

THE PROGRESS OF HEBREW.

Even the prejudiced antagonist cannot help being deeply impressed by the progress of Hebrew in Erez Israel. It is now the living language not only of the schools but also of the streets and open places. The entire young generation speaks Hebrew. All over the colonies you hear Hebrew. Even among the older generation there has been a great change during the last few years. Hebrew is heard among them more than any other language. It is needless to add that it is the only language used at meetings, lectures, gatherings, etc.

Immediately after crossing the Palestine frontier one is struck by the practical application of the paragraph of the Mandate in which Hebrew is proclaimed one of the three official languages of the country. Beginning with the inscriptions on the uniform of the railway conductor and ending with the ordinances of the Government, everywhere the eye of the Jewish visitor from Goluth is delighted with the sight of Hebrew letters.

In the settlements of the Chalusim the reign of Hebrew is more supreme than anywhere else in the country. The majority of the Chalusim acquired the knowledge of Hebrew before they came to Palestine. For the others there is the peculiar institution of the Kwuzoth—the "Moreh Noded," the wandering teacher who gives instruction in Hebrew and Hebrew literature. After a day of strenuous work in the fields, the Chalusim and Chalusoth take their Hebrew lessons with all the zeal and determination of young idealism.

HEBREW OPERA.

There have also been remarkable cultural achievements during the last few years. The first question which one is asked upon arrival in Tel-Aviv or Jerusalem is "Have you seen our Hebrew Opera?" This first opera in the country was established without any support from abroad. It was created only through the energy and devotion of a few enthusiasts—created within the last year. This opera is travelling from city to city—a week in Jerusalem, a week in Haifa and so on. Its material success is such as to cover all the expenses and maintain the 64 people who are connected with it. Its moral success has exceeded all expectations.

ECONOMIC DIFFICULTIES.

The economic world crisis is felt very badly in Palestine. The Jewish colony, as well as the Arab village, is seriously affected by the competition of other agricultural countries with a lower currency. Last year, however, gave forth a new hope in the beginning of tobacco plantations. Representatives of the big tobacco factories in Egypt bought all the tobacco in Palestine at very good prices. A large cigarette manufacturer in Egypt, Maspero, recently opened a branch factory in Jaffa with Jewish employees. This year they are going to plant tobacco in almost every part of Palestine, hoping to export it to Egypt. It would be premature to foretell the final results of this tobacco planting experiment, but should it succeed it would become a great factor in the agricultural life of the country.

The colonies as well as the cities suffer from *lack of credit*. There is probably no country in the world where it is more difficult to raise a loan than in Palestine. The Zionist banks there try to do their best, but

unfortunately their means are limited. The problem of creating *cheap credit*, especially to provide small merchants, artisans and colonists with necessary loans, is one of the vital problems of our work.

THE VANGUARD.

Among all the people in Erez Israel there prevails a feeling as of a vanguard—a feeling of those who are in the first lines of trenches, and are waiting for the reinforcements to come and strengthen their lines, and who have become nervous because those reinforcements are not to be seen. They are eagerly looking not only for new money from the outside world, but also for new Jews to come and settle in the country. They cannot understand why Jews, possessing money and energy and professing their sympathies for the Zionist ideal, do business everywhere except in Palestine. They hope that there will soon be a change in this abnormal situation.

THE KEREN HAYESOD MONEY.

During the last three years I gave my whole time and energy to the Keren Hayesod work in such various countries as Roumania, Argentine, Bulgaria, Brazil, America and Canada. I was, therefore, very eager to see what was being achieved in Palestine with the money collected by the Keren Hayesod all over the world.

I must say that the results I saw in Palestine filled me with pride and satisfaction. The Mortgage Bank; the hundreds of new houses in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and Tiberias; the thousands of children educated in our Hebrew Schools; the splendid medical organisation in the Jewish cities and colonies; the eighteen new agricultural settlements in Galilee, Judea and Emek Israel; all this could not have been achieved if not for the Keren Hayesod.

But even if there had been created with the Keren Hayesod money just one thing alone; the flourishing Jewish Emek Israel, even then we could say "Dayenu"—"It is enough."

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