

The Duty of the Hour—Russian Refugees.

It appears that the magnitude of the question as to the duty of every Israelite with respect to the enforced Jewish emigrants from Russian despotism is not appreciated. Every one whom these lines reach should understand that he or she and all who they can influence, owe it to themselves, to humanity, to the great Jewish principle of benevolence toward his brethren, that every effort must be made in behalf of these unfortunate exiles, to place them either on the farm or in the workshop, or at some employment where they can earn a subsistence. These people are able to work, some in one way, some in another. They are strangers among us, unused to the ways of our country, and must be helped, as children are, until able to care of themselves. Every one must know that unless action is taken to afford these people means to earn a livelihood, we shall have among us an element of Jewish tramps and paupers, producing criminals, who will disgrace the name of Israelite through the land.

Do not think, my reader, that this will not reach you, for it will, and it is you I speak to, aye, every one of you. Arouse yourselves in every town, in every city, in every village. Act alone, if you have none to help you, organize in every place where there are more than one, and set to work; take one family, take two, ten or a hundred people, find them occupation, shelter, food and raiment, no matter how little they earn at first, they will grow up and improve, as many who read this have grown from small beginnings.

It is not in the large cities where these people congregate that they can alone be maintained, the thousands must find homes in the West in cultivating the soil, in manufacturing and mechanical pursuits. Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Iowa, Wisconsin, Dakota, Minnesota, these are the States, in every township, county and village our people should aid the emigrants to find homes. This being done will redound to our credit and to our pride, but this neglected, the good name of Israel will be tarnished, our pride lost and the blush of shame be called to our cheeks. We publish the following letter as more fully illustrating what we have written, it speaks volumes but it speaks burning truths:

A.

48 EXCHANGE PLACE, NEW YORK,)

June 23, 1882. }

Joseph Abraham, Cor. Sec'y, Cincinnati:

DEAR SIR:—I have received the letter addressed to me under date 21st inst., relative to settlement of twenty families on land in Kansas selected by your society, one half the expense of which (you estimate at three to four thousand dollars for entire charge) you ask our society here to bear. You probably have no idea of the present condition of things in New York. We are feeding at present three thousand people, and our expenses foot up over two thousand dollars (\$2,000) per day for that item, transportation, clothing, etc. Our resources are taxed to the utmost to meet this outlay, and we can not talk colonization in any shape. We have gone to work to raise money and expect seventy five thousand dollars (\$75,000) from our people here inside of two weeks, but at our present rate of expenditure this will not last six weeks, and I do not see how it can be much diminished in view of what we learn from the other side—the emigration of thousands to our shores, when we have cabled positively to stop altogether.

At the convention, you will recollect, that it was resolved not to go into further colonization in any shape, but to put it on business principles outside of our society.

Outside of New York, in spite of the promises made in convention, we receive no assistance whatever, and you will probably find, when too late, that every city of the United States will be swarming with these people, because Hebrews everywhere do not put their shoulders to the wheel to distribute the burden, and to help properly to combine to place these refugees in some self-supporting way. Of course, money is necessary, but the miserable pittance generally dealt with are entirely insufficient to meet the emergency. Cincinnati should raise from thirty to forty thousand dollars and be prepared to place two hundred and fifty to three hundred emigrants per month, organizing an employment agency and having a shelter somewhere under proper superintendence, where they could be fed for about twenty cents per day, pending future settlement. New York would contribute, say ten dollars per head (adults) for this purpose, but to expend now two to three thousand dollars for twenty families, while such burdens are looking to us for their daily bread, is out of the question.

Our difficulty is increased always by the want of co-operation elsewhere. With forty to fifty towns large and small, working with us, we could soon see daylight, but with the restrictions generally imposed upon us from all sides, we must break down, and the end will be that all these people will have to shift for themselves, and be obliged to beg their bread all over the country, to the disgrace of the Jewish name. It is extraordinary to me to find that you can be so blind to your own interests in the matter, and I forewarn you of the danger of the general indifference prevailing throughout the country.

I should like very much to see these twenty families you refer to settled, and surely you could raise money somewhere sufficient to do it without our aid, the giving of which at present is, as I have explained, entirely beyond our power.

Yours truly,

H. S. HENRY,

President Hebrew Emigrant Aid Society of the United States.