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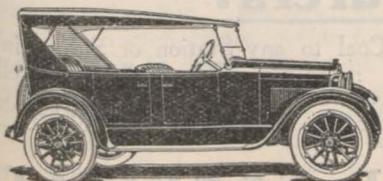
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### THE LESSON OF PASSOVER.

Passover is upon us, and once again we commemorate the great deliverance from bondage. No festival in our calendar so deeply and so strikingly reminds us of the lessons of history as this one does. No festival so forcibly compels us to realise the weight of national responsibility. We have for centuries lulled ourselves into the belief that all was right, and for that reason, Passover has lost much of the significance it has meant to convey. Developments during the past quarter of a century, however, have given us a rude awakening. Things were by no means all right. Up to quite recently we were precisely at that stage of national existence where we were 2,000 years ago; our national progress was nil. Was there really no hope for us as a people? Were we always to be the hewers of wood and the drawers of water for every other people among whom we live?

Passover this year reminds us that we are entitled to a great measure of that Jewish genius and intelligence of which we have given so abundantly and so ungrudgingly to the stranger. It helps us to emphasise the trite old saying that self-preservation, whether of the nation or of the individual, is the first and primary consideration of human nature. Recent happenings in Palestine have amply proved that we are worthy of a greater future than we ourselves years ago believed to be possible. It is impossible to think that a people who gave the world religion and ethics must for ever be consigned to the limbo of the past; to be cast aside as a race of no consequence—ever ready to lick the hand of the patron, and take everything without being able to give anything in return.

When we celebrate Passover this year it will be to assert the principle that every human being has an inalienable right to freedom. Indeed, the festival re-affirms our age-long protest against cruelty and oppression; it is our annual protest against the continued perpetration of injustices on helpless and subject peoples. If it is true that "righteousness exalteth a nation," then it is surely equally true that "sin is a people's shame," a shame that must inevitably be expiated in national humiliation and disgrace. There is a day of retribution and reckoning for all nations and individuals as surely as the sun will rise to-morrow.

We are invariably regarded as a race of commercialists. If it is true, it is only what our neighbours throughout the world have made us. Ancient history tells us of the simple and almost primitive life that our people led in their own homeland, when their ideal of earthly blessedness was that which pictured each one of them dwelling in peace and security

“under his vine and under his fig tree.” That picture is now no mythical one for us. It is a reality. Even the anti-Semite notices plainly the writing on the wall. Even he is being made to see how the idyllic chapters of the Bible in reference to our people are being re-enacted in the Holy Land. And, perhaps, in time to come, Jews will witness the remarkable spectacle of the anti-Semite himself asking on Passover night: “*Ma nishtahne halaile hazeh meekol halailos?*” What a day of reckoning it will be!

On the very hill where the Roman legions under Titus conducted the siege of Jerusalem, which ended the great chapter of the Jewish people, over 14,000 of our co-religionists from all parts of the world gathered to witness the official opening of the Hebrew University by Lord Balfour. It is futile for us who have not attended the historic function to attempt to analyse for others the emotions which the ceremony must have exercised in the hearts and minds of those who attended. The spectacle of an ex-British Prime Minister declaring the University open; a Jewish High Commissioner reciting *Shehecheyonu*; the presentation of the good wishes of the British Foreign Secretary; and the representation of fifty of the world's leading institutions and academic bodies—these and other factors have for us a significance the full import of which it is hardly possible to realise. As Lord Balfour remarked, when returning thanks for his reception: “It is the great milestone in the future career of Judaism.”

Lord Balfour took an opportunity of recalling the past co-operation between Jews and Arabs, and concluded with an eloquent appeal for the same spirit now. On an occasion such as this, it might have been fitting for the Arab community to have identified themselves with our ambitions, especially seeing that they have much to gain from the University. While, however, that sympathetic co-operation was evidently lacking, we have still to be told the reason that prompted the despatch of cable messages intimating possible open Arab hostility, and even bloodshed. The celebrations were fortunately not marked by such outbreaks, and it is difficult to believe that any substantial grounds existed for the hair-raising messages that were cabled to the Press.

The generous space given to the inauguration ceremony in the South African newspapers gives us cause to rejoice that the sympathies of the people of the Union are on our side. Practically every newspaper in the country not only published informative articles about the University, but commented in the most glowing terms on our achievement. As the poet has it: “A fellow-feeling makes one wondrous kind.”

It is obvious that the re-awakening national consciousness of the Jews is being closely watched by the Press of the world. The task before Jewry is one of exceptional magnitude, and we cannot afford the bitter consequences of a debacle. Given unity and co-operation, we shall be able to proceed unhindered along the path of national rejuvenation. We can only hope that all Israel will be encouraged to still greater efforts by the inauguration ceremony on Mount Scopus, and that they will not rest from the task until the foundation on which is to be erected the fabric of our homeland can be declared to be well and truly laid.

When the wonderful story of the modern Jewish national movement is considered, it is impossible to overlook a contribution which has provided us with a force that helped to stir the embers of national aspirations. That contribution was made by Henry Rusato, who passed away in New York recently at the age of 55, and who composed what is popularly regarded as our national anthem, “Hatikvah.” When Zionism was still in its dreamland stage, it was regarded with suspicion by Jews, and with curiosity and amazement by non-Jews. The first Congress had the resemblance of a novel and somewhat unique collection of cultured dreamers, who had little beyond “hope” to offer to their co-religionists. “Hatikvah” came to their aid. It was the all-pervading strains of that immortal composition that constituted Dr. Herzl's greatest ally. It sustained us in the early days to a degree far greater than later adherents can possibly realise.

During that seemingly far-off time, when the movement was in the academic stage only, it provided a source of enthusiasm for the re-awakening national consciousness of a physically-tired race. It exercised on Zionists a compelling power and significance even more immense than did Rouget de Lisle's “La Marseillaise” over the early French Republicans. Stirring in its effect, “Hatikvah” still fills the heart of the singer in exile with reverent hope and expectation personally to witness the consummation of a two-thousand-year-old dream. There is something strange, mysterious, gripping and all-compelling in the haunting melody, the musical origin of which is still a source of discussion among musical authorities.

People throughout South Africa are at present co-operating in an endeavour to extend to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales an enthusiastic and loyal welcome when he arrives in this country at the end of this month. We Jews claim to be not a whit less loyal than any other section of the South African people, British or Dutch. We shall join whole-heartedly in the effort to make the royal tour of the Union a success. Loyalty to the land of our adoption, and strict obedience to and respect for its laws, have always marked Jewish life throughout the ages. Even in those countries where Jews nowadays are not permitted to enjoy the most elementary rights of citizenship and where they are hounded from pillar to post, they still obey the laws, even though they thereby have to suffer in silence.

In South Africa, as in other parts of the British Empire, we enjoy full liberty of action. In return for that freedom—and freedom is surely the right of every human being—we claim to have done our fair share in the progress and development of this southern continent. The Prince of Wales is coming to South Africa in order personally to see its peoples of all races, colours and creeds. We Jews eagerly look forward to his arrival. No one can doubt the loyalty of South African Jewry to the British Crown and Flag, and we shall co-operate with the rest of the community in every way possible to make the welcome to the Prince enthusiastic and warm. If the Prince were ever to visit Palestine he would find on the portals of our colonies there the words “*Borüch Haboh.*” It would be a welcome certainly no less hearty than that to be extended to him in any part of the Union of S.A.

Welcoming the Prince of Wales.

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