

PALESTINIAN COLONIZATION.

THE movement looking to the colonization of Palestine by Jews of various countries has more to commend it than a sentiment, however laudable that may be. It is of no political importance whatsoever, but it is the outcome of the deliberate purpose of thoughtful men to provide a settlement for Jews, which shall be both sure of success and always under their watchful care and thus free from the many dangers which have made so many other experiments practically failures. This is the aim of the "Lovers of Zion" societies, of which there are so many flourishing in England, and of which we know so little in this country. Yet they can hardly be said to be either visionary or to involve their abettors in schemes of which they must be well ashamed if they pretend to be patriots. Lord Rothschild is one of the many notables in Victoria's realm who have taken the project under their wing with an enthusiasm which means all earnestness.

There is, of course, no little of the Jewish fondness for the land of their fathers in this undertaking, and perhaps not a few hope for a restoration of the glory of Jerusalem, as depicted by the prophets of the Bible, which will include, perhaps, the blood-sacrifices and the royal splendor of the Solomonic period. This is but natural; and the religious enthusiasm is shared by Christians and Mohammedans as well, though, of course, for somewhat different reasons. Still it must be said that of all countries in the world there is none in which so many people have so lively, so direct, an almost personal interest, for which they will, if need be, make sacrifices greater or less in degree. Herein lies the security of any local government which may be established on the historic soil; and from being the fighting pit of the nations of antiquity, it will have guaranteed it an independence which nineteenth century enlightenment and international jealousy will prompt. Thus the colonist will be spared the dangers of civil war and foreign

invasion, or if the Turk remain in control, he will have the protection afforded by consuls on the spot.

The prospect of the establishment of a government which, following the prophecy of Isaiah, shall act as the arbiter among the nations, is not seriously considered by the largest number of those active in the movement.

Political hopes are given something far more tangible and practical at this juncture. Nor is the other beautiful idea held to of making Jerusalem's Temple the place of the assembly in which all peoples shall have their common ideal religion. As with Messianic ideas, which likewise it is urged must follow a miraculous interposition and a divine deliverance, this, too, is set aside for the more practical ideas of the colonists.

It has been demonstrated that the soil is sufficiently fertile to maintain colonists, and there is no doubt that the opening up of the railroads and steamships will furnish ample markets. The Jews from being the dromedaries of civilization will take the place of the Phoenicians of history and become the burden bearers of commerce in the same sense that the last great nation was. Not content with building up slowly for future use, some of the more enthusiastic are raising funds to return themselves, as soon as possible, to the Promised Land of milk and honey. They mean to put their theories to a severe test and by heroic measures.

It cannot be that the distance between the older citizens among American Jews and the new-comers is responsible for the lack of interest shown for what is really a big movement in the great cities of the country, for the Lovers of Zion have branches and are collecting money everywhere. The people here know little apparently of it, however, and their indifference takes the form of contempt, and then oftentimes a little side light makes them mistrust it because it is either an attempt, so they say, to compromise them into swearing allegiance to two flags or is visionary and opposed to their doctrinal views or

Messianic hopes. The flag of Judah is not to be flung to the breeze shortly, but whereas it has cost tens of thousands of dollars to experiment in the United States and in Argentine, with the result still in doubt, it is hoped to carry successful farming in the sacred land to its furthest point, the Jews can find no safer, no better haven anywhere on the globe. The members of the colonization society do not want the Jews of the world to go *en masse*, but they would go in small companies themselves. This is an earnest of good faith, and if assistance is needed when the aims and purposes are well understood, money to aid them will be forthcoming.

– *Jewish Exponent*.
