

THE SECOND ZIONIST CONGRESS.

WHAT a birthday party we have enjoyed! One year ago, on the closing day of the first Zionist congress, Dr. Theodor Herzl, author of *Der Judenstaat* and foremost in the leadership of the new Zion movement, casually remarked to a circle of friends: "The Roumanian Jews have long believed that the Messiah would be born on this day, the 29th of August. I now share their belief, for I too am persuaded that this day marks the birth of the Messiah, the dawn of a Messianic hope for my people." In this wise the gifted standard-bearer of Zion silenced for all time the cavillings of those who had looked upon Herzl as a self-deluded pseudo-Messiah, and, on the other hand, clearly proclaimed his personal conviction that Zionism was the—not a—solution of the Jewish question; that, in the memorable words of Max Nordau, "Der Zionismus ist die letzte, grosse moralische Anstrengung der Juden." If, then, August 29, 1897, was the birthday of the Messiah, the 29th of August, 1898, may fairly be said to have been a glorious birthday feast.

The former congress was convened in part in order that some estimate might be formed of the depth of sentiment in Jewry touched into life by the summons, "Let us journey back—in a higher sense, forward—to the land of our fathers." In so far, therefore, the gathering of a twelve-month ago was experimental in respect of its plans of organization, and limited in the scope of its deliberations. So pronounced at the outset was this feeling of uncertainty as to the outcome, and insecurity as to the consequences, that the Russian delegates not unwisely refrained from public participation in the debates, fearful lest their eagerness to assist in the rebuilding of the Jewish nation might appear treasonable in the sight of over-alert officials. One year had changed all this—in truth, one day, for ere the sun had set on the first day of the first congress a message had gone forth to the farthest ends of the earth, telling that this Jewish assembly, far from being an international conspiracy, was but the modern and popular expression of a noble and olden aim—the undying aspiration of the scattered remnants of a people to put an end



DR. THEODOR HERZL.

to long centuries of sore travail and wandering and homelessness by creating a "Heimstätte" for themselves. And if one year ago the scorner was constrained to respectful silence by the dignity and fervor with which a "mercenary lot" pledged their devotion, like unto Arthurian knights, to the pursuit of an ideal, this year the would-be mockers were moved to admiration of the practical statesmanship with which these idealists had set about the realization of their hopes.

One might have searched long and vainly for any sign of wavering or indefiniteness in the character of the second congress, for within a year Zionism had felt and tested and multiplied its own strength. The figures presented by the committee on organization were welcomed in proof of this, showing as they did that the number of organizations formally allied with the cause had increased ninefold within a few months. Statistics are scarce needed on this score, if we but think of the six millions of un-

happy Jewish dwellers (citizens they are not) in Russia, Roumania, and Galicia alone, whom only the promise of release from persecution can save from the slough of abject despond by pointing comfortingly and encouragingly to the well-beloved home of their forebears.

Of far greater moment than any witness to the spread of Zionism among the Jews is the proof, yielded in abundant measure at the various stages of the congress, that Zionism has not merely gained the friendly sympathy of the Christian world, but even arrested the attention of some of Europe's crowned heads. No more watchful listener followed the proceedings of the congress than a certain visitor who is known to have been intrusted by his royal master, Emperor William of Germany, with the duty of preparing a report of the congress in all its many-sidedness. Again, on the last day of the congress, Dr. Herzl, in his official capacity as president of the congress, sent a message of congratulation to the Sultan of Turkey in honor of the celebration of his accession to the throne, to which the "Commander of the Faithful" immediately replied, by the hand of his Lord High Chamberlain, in terms most genial as compared with the ordinarily barren phrases of diplomacy. Will doubters now urge that Wilhelm and Abdul-Hamid have likewise succumbed to the blandishments of the poetry and sentiment which are oft decried as the fatal charm of Zionism? We prefer to recall that these two rulers may some day cast the decisive vote in the settlement of one phase of the Eastern question. By reason of its situation, as well as its natural endowments, Palestine has been happily named "The Gateway of the East." True, but the gate is shut and tightly barred. Who shall open it? The Turks? They lack the gift of initiative, as well as the genius of enterprise. They must be taught and trained to follow whither others have led. Shall the door be opened by one of the European powers? The proposition is unthinkable; against such aggrandizement an invincible concert of the nations would speedily array itself. Shall it not be left to the Jews to open that door, which has never been widely opened since it was closed against the outcasts of Judaea? Inasmuch as Israel is destitute of ambition for temporal power or national supremacy, will not the Jewish reoccupation of Palestine be at one and the same time the simplest and the noblest solution of one of the most perplexing phases of the great Eastern problem?

We can do no more at this place than lightly touch upon the leading incidents which occurred in congress week; for although the delegates were nominally convened for three days, this the greatest synod of the Jews in the eighteen hundred years of the Diaspora, as the congress has justly been styled, lasted throughout the whole of the week, and even longer. On the Sunday prior to the actual assembling of the delegates the minister of the Anglican Church, who conducted services at the improvised chapel of a Basle hotel, pleaded earnestly and eloquently with his Christian hearers in behalf of Zionism. His stirring discourse derived a heightened interest from the frank admission on his part that he was born in Jerusalem, of Jewish-Christian parents, and had lived in the Holy Land until his nineteenth year. Sermon texts are not always of great moment—the personal testimony of a preacher—but the Rev. Mr. Schorr's was of peculiar interest, seeing that his text was the twenty-first verse of the thirty-seventh chapter of the Prophet Ezekiel, which

is engraved upon the reverse of the congress medal. How proud we were of this commemorative medal, partly because designed by a French-Jewish Zionist and struck off in the mint of France (an act of rare and saving grace *anno* Dreyfus), furthermore because it so graphically illustrates the purpose of Zionism! The Genius of History points with hand uplifted to the sun of promise rising over the hills of Zion beyond the sea, and is evidently bent upon urging a typical Jewish family to heed the summons of destiny. The father leans heavily upon his travelling-staff, the tragic symbol of his people's lot; the mother holds an infant to her breast; some young children are near by; but the faces of all betoken the resolution to follow the bidding of the vision before them.

Wednesday evening witnessed a splendid demonstration in honor of the arrival of Dr. Herzl. A hundred or more delegates waited at the railroad station for hours in a blinding rain-storm, the enthusiasm of the welcome being marred in slight degree by the failure of the party to have agreed in advance upon some common form of salutation. Master of a dozen tongues though he is, Dr. Herzl was for a moment bewildered by the Babel-like storm of greetings. This was perhaps the only occasion upon which the "polyglotism" of the delegates was noticeable. German, the Jewish Volapük, was the official language, but Hebrew and French were heard on every hand, varied by the occasional accents of Russian, Polish, Roumanian, Arabic, English, Dutch, Italian, and Turkish, most or all of which tongues not a few delegates spoke with equal facility. The following days—Thursday, Friday, and Saturday—were given over to a multitude of preliminary conferences on the important questions of policy which it was known would arise. "Safety-valves" these forgatherings were called by a witty German jurist; "peace negotiations" by another, who was cognizant of the many differences to be healed prior to the assembling of the delegates.

A seemingly trivial incident occurred on Friday evening, which afforded the deepest satisfaction to the lovers of Zion in Basle assembled. It was the twenty-sixth day of August, the feast of St. Jacques, in annual commemoration of the great national victory of 1444. As the holiday procession filed by the meeting-place of the congress, the grotesquely attired lines paused under the blue and white flag of Zion unfurled for the first time from the balcony of the Stadt-Casino, and shouted aloud: "Hoch die Juden!" "Hoch die Zionisten!" Herzl was visibly moved by this show of good feeling, and in his presidential address rightly interpreted this friendly act as a sign of sympathy with the manly, outspoken stand taken by the Zionists in their determination to help themselves.

On the Sabbath morning the stately synagogue of the town became the Mecca of the visitors. Favored, blessed shrine! Since last the pilgrims of Jerusalem offered up their prayers in the Temple of the Most High, no altar had sheltered such a body of worshippers, come together literally from the four corners of the earth. What rapt devotion! What tearful entreaty! What fervent thanksgiving! Within these walls there reigned no confusion of tongues, for the speech of the prophets and the sweet singers in Israel lived again. How these hosts thundered forth the *Shemang Yisrael*, Israel's ancient declaration of faith in the unity of God! Instinctively the congregation rose in reverence as Herzl mounted the altar steps and



OVERSE.



REVERSE.

COMMEMORATIVE MEDAL OF THE SECOND ZIONIST CONGRESS.

"Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, . . . and bring them into their own land."



GROUP OF DELEGATES AT THE ZIONIST CONGRESS, BASLE.



AT THE SECOND ZIONIST CONGRESS, BASLE, SWITZERLAND—SPEAKING FROM THE TRIBUNE.

stood with bowed head before the holy scroll of the Law; and as the "Vorbeter" chanted in a soft minor strain such passages as "Have Thou mercy on Zion, for it is the house of our life," strong men covered their faces and silently wept.

I must forbear to dwell upon the actual proceedings of the congress, and can do no more than make the briefest mention of the chief features of those eventful days. These were, though perhaps not in the order of their importance—first, the scenes of enthusiasm which were enacted at the close of the inaugural address of Herzl, and the incomparably fine review of the past year in Jewry by Dr. Nordau; second, the masterly summary of the aims of Zionism, in which Professor Mandelstamm, the eminent oculist of Kiev, proved the nearest task of Zionism to be the upbuilding of the physical and moral life of the Jewish people as the first step on the way to self-government; third, the tumultuous receptions again and again accorded Bernard Lazare, the French litterateur who paved the way for the revision of the Dreyfus case by burrowing out the proofs of the illegality of the trial and placing them in the hands of Scheurer-Kestner and Émile Zola—these scenes reaching a climax on the day following the adjournment of the congress, when the confession and suicide of Colonel Henry were announced; fourth, the joyous acclaim with which the congress hailed the reading of the Czar's proposal to call a conference of the powers, to the end that the peaceful offices of arbitration be substituted for the cruel arbitraments of war—the congress coupling with these congratulations the heartfelt prayer that the proposed conference deal in a spirit of wisdom and justice with the affairs of the afflicted Jews, and further the return to their ancestral home; fifth, the admirable paper, by Dr. Motzkin, based upon personal study and painstaking investigation, showing that the Holy Land, provided its resources were properly developed, could again be made to support a population of millions; sixth, the *Fest-Commerz* of Monday night arranged by the young Zionists of Basle, at which, in true German-student fashion, goblets of Palestinian wine were emptied, amid the singing of tuneful Zion songs in classic Hebrew by a thousand voices, and the presentation of some simple plays, portraying side by side the helpless, wailing Jews of the old Zion and the sturdy, contented husbandmen of Zion the new; seventh, the high order of the post-prandial oratory at the luncheon of Tuesday, given in honor of the representatives of the press, upon which occasion Dr. Herzl, who is editor of the *Neue Freie Presse* of Vienna, proudly stated that his book calling attention to the "Judenelend" the world over was put forth as the work of a journalist, for he conceived the office of journalism was to speak of the wrongs of to-day in order that they might be righted on the morrow; eighth, the matchless dignity and beauty of that early Wednesday morning hour when, after a practically continuous day and night sitting, Dr. Herzl brought the congress to a close with the words: "Zionism is both a mournful necessity and a glorious ideal. We are to journey henceforth along

new paths; Judaism is about to set out upon a moral pilgrimage. Whither shall the way lead? . . . Let us hope for better and brighter days!"—cheers and sobs dying in men's throats as they beheld the first ray of the dawning day fall prophetically upon the noble countenance of their loved leader, and light up a large map of the land of promise hanging overhead.

The results of the congress—who can accurately foresee at this early hour? We may, howbeit, confidently declare that a tremendous uplift has been given to the cause by the second Zionist congress. For one thing, Zionism has resolved that the immigration of foreign Jews into Palestine shall not be abetted or countenanced as long as the restrictive and prohibitive laws be not repealed from the statute-



THE ZIONIST FLAG.

books. Zionism will not sanction or even tolerate further evasion; Jews shall not smuggle or beg their way back into Palestine. We shall wait until we can return with head erect and the firm step of men knowing and cherishing their rights. We can wait a little longer, for who will deny to the long-suffering house of Israel the possession of the virtue of patience? Again, acting upon the report of a committee headed by Professor Gottheil of Columbia University, and president of the American Federation of Zionists, the second Zionist congress emphasized the fundamental principle that Zionism shall take no account of the differences touching the religious beliefs and practices of its adherents. We hope to teach the world a lesson in the true meaning of toleration; the most rigidly orthodox shall not be hindered in the performance of Jewish rites and ceremonies as he understands them; on the other hand, the largest freedom shall be allowed such as reject the olden forms and customs of Judaism. Last, the establishment by the congress of the Jewish Colonial Bank at London, with a preliminary capitalization of ten million dollars, shows that, whenever needed, the means will be forthcoming with which to consummate the plans of Zionism. One-tenth of the aforementioned sum had already come to hand unsolicited from the very slender purses of the Russo-Jewish working-classes. Large sums will surely be at the disposal of the cause when such as are favored and prosperous among the Jews will awaken to the understanding of the grandeur of the Zionist movement.

"Ubi bene, ibi patria!" How the world despises such as cling to this maxim, "Wheresoever I am prosperous shall be my home"! Shall the Jew forever be expected to moan in tones of resignation, "Ubi male, ibi patria"? Shall there be no pity for such as cry out from the depth of their misery and suffering, "Where I am hated and wronged cannot be meant to be my father-land"? "Let us go back to our home, to our fathers' land," has become the new

watchword. Surely the world will godspeed with love and helpfulness the aims of the Jews, who, after centuries of exile, turn with longing, aching hearts to Zion.

REV. STEPHEN S. WISE.

Secretary for the English Language of the Second Zionist Congress.

THANKSGIVING FOR ALL.

NOVEMBER 24, 1898.

LET all the nations of the earth on this Thanksgiving day Unite in one grand swelling hymn, and grateful homage pay For all the mercies of the year, and blessings unsurpassed, Which have relieved the meed of war by which we've been harassed.

Let Johnny Bull rejoice that he now after many years Of an estrangement kept alive by bickerings and jeers With Uncle Sam is friends again, and that across the sea Their hands once more are firmly clasped in perfect amity.

And let the Cossack folk rejoice that in these latter days A light has dawned upon the mind that regulates their ways,

For he who seeks the reign of peace cannot be very far From substituting love for hate in cold Siberia.

And let the Teuton race rejoice that he whose destiny Has placed him on a lofty throne in glorious majesty Has lived throughout another year, and in its tedious length

Done nothing to impair at all his people's wondrous strength.

And ancient France, now fallen low, let even France rejoice,

However humbled be her pride, or strident be her voice, That though she's murdered justice, and is full of shame and dread,

The fact of Zola proves at least her conscience is not dead.

And as for Spain—poor walloped Spain!—she too may join the hymn;

For though her power's broken, and her glories all are dim,

She's lost her chiefest troubles in her mutineering lands, And knows at last beyond all doubt exactly where she stands.

And Uncle Sam? Well, rather! He should fairly bellow praise

Until the very skies are rent, and all the heavens raise, For Dewey, Hobson, Sampson, Clark, and all their gallant crew,

For men who stood behind the guns, the grimy stokers too;

For heroes on the hill-side, and for heroes in the vale, With blood to shed and grit to show before the shotted hail;

For strong and sturdy men at home whose hearts were in the cause

To fight for Justice till 'twas won and give the Tyrant pause!

JOHN KENDRICK BANGS.



STADT-CASINO AT BASLE, WHERE THE CONGRESS MET.



SYNAGOGUE AT BASLE.