

unknown in Palestine, and very few Jews—if indeed any—were to be found living outside of the towns and engaged in agricultural pursuits.

The total acreage possessed by the fifteen colonies referred to above I find to have been 27,000, but I do not suppose that more than 5000 acres of these were under cultivation in 1892. I learned at that time that immense tracts of uncultivated lands in Gilead, east of the Jordan, comprising many hundreds of thousands of acres, had been purchased, partly by Baron Rothschild, and partly by the well-known and noble Jewish society called Chovevi Zion ("Lovers of Zion"), with the object of settling Jewish colonies there; but I am informed that as yet no progress whatever has been made in carrying out their views, owing to the prohibition by the Sultan of immigration by Jews into Palestine.

The facts stated above incontestably prove the beginning of a return of the Jews to the Holy Land, and the strong desire on the part of very many of the most influential men of their race to promote and facilitate the movement to the utmost of their power, a movement wholly unprecedented and unknown in the history of their race since their return from the captivity in Babylon two thousand four hundred years ago, as narrated in the Book of Ezra.

At that time, he informs us, "the whole congregation together was forty and two thousand three hundred and three score, besides their servants and their maids, of whom there were seven thousand three hundred and thirty-seven" (Ezra 2 : 64), in all nearly fifty thousand souls, and it is probable that fully as many have returned to Palestine within the last fifteen years.

And it ought to be known that it is not from Eastern and Central Europe alone that these people have returned and in their thousands. When I arrived at Jerusalem in 1891, I found a large colony of Jews recently arrived from Yemen in Arabia, calling themselves of the tribe of Gad, settled in houses and around a synagogue which they had built for themselves, and that there were many thousands of Jews from Morocco in the city, whose numbers were being continually increased by fresh arrivals of small parties. In 1892 a large troop arrived from Persia, refugees from cruel persecution there, and on my second visit, in 1894, I found a new and large settlement of Jews from Bokhara, in Central Asia, dwelling in substantial houses, which they had built for themselves in the northern suburb of Jerusalem. It seemed as if the command had already been heard in distant lands : "I will say to the north give up, and to the south keep not back, bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth" (Isa. 43 : 6).

That this is even the beginning of the great return promised in the Word of God I do not say; but I am unable to regard it otherwise than as an advanced guard sent by Him to occupy posts in the land, that land which He has kept for a chosen race whom He has kept for it, and whom He will certainly bring into it in His own time; and it seems to me as if, in this movement of the people, He is loudly proclaiming to the world, "Hear the Word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles that are afar off. *He that scattered Israel will gather him.*"

If recent years have seen in a remarkable degree a literal fulfilment of promises as to restoration of Jews to their own land, they have also seen to an extent wholly unknown before, hundreds of them seeking a spiritual Zion at the teaching of the Holy Spirit, in obedience to the entreaty, "Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you; for I will take you one of a city and two of a family, and I will