

V.—THE MONTHLY CONCERT OF MISSIONS.

Syria,* Egypt,† the Jews,‡ Education.§

THE PRESENT ATTITUDE OF THE JEWS IN RELATION TO CHRISTIANITY.

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In speaking of the present phase of mission work among the Jews, let me first, in merest outline, give a bird's-eye view of that peculiar people which, in Europe at any rate, is fast becoming what the prophet Zechariah foretells of their past and yet future metropolis, "a burdensome stone for all the peoples," in whose midst they have been tossed about for centuries, in fulfilment of the Word of God.

One of the peculiarities of the Jewish field is its *extensiveness*. Any other field, however vast, still only brings to our mind a particular region of the globe, and is for that reason more or less *local* in its character, but the Jewish sphere may indeed without exaggeration be termed *universal*, for is there a single country in the world to which the Diaspora does not extend? Dr. Keith has well said: "If the simple fact of Israel's dispersion is one of the most astounding events in history, the extent and remoteness of the countries which have been the scene of it are perhaps more remarkable still." The number of Jews now in the world cannot be less than 12,000,000. I am aware that much lower figures are given by so-called authorities, but their estimates are either based upon ancient statistics or are mere guesses without solid foundation. Having been permitted to travel extensively in those parts of the world where the masses of my people are located, and having devoted attention to the subject, I may claim to speak with some amount of authority. Note this remarkable fact: About two

hundred years ago the great historian Basnage, who devoted so much time and careful labor to this subject, estimated that the number of Jews had in his day, after centuries of untold sufferings, dispersions, and massacres, been reduced to scarcely 3,000,000, so that in about two hundred years they have increased fourfold. Considering the adverse circumstances under which it has been going on, this rapid increase of the Jewish people is wonderful, and must be regarded as a sign of the times. The God who caused Israel to multiply so enormously after years of cruel bondage just before their deliverance from Egypt, is repeating the miracle now, that, as we believe, the Dayspring from on high is once again about to visit them. It is a notorious fact that in certain parts of the world the Jews increase in proportion to their Gentile neighbors at the ratio of three to one. It shows, even apart from prophecy, that at any rate the Jewish nation is not as yet likely to become defunct from exhausted vitality. Another fact to be noted is that although scattered over the whole surface of the globe, the great bulk of these millions of Jews has for all these centuries been located in Central and Eastern Europe; thus, Russia alone, or that part of Darkest Russia known as "the Pale of Settlement," embracing only some twenty-five governmental districts, including Poland, out of about seventy-five such districts into which this huge empire is divided, has a Jewish population of at least 4,000,000, while the Austrian Empire has about 2,000,000 Jews, of which number between 600,000 and 700,000 are in Hungary, and about 500,000 in the one northern province of Galicia. It will be seen from this that God, who has foreordained the course of Israel's wanderings and dispersions, has in His providence arranged it so that the great mass of them should be sojourners in that part of the world where the name of

* See pp. 611 (September), 899, 906 (present issue).

† See pp. 822 (December, 1892), 893 (present issue).

‡ See also pp. 319 (May), 892 (present issue).

§ See pp. 103 (February), 534, 611 (August), 842 (November), and 881 (present issue).