses for Jews, than in the cases of Protestant sects and Church communities. Thus it is intelligible that in the course of the nineteenth century the Jews of Russia very speedily acquired a

* The latter attempts failed entirely. I will not describe the causes why the Jews settled as farmers on these lands let the land instead of cultivating it themselves.

† The "Kahal" was a fiscal commission elected by the Jewish community, with certain judicial powers ; it was officially recognized by the Russian Government in 1772, and dissolved and removed in 1844.

strong position, as regards numbers and influence, in the provinces of ancient Poland. And in the rest of the Empire we find their activity very perceptible, particularly in trades and in the liberal professions—law, medicine, and in manufactures. Thus, for instance, in one district of the province of Pskoff, more than half the land property, a district as large as Wales, belongs to Jewish merchants. Before the railways became Government property, they owned also many thousand miles of railroads. The larger proportion of the Press, of banks, and of factories in the Empire is in the hands of Jews. In trade it is almost an impossibility to transact business without the ubiquitous Jewish agent.

These and many other circumstances, which I have not space to enumerate, show that the first 100 years the Jews were ruled by Russia did not present such a picture of the degradation and oppression of a race of fellow-creatures as the Press of Western Europe now so constantly describes. The Jews, like all the lower classes of the population of our Empire, have passed through a process of evolution, and, in spite of everything, have kept time with the rest fairly well.

An English reader cannot even imagine the very great difficulties the economic and

social development of the State and its population have to contend with in such an enormous country as Russia. It is an eternal struggle with a severe climate, with the necessity of lying fallow during the long winter ; the devotion of great energy to the competition in the struggle for existence among all the nationalities that have gradually been ranged under the sceptre of Russia ; an endless defence against the ill-will of neighbouring States ; an endless war against the barbarism of the East.

Since the end of the eighteenth century Russia has had to withstand the whole force of the West of Europe under Napoleon, then to overcome the barbarism of the Turks in Europe, and thereby open extensive tracts of steppe and desert to civilization, as hardly any other nation has ever done. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were still territories in the south of our Empire, as large as Germany, France and England together, at the mercy of nomads and robbers, which are now the most flourishing provinces. In our own days we have seen Turkestan with its slavery, the Caucasus with its robber tribes, Bulgaria, where the most horrible massacres, under the eye of the civilized world, were of daily occurrence, freed by Russia, and placed

under conditions capable of developing culture and civilization. All this has not been accomplished without the expenditure of enormous civilizing energies and at the cost of the internal development of our own organization. Many questions upon which the education and the civilization, as well as the welfare of the population, depended, could not be solved and had to be laid aside because the enormous task of the Empire demanded its whole energies; and the Jews could not but feel the weight of the sacrifices the whole country had to make. After Napoleon's wars and the suppression of the first Polish insurrection and the Turkish wars which followed, Russia's energies were so exhausted that she was obliged to pass through a period of stagnation in order to collect her forces, just as England has had to do more than once in her history.

The rule of the Czar Alexander II. inaugurated a new era in internal politics. The liberation of the serfs, independent tribunals, local administration in the provinces, universal conscription, and the equalising of all classes of the population occasioned by these reforms, effected a tremendous alteration in the whole imperial organism. Contests before unknown arose, the competition in political, social, economic and, above all, national affairs, be-

came sharper and sharper. A ferment through all grades of the population brought to light forces that jeopardised and endangered the organism of the State as formed by its history. The consequence was that the Conservative element and the Legislature entered on a mortal conflict with those forces. In the rivalry of nationalities within the bounds of the Empire the Russian, by right of historic tradition, must maintain the supremacy. The equalizing of the nationalities in relation to the law was the keynote of this effort. England has had similar experience in her Irish and South African questions. Meanwhile the Jews during the past hundred years had firmly rooted themselves in the territory assigned to them, and thanks to the privileges acquired by industry, education and the practice of trades, had gradually produced a number of men and of families of a high level of culture (this applies to the beginning of the eighties of last century).

Thus it came about that at the moment when a more highly cultured class had been formed within the Jewish nation, under the rule of Russia, and consequently a strong effort to obtain a higher social position became perceptible (quite unknown to their forefathers in the first century of Russian rule), there was throughout the Empire a ferment among all

classes of the population, produced by the throwing down of all the old restraints and the modernizing of the State, which resulted in the sharpening of contests, the competition of interests, and the rivalry of nationalities. In this struggle the Jewish people had to play a prominent part on account of its racial peculiarities and the manner in which they had been developed in the course of its history.

In order to understand the conflicts that necessarily ensued, we must form a clear conception of the condition of the Jews at the beginning of the eightieth year of the last century.

Let us imagine a caste system in the act of breaking up—on one side a great multitude with but a few pence a head per day, whose ideal is the earning of those copper coins, whose traditions relate only to the methods in which the money is to be earned (methods drawn from recollections of the time when the ancestors of these people were hunted like wild beasts through all Europe, were treated as animals, and, consequently, like hungry animals, could not but consider all possible methods of extracting a living from their persecutors allowable) ; on the other side—grown out from the multitude, an entirely new class, often endowed with the same ancestral characteristics, who had used

the hundred years of peaceful development under Russian rule to acquire civilization, education and material wealth. This last class was accustomed, owing to these advantages, to consider themselves naturalized citizens of the the Empire. There was a great division between these two classes of the Jewish population, yet they instinctively presented a united front, as opposed to the rest of the citizens of the Empire. Besides the consciousness of blood relationship, the traditions of the caste system served as a bond between all Jews. Thus it happened that the leading statesmen could not accustom themselves, as the years went on, to distinguish the varying tendencies in the mass of Judaism and act accordingly; they had not time to do so, for the new conditions of political and social life of Russia left them no leisure to deal with problems concerning a comparatively small fraction (apparently homogeneous) of the whole population.

Thus, when at the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties of the last century, the catastrophe broke out which had been fostered by the competition among all classes and grades in the Empire, and when the old governmental methods and laws were no more sufficient to stem this movement or to regulate it, then it appeared that the leading statesmen

were neither prepared for nor able to cope with the questions they had to face. A whole list of laws and decrees developed which never had in view the whole fully opened-up question, but sought only to heal special dangers to the State, local interests and excitement, which for the time being had become acute. For this reason these regulations could never logically have a thorough influence, and for the most part they missed their aim. In the treatment of the Jewish question this method could be most prominently observed.

English writers, I find, often look down with very great contempt upon the efforts of our statesmen at the end of the nineteenth century, and contemptuously call them bunglers. I can easily understand an Englishman who, looking with pride upon his native institutions, the regularity of their work in solving, as if in play, most of the social and political problems, sincerely believes that it would be easy for us to get the same results after similar methods and rules. Unfortunately, it is so often forgotten how many centuries have been necessary for the building up of these institutions and for the schooling of the nation in the use of them. England is a State in which the various races have gradually merged into one homogeneous whole, possessing an equal tem-

perament and similar political ambitions. It is therefore very difficult for Englishmen to form an impartial judgment of the evolution of our State and the treatment of many problems which stir up deeply the passions of the various grades of our population. This is specially the case with the Jewish question.

In the beginning of the eighties of last century there arose, especially in South Russia and in Poland proper, a serious Antisemitic movement, resulting in pogroms which came as a complete surprise both to the Central Government and to the local authorities. The Antisemitic papers of that time declared this to be the reaction against the so-called exploitation of the poorer peasantry and the industrial classes by the Jews. This opinion was shared by many officials, and partly also by the leading statesmen, and produced in consequence a number of purposeless regulations which led to most unhappy results ; for instead of treating the evil at its roots, they called into life a number of laws of exclusion which could not be carried out, and were unjust and hurtful to the individual. I have conversed with many officials who have witnessed these Antisemitic movements, and have had details of them related to me by victims and impartial onlookers. Everywhere we see

the same results as well as the same motives, which in earlier times produced identical movements in Western Europe.

In my opinion, the first and foremost reason for this was the discontent of the lowest strata of our population at finding themselves almost entirely dependent economically on that race which, in the course of the last twenty years, had outstripped them in the social and economic competition by means of untiring industry, inborn perseverance, and the use of business methods often not in accord with morality. This dislike of being at every step dependent on Jews, of feeling the strength of Jewish solidarity, developed a deep-rooted grudge in those classes of the Gentile population which had only recently been freed from the leading strings of the institution of serfdom. This was fostered to the utmost by their traditional habit of regarding the Jews as a God-forsaken and accursed people; and in my opinion this sentiment formed the second lever which mightily furthered the Antisemitic movement of the early 'eighties.

The third reason lay in the political immaturity of the lowest classes of the Empire, who had only just obtained freedom after several centuries of guardianship, and who could only understand freedom as unbridled

licence, since the institutions of the State were not constructed to prevent misuse of liberty. A simple local cause, such as a quarrel in public between a Jew and a Gentile, or some such thing, was therefore all that was needed to call forth a pogrom, with all the horrors of a mob let loose. There were more than enough causes for quarrels between Jew and Gentile, especially in South Russia, where the Jew had the whole economic life of the people in his hands. During the time of serfdom the landlord was the guardian of the lower sections of the population in the country districts, for it was to his interest to keep his subjects dependent upon himself. Industrial undertakings were at that time in the hands of the serf owners, who worked their factories, mines, &c., with the cheap labour of their serfs. The lower sections had no need for capital then, for they were not permitted to possess any. All this altered in a moment with the liberation of the serfs (1861). All classes required capital and ready cash in order to make the transition from primitive methods of business into monetary methods. This, of course, was a state of things specially favourable to the Jews. Since time immemorial money-lending had been the only means of existence possible to the Jews in every country.

On this account it soon happened that they speedily became masters of every economic undertaking in that district of Russia in which they lived. Jews were the tenants of farms, mills, distilleries, sawmills, sugar factories—all were in their hands ; the entire retail and wholesale trade belonged to them, especially the corn and flour trade, which is of such great importance to the country population. In the cities the whole artisan class was debtor to the Jews ; the selling of all produce depended upon them. Money was dear then, fearful rates of interest were asked and paid. Besides, there existed but a few banks and savings banks ; the lower strata had no idea of judicial transactions, and for this reason it happened that the usurer was often able to demand twice over debts which had been already paid.

All this had so thoroughly prepared the ground for the Antisemitic movement, that when it broke loose it swept like a storm over the whole area which had been granted to the Jews for settlement.

Laws which were consequently framed to stem the movement bear the defective characteristics already mentioned. In every measure is to be seen the legislator attempting, not to make the classes which had come into conflict

with Jews on economic matters better able by education to resist them economically, but to strengthen the guardianship of the State, and to free the population from contact with the Jews. These laws undermined the economic and social life of the Jews, hindered both, embittered and destroyed the relations between them and the Gentiles, and produced the result that all Jewry in the Empire instinctively gathered into one mass and developed such traits and tendencies as became dangerous to the State. At the same time a change took place in Judaism, which after twenty-five years made it appear in quite a different light to that in which we observed it a quarter of a century earlier.

In order to grasp the motive power which has effected this, we must take a short review of the measures which have been used by us during the last period of the foregoing century respecting the Jewish question, and note their consequences. Jew-baiting had evidently frightened the statesmen, and in reading the drafts of the laws as kept in the archives of the ministry, one can observe everywhere that the new rules had only one aim—to make impossible the return of such conditions and events as had called into being the Antisemitic movement. In order to accomplish this it was

attempted everywhere to hinder the contact of the populace with the Jews and to restrict Jewish competition in every branch. It was forgotten, however, that healthy competition is the most powerful means by which to educate an ignorant, indolent, and lazy populace, as the Gentile one was, to industry and initiative. By the laws of the year 1882 the Jews were forbidden to start new settlements in the country outside the cities, even in the zone which until now had offered them free habitation. Every family had now, according to the letter of the law, to remain just in that very spot in the country in which the edict of the law had found them. Anyone transgressing this decree had to move into the town. No one who had lived in a city could return to the country. The Jews' liberty of roving in that district, which even to this day is called the Pale of Settlement, was *de facto* cancelled with one stroke. At that time this rule did not appear to most of its authors so hard and unjust as it proved itself to be in reality. Jews living in the year 1882 in the country were not so numerous as those residing in hamlets and towns. Moreover, these were people of a class which really was to blame for the birth of the Antisemitic feeling; they were mostly publicans, owners of liquor distilleries, tenants of

farms, though not themselves farmers or agriculturists, subletting the land in small parcels to peasants, millers, and corn dealers, carrying on an extra trade in usury, buyers of cattle, milk, and other country products, who often used the peasants' want of money in order to buy up everything very cheaply just before the final date for paying in taxes, as, *e.g.*, the harvest, even before it was garnered or threshed, &c. All these people kept, according to the law of 1882, their domiciliary right for the country, though only in a very limited and small circuit, *i.e.*, in that parish in which they lived in the year 1882. No other Jew was allowed after 1882 to settle down permanently in this parish, and on account of all this there arose just such a state of things as the legislator had sought to avoid—annihilation of competition among the Jews themselves and a monopolizing of the exploitation of the populace of the country, on account of the formation of quite small districts in which the Jews lawfully residing dictated the prices and became the autocrats in all economic affairs. Scarcely had a newly immigrated Jew appeared in any community, and, for instance, opened a new business or undertaking, than he was at once denounced to the authorities by the Hebrews already established there. He had either to

give in to his competitors, or try by circumvention of the law to settle in that place. The easiest means to this end was the bribing of the lowest officials, the police and other authorities. This, again, was followed by a fearful demoralization of the local officials, but at the same time of the Jews themselves. Both became used to corruption and dishonesty; an ever stronger State apparatus was needed to control the affairs of the Jews; accusations and legal proceedings were heaped up immeasurably, and accustomed the authorities to look on the Jewish question as the gangrene of the State. This is a very sad chapter in the administrative history of the Empire.

From another side, on ethnographic and economic grounds, the law of 1882 had a most peculiar result, the probability of which had doubtless never occurred to its framers.

As there was no outlet in the country for the natural increase of the Jewish population, there arose in the towns and small hamlets of the Pale of Settlement an unnatural surplus population through the Jewish element, which began gradually to oust the Gentiles from most of their sources of income by means of cheap competition. One may boldly state that through the law of 1882, to-day most of the cities of North and South-west Russia

bear a markedly Jewish type. In the smaller towns of this district the ratio of Jews to Gentiles is often nine to one.

To be able to live in the cities the Jews had to learn all kinds of professions, with which till then they had not been conversant. At first this had a reviving influence on the economic life of the cities. Trade flourished, powerful branches of industry arose, and gradually took firm hold. Everywhere one met Jewish workmen, temperate and industrious, who offered the innate inventive genius and intelligence of their race for very cheap remuneration.

This period, however, did not last long ; competition among the Jews themselves lowered the working wages as well as the products of industry, and the greatest sufferers were the lower classes of the population, especially those of the Gentiles. An emigration of working classes gradually began out of the districts of Jewish settlement. Gentiles were allowed to go east into provinces which were closed to the Jews, except where Jews had reached a higher educational standard, had adopted the liberal professions, or had learnt a trade. We see, therefore, that as a result of the laws of 1882 the Jews were forced over the frontiers of the zones to which they had been so long

restricted, into the original provinces of Russia proper, which had formed the State, and, until now, had governed it. For the first time after the expulsion of the Jews from Spain the nation was, by our laws, gradually forced to change from a more or less exclusively trading people into a community of factory workmen and artisans, withal to evolve out of their midst a large number of educated *litterati* as the leading class. This phenomenon is the most important factor in the life of this people which has entered into their existence for many centuries. Our legislators did not even understand how to deal with this factor, and again followed the same course to try and fight Jewish competition in every branch by a system of exclusion. In the matter of school education this was speedily pronounced. The simplest way for a Jew to acquire complete citizen rights throughout the whole of the Empire was to enter the university and obtain its diploma. For this reason an ardent desire for education arose among the Jews which took hold of nearly the whole nation. The poorest sent their sons, if at all possible, to the university. Among a population of 130 millions in the Empire, the percentage of Jews was 4 to 5 per cent. of the total sum ; but in the existing teaching institutions the number of

Jewish youths entering was far in excess, *relatively speaking*, of that of Gentile scholars. One cannot summon new schools out of the ground, the means, and especially the teachers, were wanting to the State. Therefore, the unfortunate political measure was adopted of fixing by law the percentage of Jewish scholars in every school, in order to protect the Gentile population from the competition of the Jews. As an explanation of this measure it may be pointed out that the cost of education being ridiculously low and the school expenses being borne by all ratepayers, principally Christians, it seemed unjust that the children of these latter should be ousted by the children of a small race of people. (In the "Gymnasium" a boy's education costs £5 per annum, in the University only a little more.)

In my opinion, it would have been politically better to grant to Jewish communities the possibility of founding their own middle or perhaps even high schools, and to bear the cost of these themselves. This would surely have been done by them. However, at that time private schools were phenomena not viewed with favour by the law of the whole State. Again, the result of this law completely missed its aim and bore the worse consequences for the State. Far more than any other law

of exclusion it has helped to foster in the hearts of the rising generation of Jews the spirit of rebellion. It is not difficult to understand the feelings of a boy who, having worked with all his might, has passed his entrance examination often better than many of his Gentile comrades, and to whom the doors of the schools remain shut simply because he is a Jew. For him school is of much greater importance than for his contemporaries the "Goyim," for only if he can enter into the same school can he ever hope to obtain the full citizen rights of the Empire. Having passed through the "gymnasium," or middle school, the same question begins anew. The entrance into the University, higher technical institutes, &c., was limited in the case of Jews to a certain number, only the best Jewish scholars being admitted. Owing to the exertions put forth to get this higher education, countless lives have been sacrificed. The injustice of limiting the ardent desire of the Jews for scholastic education, produced by the laws themselves, is most keenly felt by those sections of Hebrews who have worked themselves up to a higher social level; for every son of a lawyer, doctor, &c., knows that he can never be a full citizen of the Empire if he has not passed through the University. For this reason a race begins

to strive for educational diplomas. Youths, for instance, who have never felt the desire to become dentists, study this profession in order later to obtain the right to live in the Empire ; never, in fact, pulling out a tooth, but earning their living as builders or merchants. All kinds of permitted and forbidden means are used to reach the goal. The teaching *personnel* of the schools is demoralized by bribery, the sons of richer Jews enter the schools, the poorer ones remain outside. A whole class of young men seek to obtain the necessary knowledge for the "Abiturien" (entrance examination for the university) by self-taught methods. Coaches and private teachers, who have themselves very limited knowledge, and who, without method or technical training, cram only enough into the young people to enable them to pass the longed-for examination, grow up in the cities like mushrooms. A number of youths of the poorest section of the Hebrew population emigrate into foreign parts, and there seek to enter the high schools in order to pass, on their return home, the final examination. All this youth is saturated by hatred to State officialism and State forms, which seems to have been the cause that their best years have been embittered. The men who have

obtained their education thus are just those who henceforth become the leading class of Judaism. A deep trait of annoyance, irritation against life in general, hatred of their descent, of the traditions of their ancestors, of everything that has been built up around them on the ground of the evolution of history, an unbridled abandonment to their hatred, a grasping after all the senseless theories that speak of a golden future and preach the destruction of all existing things—these are the characteristics of this new class—sprung up amidst such circumstances. The seriousness of it all lies in this, that this sentiment of pessimism and hatred is not only directed against the fundamental principles of the State and society ; against property, family, faith, but also against all the traditions and ideals of its own people. Even the bitterest Antisemites could not deny to the Hebrews their high individual qualities, their strict morality amongst fellow-believers, their firm and deeply rooted sense of family, with love to their children and reverence to their parents ; and just these characteristics which have been their power and strength in the course of history, are crushed and destroyed by the intellectual direction which the educated classes have now taken, and even tend to widen the breach between them and the con-

ditions of life of the other classes of the population of our Empire.

I will not enter further into the details of the laws concerning the Jewish question which have arisen in all departments, in consequence of the Antisemitic movement of the eighties of last century, and as a preventative to the return of the same. The examples which I have given demonstrate their character. Here, again, the same leading motive may be perceived—hampering the free activity of the Jews in their struggle for existence, and limiting their contact with other religions to the lowest possible minimum. It is a sad tale of short-sighted conception of the situation.

But truly the critics abroad, who speak of the persecution of the Jews here, and who think themselves able at a distance lightly to pass judgment on the exertions of our statesmen in this question which it is so difficult to solve, show only an incredible ignorance of the true state of affairs and of the history of Russia.

They forget that we have not to do with a problem easy of solution, that here we have not to do with a few tens of thousands of Jews—as in England—or some hundreds of thousands, as in Germany, for by the annexation of Poland, Russia really took over the whole mass of the Jews. To speak of

a Jewish persecution in Russia, in the literal sense of the word, is a delusion—just as one cannot speak, as is often done in Russia, of the persecution of the Dutch race in South Africa, or of the natives in India or Egypt, notwithstanding the concentration camps in the Boer War, the strict measures in Egypt and in India, and the withholding of citizen rights from the great bulk of the population there. The development of our State has, even in the last fifty years, brought to the front such serious questions, class interests and rivalry, that the energies of legislative institutions were strained to the utmost in maintaining the whole structure of the State built up by a people endowed with so much political instinct as the Great Russians, and in resisting efforts inimical to the common weal. Thus the Jewish question was only one among the many problems that the State had to solve, and in the eyes of the legislators undoubtedly not the most important compared to the other great home and foreign political problems of the realm.

I must further remark that in every State its own interests can only be treated from the point of view of the race which formed it and guides it. The position of the statesmen of the 'eighties with regard to the Jews was not easier than that of the English with regard to

the Irish and South African questions. And how many mistakes have been made there also, now that we view the events from the perspective of history. The solution was made yet more difficult by the exclusiveness of the Jews, which, formed before they came under Russian rule, prohibited any insight into the inner life of the Jewish people. So that only the results of the measures employed could show, when too late, that the wrong course had been taken.

But in one matter the Jews had most deeply exasperated both the ruling class and the whole population of the Empire, thereby calling attention to themselves, *i.e.*, their attitude to the question of conscription.

In the year 1874 Russia followed the example of Germany and brought in universal conscription. All the privileges of the favoured classes yielded to this duty to the State, rich and poor, noble and peasant ; all had to give up their sons to render this patriotic service. Yet from the very beginning of the enactment of this law it appeared that an enormous percentage of Jews entirely shirked the duty. To make this plain to the English reader I must go into some details.

The conscription of the population was regulated as follows :—

A special statute each year fixed the number of recruits required for the Army. At first it was not higher than 200 per 1,000 of the whole Empire with five years' service, now it is double that number with three years' service. These figures were divided among the provinces, and then again among the districts, according to the statistical returns of young men at the age of 21. Say, for example, that in a given year 1,000 young men arrive at the age for conscription; say that 25 per cent. of these are Jews, this district according to the division would have to find about 200 recruits, therefore 50 would be the normal proportion for Jewish recruits. (The drafting is done in the following manner: From the thousand young men liable to conscription the bread-winners are first set aside; as only sons, or those whose fathers are incapable of working and whose brothers are too young to work, or already serving as soldiers, &c.; the remainder are then medically examined, the sickly ones dismissed, and from those who remain the recruits are drawn by lot.)

Scarcely had this law come into operation when it became apparent that most of the Jews liable to be recruited shirked their military duty in one way or another. In a district, such as the example above mentioned, the

Gentile population observed that not 50 young Jews, but at most five or ten, took their place as soldiers, and therefore the district did not furnish 150 Gentiles *plus* 50 Jews, but 195 Gentiles *plus* 5 Jews. And the parents of the Gentile recruits observed that most of the young Jews of conscription age remained openly at home, having freed themselves by evasion of the law and often by criminal methods.

How the law could be evaded I can only explain by examples.

The defective and often dishonest registration of the births and marriages of the Jews by their Rabbis (in Russia there are no registry offices) facilitated the transgression of the law. Thus it came about that numerous families got their children adopted by childless relatives, making all those liable to conscription only sons ; then with the connivance of the Rabbis some births were either not registered at all, or registered under false names ; if an investigation into the matter was made, the registers had almost always been lost or burnt "by accident" ; again, if it became known that the examining physician of any committee was open to bribery, there was quite a pilgrimage of Jews liable to conscription to that committee. Yet more de-

moralizing and perilous to the lives of young men was the almost wholesale system of mutilation. Months before the recruiting began the young Jews trained themselves to appear invalids. They would eat almost nothing, indulge in quantities of castor oil so as to appear before the Committee in an absolutely pitiable condition, like living skeletons. Many of them were unable to recover from the effects, and eventually succumbed to tuberculosis and other diseases. Numerous ruptures of the ear drum were artificially produced ; trachoma and other infectious diseases of the eyes were inoculated ; chronic festering wounds were produced ; fractures of every kind were multiplied ; and very frequently sick persons were hired, who, provided with the passports of the conscripts, presented themselves before the Committee, and having received a certificate of unfitness for service and got it noted on the passport, could then perpetrate the same fraud before another committee in another place for another military shirker.

The authorities were quite helpless with respect to these frauds, and the less cunning Gentile population had to make up the deficiency of Jewish recruits with their own youth. This has engendered an incredible

bitterness against the Jews. The consequence was that the Jews were separated by law from the general return of recruits. It was enacted by a new law that every district with a Hebrew population should annually present a fixed number of Jewish recruits. But as, notwithstanding, a large number of Jews still shirked military duty, and in consequence the shortage had to be made up by the Gentile population of the whole realm ; another exceptional law was enacted by which the families of the absconding Jewish recruits were fined £30. Thus the recruiting question became a continual warfare between the authorities and the Jewish population, which continues to this day, though at present the aversion of the Jews for military service is gradually diminishing. But, on the other hand, the furnishing of recruits has become a very heavy burden for the steady and loyal portion of the Jewish population, as the only breadwinner of a family has often to serve in place of a deserter. As I have already said, the recruiting question has produced an incredible amount of ill-blood, and agitation against the Jews in the Gentile population, and contributed very greatly to the Jew-baiting of the 'eighties, and likewise to the ill-will of the ruling powers towards them in the last twenty-five years.

I have roughly enumerated the features of the development of the Jewish question in Russia. It only remains to deal with the situation as now developed, and to enter into the causes which have let loose the Anti-Jewish excesses of the last few years.

We now come to a division of the subject upon which it is much more difficult for the foreigner to form an objective judgment.

When in the year 1903 a fearful massacre of the Jews broke out in Kischinew, a cry of indignation rang through the whole civilized world. So much has been written about it that it is not necessary to go into the details now. Outwardly the pogrom differed very little from those of the 'eighties. First, a brawl between Jews and Gentiles in the market, then, before the authorities had comprehended the danger, a gathering together of all the rabble who were lying in wait for robbery and plunder—and, lastly, a catastrophe. This massacre of the Jews, which was brought about by entirely local causes, has had the most deplorable consequences for Russia. Like the war with Japan, it opened the eyes of many, who were interested in the matter, to the weakness of the Government and the administrative machinery. I myself questioned Prince Ourusoff (who was

appointed Governor just after the catastrophe) as to the cause of the occurrence. His narrative gave a picture of incredible indolence and disorganization on the part of the authorities, which happened to be aggravated by the personal weakness and administrative ignorance of his predecessor, an invalid Governor, who had been appointed to Kischinew because the province was considered particularly insignificant and quiet, and he was no longer fit for military duties. It is madness to believe in provocation on the part of the Government. No one in St. Petersburg in those days, least of all in Government circles, troubled themselves as to the relations between Jew and Gentile in far-off Kischinew. The Ministry of the Interior at that time had many more important questions to attend to.

The massacre at Kischinew had, however, two evil consequences, which were very serious.

The first was that the rabble in the other towns of Russia became convinced that the authorities were not equal to cope with an outbreak of the passions of the masses ; and unfortunately, this was quite true. What could be done by a police which, in most of the towns of Russia, scarcely amounted to the tenth part of the force in a similar town

of England, and which was badly paid and badly led?

Order rested solely upon a patriarchal tradition of the people, who were convinced that resistance dare not be made to the decrees of the authorities. The Kischinew riots destroyed with one blow this whole illusion, and therefore prepared the ground for later Jew-baiting and political street tumults.

The second consequence of the catastrophe was that the echo of it resounded throughout the Jewish world, and especially among the Hebrews of Russia. The national sense of the Jews, which the Zionists had for a long time been vainly trying to awaken, suddenly blazed up with indescribable power after the Kischinew catastrophe and occupied the place of the old spirit of caste. I had plenty of opportunities at that time of noticing this change among the Jews. They were transformed from South to North. Everywhere the national sentiment came to light, both in their bearing and in their views, without exception of position, education, or age. In every Jewish circle the watchword was taken up with enthusiasm: "The organization of the State is too weak to protect us, but we as a nation are strong, let us take our protection into our own hands." Wherever there were Jews living, there now

arose so-called "Samoborona," literally translated, self-defence. Weapons were obtained in large numbers. The youth was organized into divisions for battle, and industriously practised shooting with revolvers. The leadership of this movement was taken over, or rather snatched up, by those classes which in the last ten years had become the leading ones in Jewry: educated and half-educated young men whom I have described before. This class, filled with hatred for everything existing, had secretly carried on conspiracy against the State and the social order. They had formed a band of conspirators called the "Bund," with a purely socialist and cosmopolitan platform, which had until then never been able to break through the old Jewish caste system. But since after the events at Kischinew the Jewish world had been in a state of intense feverish anxiety, these people became the masters of the situation, and, relying on the knowledge of their seemingly mighty organization for fighting, they suddenly felt themselves strong enough not only to meet the danger (mostly imaginary) of an Antisemitic lynch attack, but also to undertake at the first opportunity open aggressive warfare against the State and social order. From 1903 to 1905 we observe this movement ever growing and becoming

more assured of victory. The revolutionary organizations show themselves openly and boldly, and thereby acquire prestige among the Jewish masses. Suddenly there will appear in the most frequented streets of the cities an evidently organized multitude, mostly quite young men, clothed uniformly in black, who march in order, give way for no one, and nearly always bring the traffic in the streets to a standstill. If the single policeman wishes to stop them, he will meet with threats, very often with revolver shots; when the police appear in stronger force the band will scatter, or, should their passions be aroused, a regular battle may ensue, demanding victims from both sides. Soon, no day passes without causeless revolver shots being fired. The authorities generally lose their heads, do not know how to act, and the police become more and more embittered and fatigued by the constant alarms and the numerous casualties in their ranks. Soon the leaders of the movement lose control over the masses of youth organized by them. Single parties begin to act on their own initiative, fall upon peaceable citizens, assassinate the hated policeman, everywhere seek to begin a quarrel in the streets, in order to use, for mere sport, the weapons distributed amongst them. Thus from a purely defensive organiza-

tion of self-help there arose an aggressive movement against the State and Gentile society, which gripped the whole of the Jewish people as in a dream, out of which it seems only to be awakening to-day. This current was mightily nourished by the ill-will and anger which the unhappy exceptional laws of the last twenty-five years had created amongst the Jews of Russia.

It was unavoidable, therefore, to prevent a collision with the numerous elements in the Russian nation which support the State. The tragic note in this catastrophe is this, that in spite of the exceptional laws against the Jews and the immeasurable misery which they had produced, the very same economic and social forces were again at work which had produced the Antisemitic movement of the 'eighties, but this time they were raised to incredible passion through the added political element of the instinct of self-preservation in the State and the people that had worked a thousand years on the building up of the same.

I will not delineate the course of events which the year 1905 had drawn in letters of blood. The Jewish revolutionary organizations have, together with their leaders, played a very pitiful *rôle*. Like children playing with matches, who, having set on fire a building,

will run away and leave to others the damage as well as the extinguishing, so these revolutionary organizations have not been able to save their co-religionists from the pogroms. Having provoked most of the Jew-baiting, and created untold misery for multitudes, they have disappeared, partly dissolved into anarchist bands, and have thus put off the just and subjective solution of the Jewish question for many years. In those sections of the people of the Empire in whom not very long ago there was no trace of Antisemitism to be observed, there is now a very strong current in that direction.

The crisis of the last two years has also had a positive result. It has opened the eyes of statesmen and society to see what dangers are involved when a State treats the Jewish question as a negligible quantity, and creates laws which are in disaccord with the logic of the evolution of the State, and denies the existence of the just and natural life of many millions of its subjects. I am convinced that now all our earnest-thinking statesmen consider a pogrom one of the greatest dangers to the State, and that the Government is putting forth the greatest energies, and will do so in future, to prevent a return of such catastrophes. After all, in the history of states and nations

common-sense and logic have always kept the upper hand over passions, and this gives reason to hope that in time the Jewish question will also lose its rough and sharp corners. As the lower sections both of Gentile and Jew grow in civilization, the danger of such Jew-baiting will gradually diminish, and the competition of single classes as well as of nationalities in our Empire will be drawn back into normal bounds.

However, the battle which reached its zenith in 1905 is still raging. Here and there the dying sparks flare up afresh.

I said above that the Government was devoting its whole energy to the suppression of this strife, for its simple existence signifies a tremendous danger to the State itself. This strife of the Government is a battle on two lines from the nature of the movement. What we now see in Odessa is a drastic example of this.

There, as in the whole of the South, the events of 1905 made most wounds, called forth most passion and embitterment on both sides; there it is most difficult for the local authorities to preserve that coolness which every action of the State demands, and to maintain an impartial attitude. It is hard to say on which side more victims have fallen in the

battle ; on that of the fanatically loyal and often misguided partisans of the national idea, or on that of the aggressive party, equally fanatic in their hatred and bitterness—Jews, led by men wholly indifferent to right and wrong in their choice of means. I have still a vivid recollection of articles in the English press, and conversations I had with English acquaintances, especially those who were in any way connected with Ireland, when the terrible news came of the murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish in Phoenix Park and of the Fenian outrages that succeeded it. I shall never forget the bitterness and even hatred with which people, usually generous in sentiment, spoke of the Irish nation ; the present expressions of Antisemitic acquaintances in South Russia remind me of it.

Let us picture the position of officials at Odessa. On the one side are still fresh recollections of the events of 1905, where the authorities, at their wits' end, for some days entrusted the maintenance of order to the "Samoborona," and that ended in complete anarchy and massacre ; then followed guerilla warfare with the organization of Jewish conspirators, their throwing of bombs and assassination of innocent people. It is quite natural that the whole of the lower grades

of officials were thereby prejudiced in their sympathy and in their judgment. They considered the Jews their personal enemies, and rendered unwilling obedience to the directions from St. Petersburg insisting on calm and prudence. Not a policeman, not a police inspector, not an officer, not a soldier of the troops called in to maintain order, knows when he enters upon his duties in the morning if he will come home alive, if his children will not be fatherless and his wife a widow ere the evening. Many mourn for comrades murdered by an ambush, and know the infinite misery and grief of the bereaved—and all these sentiments, together with the fact that these murders are perpetrated by men of a foreign race, are the cause that when the rabble break out in excesses against Jews, a very half-hearted resistance is offered by the lower grades of police and the common soldiers.

The higher local authorities are in a still worse condition. They see quite clearly the danger of this anarchy, make the] greatest exertions to control it, but are able to do so in but a comparatively small degree, as the lowest grades obey them with reluctance, and if they appear in person they are exposed to the greatest danger at the hands of those they are trying to save. A Governor of a Southern

province told me the following : " A deputation of Jews came to him to ask protection for their co-religionists, as a rising in one quarter of the town was likely to endanger the Jews. He promised to go himself immediately and see that his subordinates fulfilled their duty ; by good luck he went on foot, directing that his carriage, which was not ready, should follow to the place where the riot was. The Jewish revolutionary organization greeted the carriage in which they supposed the Governor was with a furious fire of shot. The carriage was riddled with revolver bullets, although that Governor was notoriously humane and just in his treatment of the Jews. He owed his life solely to the circumstance that he had not had time to get into his carriage." Such conditions cannot be swept away with one stroke and in one day ; yet already there are visible signs of returning calmness, and I am convinced that little by little the brutal and bestial features of the Jewish movement, and likewise the Antisemitic reaction of the populace against them, will disappear.

I have tried here briefly to show the development of the Jewish question in my country ; the history of this people amongst us extends over a period of about 130 years. We have seen how during this time a people sunk in poverty

and need, absolutely devoid of civilization, whose one ideal lay in the remembrance of a glorious past, whose mental life found nutriment only in the theological discussions of the synagogue, gradually underwent a complete transformation, and has now awakened a nation in the true sense of the word ; a nation conscious of its strength, numbering in her midst learned, educated and cultured men of high standing : possessing mechanics, manufacturers, physicians, lawyers, politicians and the like, as well as numerous well-trained artisans and workmen, in addition to wealth in the form of capital such as no other nation can boast. One class still is wanting—that of the farm labourers ; and this is a characteristic feature of this people, once primarily an agricultural people, which gives it a touch of uncertainty. It is as if the same picture lay before us that we know so well in the Book of Exodus, where we find the children of Israel at the end of their bondage existing only as shepherds and workmen, to whom the agricultural methods of Egypt were repugnant, and who were thus able to leave in a single night the country where they had lived for 400 years.

In Lukè xxi. 29-31, it is written : “ And He spake to them a parable : Behold the fig-tree and all the trees, when they now shoot forth,

ye see and know of your own selves that summer is nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand." In the same chapter Jesus says (v. 24) : "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." When we read God's word and see His overruling in history manifested in the light of Scripture, we trace ever more distinctly the truth of His promises and the inexorable steadfastness of His guiding of the chosen people. Almost 2,000 years have passed since the Jews rejected the Messiah God sent, since the terrible day when the Roman legions surrounded Jerusalem, and fire destroyed the symbol of Israel's unity. In these 2,000 years how true are the words of Moses (Deut. xxviii. 64, 65) : "And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, *from the one end of the earth even unto the other.* And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest ; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life." Later, again, Jeremiah says : "And I will make you to be removed unto all kingdoms of the earth."

Is not the whole latter history of Israel contained in these few words? And how those

words of Scripture are fulfilled both in them and in all the nations who have been God's instruments towards Israel, which declare that nevertheless God would always hold His protecting hand over His people. For "he that toucheth thee, toucheth the apple of His eye," says God through His prophet Zechariah (ii. 8). The Psalmist says : "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock (Psalm lxxvii. 21) ; "For the Lord taketh pleasure in His people" (cxlix. 4). The Prophet Zechariah writes : "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts : I am jealous for Jerusalem and for Zion with great jealousy, and I am sore displeased with the heathen that are at ease ; for I was but a little displeased, and they helped forward the affliction (Zechariah i. 14, 15).

When Titus returned as conqueror into Rome, and was able to say that he had blotted out the Jews from being reckoned among the number of the nations, it seemed to be true. They were trodden under foot by the nations, as the Apostle Paul expresses it. It is well worth while to study the history of Israel from that day to this in order to see the wonderful ways that God has made His people to go—evermore driven on and scattered as by a mysterious, supernatural power, and yet evermore finding asylum and periods of repose.

First a place of refuge was opened on the shores of the Mediterranean, and near the place of their first exile, Babylon. But scarcely had they formed flourishing communities and gathered force in the intellectual work of their great Talmudical speculations, when the great persecutions of the Roman Emperors began, and the scattering of the people recommenced on a larger scale. But then, again, remoter countries gave them a refuge, manifestly by God's help—Spain and Persia. It seemed that then the dispersion had found a limit ; gradually in the course of centuries the Hebrews gathered in those countries ; in Persia they became Persians, and in lovely Spain they became Spaniards. Their lot in the last-named country is especially instructive. It seemed there as if complete assimilation would take place, and that the Hebrews had found a home where they differed only in religion from the rest of the people of the land.* But then a storm burst, unexpectedly, and as it seemed without motive, which in less than seventy years swept them out of that glorious land, and

* The fact that a number of Jews in Spain preferred submitting to baptism and becoming Spanish in language and customs to leaving the land shows how they clung to it and its people. But even the Marranos (Baptized Jews) were persecuted and had to flee.

once again made them the pariahs of Europe. It was as though "an angel went forth" to chase them throughout the world, East and West. A period of 150 years sufficed to bring them into such a state of degradation as they had not known since the days of the Roman persecutions. Then followed a dark season of stagnation, of Ghetto existence, a time of resignation and transformation. The people violently expelled from Palestine, who had kept step in culture with the civilized world, and even was foremost as regards ethics, after it rejected Christianity, became a caste—a caste split up into small communities, dragging on a miserable existence, without enterprise, its gaze directed to the past, and gradually sinking in the cares of the struggle for daily food—a true picture of the wrath of God. By a violent force they were driven into the Land of the North, and gradually gathered there almost exclusively. And again they seemed to have found a home. But they had passed through such a change that no other people could assimilate them; the danger that had existed in Spain disappeared; the whole mass of the Hebrews had acquired "stony hearts" through the iron discipline of their years of degradation. How stony and benumbed they seem to us in the maxims of the

Talmud at the beginning of the Nineteenth Century when we contemplate them as spectators from afar.

I can understand the Jews loving their Talmud, which had given them during the long years of calamity the one ray of hope, the one way of understanding their dignity as human beings, their calling in the history of the world, and their altitude of Divine ethics as compared with the nations around them.

“Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in” (Romans xi. 25). Truly we cannot speak of the fulness of the Gentiles having come in when we survey the barbarity and the moral wickedness of so many nations called Christian. Thus the ethics of the Talmudic Jew are to us believing Christians in their general trend an almost unprecedented example of the struggle of a whole race of men for truth and righteousness, for God and communion with Him.

It has always been an elevating feeling when I have visited a synagogue, to see the earnest Talmud observance of the congregation, when the Cantor intones the old familiar psalms in which the aspiration of Israel after God breaks forth in every verse. Each time I could not but think of the words of Jeremiah, “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you,

saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end. And then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord, and I will turn away your captivity, and I will gather you from all nations, and from all places whither I have driven you, saith the Lord ; and I will bring you again into the place whence I caused you to be carried away captive " (Jeremiah xxix. 11-14).

This seeking of Israel has now lasted for centuries ; read the letters of Gurland before his conversion ; read, too, the poems of Talmud poets. They breathe an unspeakable longing for the living God.

And now a wonder is being worked before our eyes. Mighty as the swing of a hammer there comes a spirit of doubt and resistance into the whole mass of the Jewish people, a doubt of the Talmud's self-righteousness and its observances, dislike to the invented regulations, which darken the truth by sophistry, and have laid a " stony crust " on the hearts of so many millions in Israel. And under this crust, now breaking, the human heart is seen

in all its nakedness, a "fleshly" heart, full of sinful emotions, full of bestial passions, and yet full, too, of desire after truth. Only the Spirit of God is wanting (Ezekiel xxxvi. 26). There is a dry waste in that heart that neither Marx, nor Nietsche, nor Schopenhauer, nor others, can fill.

"And I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and ye shall keep My judgments and do them. And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers" (Ezekiel xxxvi. 27, 28).

Thus the Lord is now leading His people like a flock through all lands ; and the words of Moses are being fulfilled before our eyes, and the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, *from the one end of the earth even unto the other*. Year by year circumstances compel the Jews to emigrate in thousands from my country to *the other end* of the world. America, South Africa, Australia, have latterly been the goal of this emigration. The emigrants need only the opportunity to settle permanently in the land on the banks of the Jordan, with self-government in their own State, and whole masses of them would go there. (This the Zionist Congresses have clearly shown.) There only will they again become farmers and vine-growers, and will cultivate anew the inheritance

of their fathers. I am convinced that that is the only way for the Gentile nations and States to solve the Jewish question. But when the time for that will be ripe is in the counsel of God. The one hundred and thirty years that the Jews have lived in my country have been for them a time of maturing, renewal, and reinvigoration, a season of concentration and transformation. I have tried to describe the forces, currents, and events that have worked together. They have been led by a higher wisdom than our human wisdom, and they have matured fruits that have brought Israel further on the way of salvation than ever before. When the fig tree begins to shoot forth, we know that summer is nigh. We must remember these words of our Saviour when we consider the history of His people. Every state and every people has its part to take in the work of God. Both England and America will feel the burden of the Jewish question and have to participate in its further solution.

But whatever believing Christians in England think of Russia, they must understand that blind hatred of Jews does not prevail there, nor lust of persecution.

The Jews appear to me to have now arrived at a turning point in their pilgrimage, and it

is possible that they will be driven out of Russia by circumstances that appear to be within God's plan—yet to us, followers of Christ, it is only a sign “that the summer is nigh.”

C. A.

St. Petersburg,
November 20, 1907.

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