

under a solid Government, are so well appreciated by the masses of the Nation and so strongly required by the wealthy element of the country that all classes in the Republic realise that they have much to lose and nothing to gain by attempting to foment any sort of strife.

(6) That in every part of Mexico there are strong men devoted to the programme of peace, and ready and able to see that this programme is not altered.

I believe that Mr. De Kay's terse summing up of the situation is sound, and I am sure that it embodies his well-grounded opinion of the situation based upon his close study first-hand of the conditions in that country for the past ten years.

R. J. BARRETT.

LONDON, 1st February, 1909.

Judios

PRESIDENT DIAZ AND THE JEWS.

Interview by Mr. JOHN W. De KAY.

(Reprinted from *The Whitehall Review*, London, January, 1909.)

If Shylock shows to mankind a Jew, he shows a type, but not a race. In so far as he in any way represents a race, he represents a people who have been made what they are by the iron hand of Fate.

By nature the Jew has always been, and is religious and faithful to his religion. If the Christian (who regards himself as the follower of the Prince of Peace and engages in all kinds of war) is not consistent, it remains for the Jew to be consistent everywhere and always. From Moses to Disraeli the Jew has always declared his conviction in the distinct greatness of his race.

The Jew has never been absorbed. He is to-day in form and feature, and largely in thought, what he was in the days of David on the plains of Judea. Whether in Turkey, or Russia, or Japan, or the United States, or England, he is always and everywhere a Jew.

Back in the twilight of history he was a dreamer, a poet, and an idealist.

He cultivated the soil, was humble, and lived very near to

nature. He believed in a God who really guided him in all things, and that he had been marked as a superior race among men. He has never lost that faith.

Through injustice and persecution this agriculturist and dreamer has come to levy his tribute from mankind. If the Jew is few in number, he weighs heavily in the affairs of the world, and if he has no nation of his own, he is able to dictate the policy of nations. If he cannot rule by numbers in any land, he rules by something which outweighs all numbers.

Under persecution which always brings out the best and the worst in mankind, the Jew has achieved a unique and distinct place in the guiding force of the world. He has always been thoughtful, and a student, and faithful to his task. What he has believed in he has done, and when mankind forced him to trade and to loan money he did it well; and has become the greatest merchant in the world. As fast as society made land owning unsafe for the Jews, they have acquired the movable property created by the industry of mankind. He is the banker for the world, and has learned that the one who controls the credit of nations can go very far towards controlling the policy of those nations.

The next great step in the history of this wonderful race is that the powerful Jews everywhere unite and command the recognition to which their people are entitled by every consideration which weighs in the judgment of the world, and since the credit of no nation could withstand the sustained boycott of the Jewish bankers of the world, it remains for the powerful Jews to unite on all the great questions of principle underlying the treatment of their race, and, whenever necessary, make their personal interests secondary to the broad question of how a nation shall deal with their people. Thus the weak link in the chain of Jewish dominion in government

policy would be removed, and the Jews who are not powerful would receive the consideration which is accorded to every other nationality under the flags of the world, because they are the children of a powerful people who have commanded and are entitled to and able to demand justice and equal opportunity wherever they are.

While the Jew has preached an eye for an eye, he has been powerless to enforce that programme upon the Christian or the Pagan. While the Christian has preached brotherly love and peace, he has been able by the force of numbers to burn the Jew at the stake, merely because he was a Jew. And the Pagan, who has worshipped his many gods, has murdered the Jew merely because he was not a Pagan. But the Jew has been everywhere and always a Jew. If the Jews who are without power can be settled in the Republics of the New World they will cease to be oppressed, and through a union of the powerful members of their race they can compel the small Republics to make terms with the Jew, and to treat him with justice and liberality.

On the broad line of the policy of the Mexican nation towards the Jew, President Diaz has spoken to me strongly and with that candour which has marked his course in all things. The great Mexican President is an individualist, and recognises that, above all else, religion is an individual thing which every man must settle for himself. The President of Mexico, who has never travelled, is enabled by a genius, which is the gift to only a few of the children of men, to be the strongest personality and the biggest sustained figure in the world. As a Mexican he is interested in the greatness of his country, and as a man he is interested in the greatness of men. I asked him what the policy of Mexico would be if the Jews were to come to that country in large numbers, and settle in a single state until they became a majority in that state, and he said:—

"My country was long under a fanatic rule which denied men the right to think and to be free. The result of the slavery which that rule forced upon the Mexicans will require many generations to obliterate. To-day my people enjoy political and religious freedom, and they are anxious to extend that boon to others. I have always sympathised with the Jew in his struggle against many odds. I believe in the value of the Jew to the country of his adoption, I believe in his power to help the land in which he casts his lot. I believe he has been a highly important factor in the rise of the democracy of the United States, and that he is loyal to its institutions. When the Jew has been persecuted abroad I have instructed my ministers throughout the world to welcome him to Mexico, and in my name to guarantee him justice and equality before the law, and freedom to worship, or not to worship, and the right to build his altars in his own way.

"I have watched with keen interest the movement to acquire a vast tract of country for the Jews. Whether this is wise or not wise I do not attempt to say; but it will require a long time to get the Jew back to the land. Perhaps he may never go back. He is to-day far from agriculture.

"Whether he will ever go back, or whether it is wise for him to go back, no one knows." In response to my question, "Would you give local government to the Jews?" President Diaz said:—

"If the Jews were to come in large numbers to any one of the sovereign States in Mexico, and each acquire a small tract of land, which is necessary before he becomes a citizen of the country, and if they took the oath of allegiance to Mexico, and accepted the obligations of citizenship, they would have all the rights of that citizenship, and those rights would not differ in letter or in spirit, in any way from the rights of nature born Mexicans. Of course, no

foreigner can, under our constitution, any more than under the constitution of the United States, become President of the Republic. If such citizens in any state were to become an actual voting majority, they would elect their own governor and other officials, and enjoy all the rights accorded to other Mexicans now or in the future. These States are independent and sovereign in their local affairs, but they are subject to the superior authority of the supreme government of the Nation.

"If the Jews did not wish to become Mexican citizens, they would still be welcome. They would be exempt from military service and treated in all ways exactly as we treat all foreigners, without any regard to nationality or to religion. With us the Pagan and his many gods, the Mormon and his many wives, and the Christian and the Jew are welcome as long as they are industrious, and honest, and obey the law. But I would prefer that the Jews come to Mexico and accept our citizenship if they wish, and that they teach my people the habits of industry, and teach them to be thrifty.

"In my country nature has been very kind to man. Here he needs to do only a little work, and he does only that little. It is always summer in Mexico, and as the people never need to provide against the cold they are improvident. By their example the Jew would teach my people to work, induce them to save, and encourage them to be sober and to provide against the time when they are unable to work.

"I would like to see large settlements of Jews scattered throughout Mexico, and I would have them scattered as widely as possible, not because of any question of politics, but because their example would in that way benefit the inhabitants in every part of the country. The Mexican people are quick to imitate, and now that

they have political and religious liberty and a stable government, the foundation is laid for great national progress. What they need now is example. They need now to see the Jews come to this country, poor as they are poor, and to see them become rich because they take advantage of the bounty of nature.

"My people need to be taught how to do their work well, and how to save. One of the great needs of Mexico now is a higher skill in workmanship. That is a matter of demand and of education. The demand exists throughout the country, and Mexicans ought to, and can, ultimately supply that demand—but they must be trained. Until recently most of the industries known to modern civilisation have been unknown in Mexico.

"One by one new enterprises are being established throughout the Republic. These institutions at first must import practically all of their skilled labour. Gradually the Mexicans can come to fill all of these places which require trained ability. My people do their work well and cheaply. Formerly they were engaged only in agriculture and mining, and as conducted in Mexico these occupations required practically only cheap, unskilled labour. The less the labourers knew the easier they were to manage, and the cheaper they worked; but modern industries established here largely by foreigners have created a demand for high-class labour, and to-day Mexico is entirely unable to supply that demand. Great as this demand is now, it is only in its infancy. We have here the raw materials for a great industrial nation, and some day Mexican commerce should extend around the world.

"Mexico welcomes men with money, but it equally welcomes men with skill and industry. They are needed as the teachers of our common people, and my country offers them a field with great opportunities. The rich rarely ever teach the poor any useful thing."

I suggested to the President that the Mexican Government might sell some of its land at a low price to the Jews, and thus encourage them to come to Mexico. To this he replied:

"In many parts of the Republic the Federal Government owns valuable land which it could sell to the Jews at a low price, and which if developed should soon increase to many times its present value. I would like to have this land purchased in large or small tracts, and would be glad to see it peopled by Jews from any part of the world. We paid dearly for our liberty. We prize this liberty, and regard it as one of the treasured possessions of mankind. I want the Jew to feel that here he may have his freedom, here he would be welcome, and that here he could prosper and be free from intolerance, bigotry and persecution.

"In so far as these people engaged in new industries, the products and the capital invested in the industries would be exempt from all forms of taxation, and I would recommend that the necessary legislation be passed to protect these industries against any hardships of competition from abroad."

From the standpoint of personal liberty, Mexico is an inviting country for the Jews, but from the practical standpoint the Jew who has no money and no trade, should not go to Mexico, except under the protection of some organisation or industry, which could furnish, from the beginning, a field for common labour of a little better class than the Mexican labour. Common labour in Mexico is too poorly paid to make it an inviting field for foreigners, but the demand for any kind of skilled labour is good, and the wages are comparatively high. But it is probable that the Jew would be better paid as a common labourer in the United States than elsewhere. It seems that it would be practical, however, to make use of the liberality of the Mexican Government, and of the almost undeveloped resources

of that country, and settle the Jew there in agricultural and industrial enterprises.

If a syndicate of wealthy Jews, who are interested in the progress of their race, was to purchase from the Mexican Government suitable tracts of land in various parts of the country, and people this land with industrious Jews from Europe, these communities could be industrial as well as agricultural and could give profitable employment to skilled labour in almost every line.

It would probably be found that as the Jew prospered in these settlements, he would leave them and seek his fortune in the cities; but the places left vacant by this inevitable movement towards the cities could be filled by others who would be anxious to take them because of the political freedom, and the chance to do remunerative work which would be offered to them in the new land of their adoption.

It will be a long time before society will be so organised that the wealth created by the labour of men will belong to the ones who create it. Many generations will come and go before that generation in which justice is to be done to the common labour of the world. But in the meantime the millions who are to be helped must be helped upon the basis dictated by the present order of society. And if a new civilisation, organised upon a basis in which there will be no hunger in the midst of over-production, cannot now be implanted on the soil of the new world in Mexico, it would be a step forward to take the Jew to that country upon the basis of the existing civilisation. There he could at least enjoy religious and political freedom, and be given a chance to work honestly with the assurance he could enjoy the undisturbed reward of his industry.

In our last interview President Diaz said :—

“The price we have paid for liberty has been justified by what

it has done for the people who live under our flag, and I would consider that the Mexicans had added greatly to their achievements if they were able to confer the blessings of freedom upon large numbers of the great race of Jews, born under other flags of the world, and with or without cause denied what ought to be the heritage of all men.”

No one could have discussed with the great President the problem of a persecuted people without feeling that this man, born of humble parents, and never rich in the world's goods, was a real friend of the Jews, and that he embodied what is highest in the disinterested statesmanship of the world.

It was a quiet, lovely night. The valley of Mexico was asleep, guarded by the snow-capped peaks, and on all sides hemmed in by the lonely purple hills. We said good-bye, and all was strangely still. Behind me was the quiet, modest home of the great man, and about me the haunts of the thousands who regard him as a god; and I said I would rather be that man who has been equal to his country's need, and who has earned unending fame among a people whom he has made into a nation, than to own all the railroads that stretch their way across the prairies of the world, or to be king over all the people of the earth.

