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THE PROPHETIC ASPECT OF THE JEWISH PERSECUTION

The following is extracted from a letter in an English paper by Mr. Charles Reade, the well-known novelist, whose remarkable conversion occurred last year:

“The Jewish nation, though under a cloud, will eventually resume their ancient territory, which is so evidently kept waiting for them. The prophecies are clear as day on two points: That the Jews are to re-possess Palestine, and, indeed, to rule from Lebanon to Euphrates; and that this event is to be the first of a great series of changes leading to a vast improvement in the condition of poor suffering mankind and of creation in general. Now, we have here in prospect a glorious event as sure as the sun will rise to-morrow. The only difference is that the sun will rise at a certain hour, and the Jews will occupy Syria and resume their national glory at an uncertain day. No doubt it is the foible of mankind to assume that an *uncertain* date must be a *distant* one. But that is unreasonable. Surely it is the duty of wise and sober men to watch precursory signs and lend their humble co-operation, should so great a privilege be accorded to us.

“This sudden persecution of the Jews in the very nation where they are most numerous—may it not be a *precursory sign*, and a reminder from Providence that their abiding city is not in European Tartary? I almost think some such reminder was needed; for when I was a boy, the pious Jews still longed for the Holy Land. They prayed, like Daniel, with their windows opened toward Jerusalem.

“Yet now that the broken and impoverished Saracen would cede them territory at one-tenth of its agricultural and commercial value, a cold indifference seems to have come over them. I often wonder at this change of sentiment about so great a matter, and in so short a period, comparatively speaking, and puzzle myself, as to the reason.

“Two solutions occur to me. 1. Dispersed in various nations, whose average inhabitants are inferior in intelligence and forethought to themselves, they thrive as individual aliens more than they may think so great a multitude of Jews could thrive in a land of their own, where blockheads would be scarce. 2. They have for centuries contracted their abilities to a limited number of peaceful arts and trades; they may distrust their power to diversify their abilities, and be suddenly a complete nation, with soldiers, sailors, merchants, husbandmen, as well as financiers and artists.

“But it is now proved that sojourning among inferior nations has more drawbacks than living at

home. True, *the Russian yokel has for years been selling to the Jews his summer labor in winter, and at a heavy discount*; but the improvident Russians have turned like wild beasts upon them, and outwitted, lawfully, have massacred them contrary to law. Palestine can be colonized effectually from Russia alone, where there are three millions of Jews trembling for life and property; and the rest would follow. As to the second objection, history is a looking-glass at our backs. Whatever Jews *have done* Jews *may do*. They are a people of genius; and genius is not confined by nature, but by will, by habit or by accident. What have these people tried and failed in? Warriors, writers, builders, merchants, lawgivers, husbandmen; and supreme in all! In this history repeats itself.

“They shall be great in the arts of peace and war, and their enemies melt away before them like snow off a dyke. Should they seem to require help from any other nation at starting, *blessed will be the nation that proffers it*; and the nation that persecutes them will be made an example of in some way or other. Therefore, if by any chance this recent outrage should decide the Jewish leaders to colonize Palestine from Russia, let us freely offer ships, seamen, money—whatever we are asked for. It will be a better national investment than Egyptian, Brazilian or Peruvian bonds.”

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— July, 1882 —



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