BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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THE SPLENDOUR OF ISRAEL

by
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careless of clothes and wear open-neck shirts and care little for appearances. The girls dress without extravagance. The mood is calm, a little sombre, not given to ostentation, quietly self-assured. Wages are low. There are theatres and cinemas and art galleries, there is even a ferris wheel outlined with electric lights at the bottom of the municipal gardens, but there is no feeling that people are desperately searching for entertainment. They are self-contained, and a surprising number of them are young: the average age must be about thirty. In five minutes, in any of the main streets, you will see Jews from Persia, India, Morocco, Argentina, Yemen, Europe and America. Jerusalem is the melting pot. All colours, all races are represented, and all are Jews.

Jerusalem is a fortress. So it has been, and so it will always be. The forward defences are scattered among the hills, as they were in the time of King Jehoiakim, whose southern bastion has recently been discovered by archaeologists in nearby Ramat Rahel, a hilltop with one of the world's most spectacular views. From there you look out across a valley to Bethlehem and the red-roofed Church of the Nativity, and not far away stands a white and gleaming mountain shaped like an extinct volcano: Herod made it into a fortress palace, and on the summit he was buried in a gold coffin studded with jewels. The mountains of Moab lie far to the east, the honey-coloured walls of Jerusalem rise to the north, and the modern city sweeps around to the west. From that hilltop, near the ruins of a Judean fortress of the eighth century B.C. and of a Byzantine church, all of Jerusalem and the land around it seem to lie at your feet. The frontier is only two hundred yards away.

At Herzl's Tomb

In the Judean hills, not far from Jerusalem, and on the road to Ain Karem, where John the Baptist was born, there stands the square block of polished black marble which commemorates Theodor Herzl, the founder of Zionism, who in 1898 prophesied that the state of Israel would come into existence in fifty years. He lies beneath that immense marble tomb. On one side, written in a peculiarly vivid and powerful Hebrew script, there is his name.

There is no date of death, no date of birth, nothing about him. No text from the Old Testament decorates the tomb, as it decorates so many of the memorials in Israel. No star or shield of David, no Menorah, no Ark of the Covenant, is depicted on the tomb. There is only the immense black stone and the great name. So, in the Middle Ages, might men commemorate the death of a great prince.

The tomb stands on the summit of the hill, with Jerusalem in the distance dusky yellow and gold, very beautiful. There is an impression of height, of wind-swept spaces, of being between the desert and the sown. The site has been chosen with exquisite care.

Today and for many years to come Herzl, who began life as an obscure Hungarian playwright, will continue to haunt Jerusalem. His portrait—always the same portrait—hangs in all the public buildings. Yet this portrait is scarcely fair to him; he is shown in profile, frowning, heavily-bearded, lost in deep meditation. It is the portrait of a faintly sinister prophet, dark and saturnine. In fact, he was red-cheeked, with deep-set eyes which often glowed with laughter, and in his elegance he resembled a guardsman or a man about town rather than a prophet. He was vain of his good looks, and was perfectly aware of the power of his flashing eyes.

He was born with many gifts. He could have been a poet or a novelist or a journalist or a playwright with a European reputation, but he wrote his plays too easily and his one surviving novel is not a novel at all; it is a visionary account, in minute detail, of a Jewish state in Palestine as it would appear about the year 1962. Nor was there anything original in his book *The Jewish State*, which he completed when he was thirty-six; others before him had proclaimed that the Jewish state needed to be founded, preferably in Palestine. What was original in him was his vision of the New Jerusalem, which he saw in such clear outline that he almost believed in its existence. His greatest gift was nothing less than the gift of prophecy.

Once he had conceived of the idea of the New Jerusalem, he painted it in such rich colours that it became credible even to those who had no sympathy with it. For centuries the Jews had dreamed of returning to Jerusalem. "Next year in Jerusalem" was a common greeting, which had lost its meaning by repetition. Herzl proclaimed: "Jerusalem this year, now, this very moment." He drew a picture of a modern Jerusalem lying outside the walls of the sacred city. A modern gleaming metropolis with wide avenues, boulevards, parks, tree-shaded streets, recreation centres, electric street-cars. As for the old city, it would be conserved as a monument to the past with hospices for the pilgrims of all the denominations which regarded Jerusalem as a holy city, but there would be no private dwellings. There would be hospitals and clinics and a great Peace Palace. Whenever a disaster occurred anywhere in the world, the Peace Palace would respond immediately with help. The victims of floods, earthquakes, famine, drought and epidemics would have only to turn to the Peace Palace to know that they were being cared for. It would be the United Nations,

the World Health Organization, and UNESCO, the largest and most powerful centre of humanitarian activity on earth.

So he dreamed, and though the Peace Palace was never erected in Jerusalem, his vision of the new city outside the walls, rising on the encircling hills, came about very much as he predicted it. He wrote his description of Jerusalem in 1898 when only about forty thousand Jews were living there, many of them in squalor.

In those days, at the turn of the century, the Valley of Esdraelon was little more than marshes and swampland. It was owned largely by absentee Turkish and Arab landlords, and seemed destined to become a kind of permanent graveyard. The scattering of Arab peasants who lived there called it "the Gateway to Hell". Herzl, in one of the visionary passages of his novel *Old-New Land*, described it as a great flowering plain thickly sown with wheat, oats, maize, hops and tobacco, with cows and sheep grazing in the meadows, and trim villages and homesteads dotted about the valley and crowding the hillsides. So it became, but no one except Herzl had ever guessed there would be this flowering.

When Herzl published his novel in 1902, Haifa was little more than a village lying at the foot of Mount Carmel, with a population of perhaps ten thousand people. He never visited the town, though he caught a passing glance of it from the sea. In his imagination the village became a city towering up the entire length of Mount Carmel, and spreading all the way to Acre. There was a superb port with great piers and jetties, and vessels of all nations lay at anchor under the sheltering mountains. For some reason he imagined this teeming city very silent, with almost no noise in the streets. He wrote:

> Brilliant Oriental robes mingled with the sober costumes of the Occident, but the latter predominated. There were many Chinese, Persians and Arabs, but the city itself seemed thoroughly European. One might easily imagine oneself in a large Italian port. The brilliant blue of sky and sea were reminiscent of the Riviera, but the buildings were much cleaner and more modern, and the streets less noisy. The quiet was due largely to the dignified behaviour of the many Orientals which precluded the raising of their voices, but also to the absence of any draught animals. There was no hoofbeat of horses, no crackling of whips, no rumbling of wheels. The roads were as smooth as the sidewalks, and the automobiles drove past silently on rubber wheels.

Again and again in his diaries, where the best of his writing is preserved, he sketches out some detail of the Jewish state which has proved to be amazingly accurate. He sketched out its constitution, labour laws, social welfare, education, town-planning. He wanted entire communities transplanted in the Jewish state,

and they must be kept together; this too has been done. He wanted a public works system, and he insisted that the new state should follow the middle road between capitalism and collectivism. He wanted a limit set to the growth of the towns, and each town must live on the produce of the surrounding fields. He made vast plans for irrigation, and wrote happily about the wealth that would come from the potash of the Dead Sea. Sometimes he was overwhelmed by the sheer ebullience of his imagination, as when he dashed off in his diary: "The high priests will wear impressive robes. The cuirassiers will wear yellow trousers and white tunics. The officers will have silver breastplates." But there are not many statements like this. The diary is largely a sober examination of his own triumphs and defeats, and a continuing exploration of the nature of the Jewish state.

But when he was writing, the Jewish state belonged to the distant future. He was a statesman without a state, a prophet without a country. He bearded the powerful Jewish multi-millionaires, Baron Maurice de Hirsch and Baron Edmond de Rothschild, and made them listen to his plan for settling the Jews on the soil. He inaugurated a series of Zionist Conferences, and laid down a programme for establishing a home for the Jewish people which would be secured by public law. He believed the home should be in Palestine, then under the rule of the Sultan of Turkey, "the sick man of Europe", who sometimes gave the impression that he would cheerfully sacrifice Palestine in payment of an astronomical purchase price. Many Jews preferred assimilation in their adopted countries to the adventure of setting up a Jewish state. Herzl thundered against them, accusing them of timidity and cowardice. At various times he thought he would be able to establish the Jewish state in the arid El Arish area of northern Sinai, in Mozambique, Tripoli or the Congo, but all these ventures failed. The prize was always Palestine.

With his commanding presence, his social graces, his missionary zeal, he was able to engage the interest of kings and princes and European statesmen. The German Emperor and the Sultan of Turkey listened to long speeches on the need for building a Jewish state and its advantages to the rest of the world. His interviews with the Sultan were curiously disturbing, for Herzl had the impression that he was talking to a marionette and it was beyond his power to know who was pulling the strings. Sultan Abdul Hamid II was a small, shabby man with long yellow teeth, the hooked nose of a Punchinello, and ears that stuck out from the side of his head, thus protecting his fez from falling down and completely covering his face. He listened politely to everything Herzl said, made vast promises, and never kept them. It was the same

it had a garrison of perhaps five hundred men who were permanently resident. The Arabs destroyed Caesarea. Then for centuries there were only a few fishermen's huts among the ruins.

Today you can still trace the long aqueduct which brought sweet water to the wells of Caesarea, though most of it is covered with sand. But close to the city the supporting arches of the aqueduct can still be seen. In the twilight it looks like an immense serpent sloughing off its interminable coils.

Haifa

They were close enough now to make out the details. In the roadstead between Acre and the foot of Mount Carmel huge liners rode at anchor, and beyond the liners could be seen the charming contours of the bay and the mountain. At the northern end there was Acre with its harsh oriental beauty, with its grey castle walls and cupolas and minarets spearing the morning sky, and from Acre to the top of the mountain there were those thousands of white houses and the mountain itself was capped with magnificent buildings.

WHEN Herzl wrote these words in 1902, there was scarcely a single house on Mount Carmel and no liners had ever put into the bay. But the memory of Mount Carmel, seen only briefly from a ship's rail, haunted him as no other landscape had ever haunted him. Of Jerusalem he always spoke sombrely, as of a place so ancient that it should be kept as a museum or under glass, and neither Paris nor Rome nor any of the other cities he visited and discussed in his letters drew from him the excitement he reserved for this small town which sheltered at the foot of a green mountain.

In Herzl's day the harbour of Haifa had long since been silted up with sand, and the streets, according to a contemporary traveller, were "filthy and wretched beyond description". A colony of German Templars had settled there in the sixties of the last century, outnumbering the pitifully small group of Jewish merchants and the Arabs who sometimes pastured their sheep and goats on the slopes of the mountain. The Templars cultivated the narrow plain near the seashore; there were olive fields, small orchards and occasional palm trees, a few shops, a few lanes of houses huddled together. Herzl saw the thickly wooded mountain turning into a modern city gleaming in the sunset, all stone and marble. He saw great avenues ringing the mountain, and vast public squares "shaded by palms which served as lamp-posts at night, with clusters of lamps hanging from them like glass fruit". He believed Haifa would become a great metropolis "with the safest and most convenient harbour in the Mediterranean". All this he saw with his prophetic eyes, after seeing with his ordinary

eyes a dismal village on the sea-coast. It is always a mystery when prophecies are fulfilled.

Today, when you arrive in Haifa and see that white mountain which only sixty years ago was the haunt of leopards and hyenas, you wonder whether such things are possible. Haifa has the look of an old city. It is well anchored on its mountain, and does not have the bright, new, chromium-plated look of Tel Aviv. It has grown organically, spreading up the mountainside according to the natural laws of growth. At first it grew very slowly, cautiously, throwing up small shoots along the lower ranges of the mountain. The Jewish immigrants arriving from Germany in the 1930s forced the pace a little, so that already by the time of World War II most of the mountain was covered with houses. Now the whole mountain has become a city, which is beginning to spread over the neighbouring mountains. Whole new settlements have been built on the top of Carmel, and there is no knowing when the process will stop.

Haifa even today is still very largely a German-Jewish city. The people go about with the methodical, practical air of German Jews. There is no nonsense about them. In all other towns in Israel life comes to a virtual stop on the Sabbath. In Haifa on the Sabbath the buses are kept running, ships enter the dock, the funicular railway still operates. It is the largest and best-equipped seaport in Israel, with the only deep-water harbour, and it is determined that nothing shall impede the flow of trade. Significantly it has acquired a reputation for quiet, unobtrusive scholarship, and has more bookshops per street than any other town in Israel. I found ten bookshops in three blocks on Herzl Street, and this may well be the world's record. The pride of Haifa is the technological institute known as the Technion, originally built in 1912 on the slopes of the mountain, now in a pine forest on top of the mountain, with a magnificent view of the great bay and the houses clustered along the white slopes.

Where there are new hotels and gleaming white modern buildings there were once hermit caves and quiet sanctuaries in the woods. For centuries Carmel was sacred to Baal Hadad, the ancient god of the Canaanites, who was Lord of the Heavens, Maker of Thunder and Rain, and of Fertility; and when the prophet Elijah called upon the priests of Baal to summon down fire upon the sacred bull, he was, in order to destroy them, deliberately taunting them with their own sacred symbols—the holy fire, the holy bull. If it had not been for Elijah, Baal Hadad might have become the ruling god of the Near East. Jehovah conquered, but Baal Hadad never entirely disappeared. He haunted the topmost crags of the mountain, a mysterious and

powerful force whose fame reverberated across the Mediterranean. Vespasian sacrificed to the god when revolving in his mind his secret hopes of empire. Tacitus tells the story of how Vespasian came to Carmel and heard what he wanted to hear:

> Between Syria and Judea is Carmel—the name given to a mountain and to a god. Here there is no image of the god nor any temple: the traditions of antiquity prescribe only the altar and its sacred associations.
>
> Vespasian came here to offer sacrifices and ponder his secret ambitions. Basilides was the priest, and after repeatedly inspecting the entrails he said: "Vespasian, whatever you desire, whether it is to build a house or to enlarge your estates or to increase the number of your slaves, all these will be given to you. To you shall be given a vast palace, boundless territories, multitudes of men."
>
> These obscure auguries were soon spread among the populace, and various attempts were made to interpret them. Indeed, little else was spoken about by the common people; and in Vespasian's presence they discussed the auguries all the more freely because men have more to say to men who desire great things.

Tacitus is not always reliable when he speaks about the Jews—he had some theories about them which must be among the most inaccurate ever recorded—but here he was speaking about matters which he may easily have learned from members of Vespasian's entourage. The account rings true. Vespasian went on to seize the empire and to become the scourge of the Jews. A few months later Jerusalem fell and Judea became a small province under Roman rule.

But it is not for such stories that we remember Carmel. We remember the mountain chiefly because with Hermon and Tabor it possesses a particular holiness and a particular beauty. "Thine head upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thy head like purple," wrote the author of the *Song of Songs*. The prophet Isaiah speaks of "the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord". That the green forests on the mountain should wither, and its fruits perish, is his darkest image of desolation. For the ancient Hebrews, Carmel is the emblem of the earth's ripeness and blessedness, for while the rest of the country changed to the yellow of death during the heat of summer, Carmel, luxuriating in its heavy dews, remained unfailingly green. The green has nearly vanished and the forest has turned into stone, but somehow the city still suggests ripeness.

Like the new city of Jerusalem, Haifa has all the advantages of ancient traditions and up-to-the-minute modernity. Elijah and Elisha are almost physical presences; there are still pilgrimages to

Elijah's smoke-blackened cave. Yet sometimes the prophetical voices acquire ironical overtones. "Feed Thy people with Thy rod, the flock of Thine inheritance, which dwell solitarily in the forest in the midst of Carmel," said the prophet Micah. But "the forest in the midst of Carmel" has vanished, and no one can dwell solitarily on the mountain.

As though the possession of a holy mountain, a beautiful bay, a rich harbour and a teeming modern city were not enough, Haifa also possesses Acre as a suburb. This is rather like having an enormous mansion with an exquisite Oriental summerhouse at the bottom of the garden. Acre is the ancient Ptolemaïs, once endowed by the luxury-loving Emperor Ptolemy II Philadelphus with marble colonnades, libraries and gymnasiums. St. Paul landed there when he went up to Jerusalem for the last time, saluting the brethren then staying in the town, and spending a day with them. Under the Crusaders it became St. Jean d'Acre, and was held by them for 182 years except for a two-year period when it fell to Saladin. There, finally, in May, 1291, exactly a hundred years after it had been wrested from Saladin by Richard the Lion-Heart, the Moslems took the walls by storm and in a single day killed thirty thousand of the defenders. On that day ended the Latin Kingdom in the Holy Land.

Wandering through Acre today, you would hardly dream that it was ever a city of importance. The small grey donkeys wind through shadowy streets where the jutting eaves keep out the sun. There are streets so dark you can barely see the faces of passers-by at noon, and so narrow that even the donkeys must go in single file. There is the smell of spices. You might be in some small town in Persia or Malaya, so pervasive is the atmosphere of the Orient. Then suddenly, you find yourself looking down from street level at a vast Crusader church sunk deep in the earth and still being excavated, with huge columns like roots which have never seen the sun. At such moments, very briefly, you become aware of the power wielded by the Crusaders.

The House of Horror

Not far from Acre, along the coastal road, an enormous yellow building faces the sea. Here the air is sweet, for there are orange groves all round, and the plains are well watered, very green even at the height of summer. A long Turkish aqueduct, biscuit-coloured, runs along the road, and through the arches you can see green fields, tall cypresses, red-roofed houses, silvery water towers. The yellow building might be a school or a theatre, except for the fact that there is no town or village nearby. I thought it might be a very large and well-equipped government experimental station until it occurred to me that no government would build in such a modern style, with such deliberate art in the making of the building. In fact, the yellow building was a house of horror.

The history of this house begins in 1949 when a handful of survivors from the ghettos of Poland and Lithuania settled here on the Plain of Acre and founded a *kibbuts* which they called *Lohamei Hageta'ot*, meaning "The Fighters of the Ghettos". They had brought with them a few pathetic relics and souvenirs of the fighting inside the ghettos and the subsequent partisan campaigns. At first it was to be a very small museum housed in one of the buildings on the *kibbuts*, but gradually the concept widened to include relics, archives and photographs concerning the entire history of the extermination of the Jews by the Nazis. It would be a memorial to the six million dead. It would say what had to be said, commemorate what had to be commemorated. It would be, as well as human hands could make it, an eternal monument to a senseless and intolerable crime.

Inside, the yellow building gives an impression of extraordinary spaciousness. The rooms are palatial, very high, very broad, with their dark polished floors and well-proportioned windows. One large room contains a scale model of a concentration camp with its wretched huts and tall watchtowers; the model is half the size of the room. There are blown-up photographs along the walls, here and in all the other rooms. There are scraps of uniform, slabs of the black bread fed to the prisoners, proclamations, orders. Mostly there are these blown-up and grainy photographs reproduced from books and newspapers. We see the Jews herded into cattle trucks, or walking about the ghettos of Warsaw wearing the yellow badge of David, or assembling in the concentration camps. It is a world of black and white, without depth, without dimension, soundless and strangely impersonal. They might be stills from an old movie. It is only with a great effort that one can bring oneself to feel that these photographs represent events that actually happened, that this bath chamber or this smokestack formed part of a terrifying engine of destruction, and that these people looking out calmly from the faded photographs are in agony.

What was shocking was the sense of unreality, the appalling ineffectiveness of these photographs hanging in these palatial rooms. The photographs lied: they left out everything of importance. Just as it was impossible to suffer with these ghostly people in the photographs, so it was impossible to feel any emotion in front of the loaf of bread, resembling a black cinder, which stood