

THE DRIFT

[From "The Christian" London.]

THE JEWS IN RUSSIA. – The vast populations here now, for the most part, have but one word on their lips, and that word is – Palestine. Newspapers and pamphlets are issued daily, not only in pure Hebrew, but also in the Jewish dialect, so everyone may be able to get information on this all-absorbing topic. Books are offered for sale to learn the Arabic language; Hebrew maps of Palestine are hung up in shops, and Jews study them with great avidity. I have visited Russia on several previous occasions, but never have I witnessed before such a yearning for the land of their forefathers.

My friend, Dr. Benzion, agent of the British Society for the Jews, who is esteemed and beloved by many out of the 70,000 Jews that know him in this town, is rendering me invaluable assistance in my work. We have Jews with us from morning till evening; some come for the Gospel, others for information about Palestine, willing to place themselves under our leadership.

With reference to the persecution my brethren have suffered, it is difficult for human pen to describe the awful things that have taken place. I visited Balta, accompanied by my friend, Mr. Benzion; we were most cordially received by the leading Jews of the town. The Rabbi and principal members of the community called upon us, and gave us the names of the persons who have suffered so dreadfully. It was the hand of Providence alone that saved the Jews in that town from utter destruction. In their deeds of darkness, the persecutors spared neither age nor sex, and to give instances of the foul wrongs committed would only be revolting to humanity. I trust the authorities will bring the perpetrators of these crimes to condign punishment.

A. STERNBERG.

Hotel du Nord, Odessa, Russia, June 5.

A private letter from one who has recently visited the persecuted Jews in Russia, whose numbers are counted there by millions, tells not only of their suffering, but of their deep desire to return to the land given to Abraham and his seed forever, and from which they have been long strangers because of their sins. We would fain hope that these sorrows are part of the plan of their tender, faithful God, of "alluring them into the wilderness and speaking to their hearts." (Hos. 2:14.) Truly, the ways of our God are past finding out.

OBSTACLE IN THE WAY OF THEIR GOING TO PALESTINE. – A letter in the Times of May 31, by Mr. Lawrence Oliphant, on the emigration of Russian Jews, is of much interest at the present critical juncture in the history of the "nation scattered and peeled." Writing from Constantinople, after having visited Galicia and Roumania, he testifies to the strong and prevalent desire cherished by the mass of Russian Jews in favor of "wholesale emigration to Palestine." This desire is not confined to the poor, but is equally shared by the wealthy Hebrews, some of whom are prepared to subscribe largely towards the expense of transfer to the land of ancient promise.

An unexpected obstacle, however, has arisen, which, for the present, is likely to paralyze the national movement toward Palestine. Russian Jewish refugees are permitted to enter the Ottoman Empire only on condition that they will become Turkish subjects, and that they will not settle in that "province to which they are most strongly attached by religious association." Mr. Oliphant, after deploring this restriction, thus concludes his letter: –

Meanwhile, whether owing to unfounded suspicions, or to some still more occult reasons, the fact remains that no Jew is allowed by the Turkish Government to enter Palestine from Russia. In what manner the British nation can come to the relief of at least a million

of people prepared for an exodus, but who are trembling in panic-stricken suspense till the way is opened for its accomplishment, it is for them to consider.

EMIGRATION TO SYRIA. – The terrible outrages upon the Jews in Russia have led to the formation of a Society for their relief, specially for the purpose of assisting them to North Syria. Of this Society the Earl of Shaftsbury is President, and the Viscountess Strangford, Lady President.

Mrs. Finn, widow of H. B. M., Consul at Jerusalem, said in a recent address: "Now, what is to be done for this persecuted people? We know that the Mansion House Fund was established for their immediate relief, and to send to America, but families are returning because they are obliged to eat forbidden food; and they say, we would rather die of persecution in Russia than disobey God's laws. Now, we have opened a fund with the purpose of sending them to Syria. The Sultan will not allow them to go to Palestine, by which he means Jerusalem and a little of the adjacent countries, so we may still send them to Syria and fields further abroad. But we want the money to buy this land. The other day I was offered £500 to buy land, and £200 extra to build houses on it; but we want (and can we not have?) at once £10,000 for this purpose. The Christians of England have only contributed one-ninth of the Mansion House Fund; is that what is expected of us? I entreat you all, the Christian women of England especially, to give something, be it ever so small."