

Copy

Political

No 22

Jerusalem

October 5. 1853

My Lord

I have the honor to report
that a company of forty pilgrims
from France, having lately passed
through this country (a few of them
being ecclesiastics and persons of
literary note) it was a new event
to have such an expedition made
an enterprise of speculators

Rt Hon ^{ble}
Earl of Clarendon
K.G. G.C.B.
fc

The persons who contrived and
executed

The General Review

No 31 - 2 Books

Plat 31. S

Copy of Despatches
to London
Michelemin of Jante
arrived in the
chamber

502
executed it are both British
Subjects of the Roman Catholic faith
residing in Jerusalem. viz. Mr. Wifley
of London, and Mr. Schembri of
Malta. They therefore had all
the contracts made in my office
and all the assistance I could
render to forward the enterprise
was cheerfully given. - I visited
the travellers at the Latin
Hospice, which no other Consul
did, but not one of the persons
had the civility to return the visit.

I am informed by the
managers of the scheme that
about Christmas we may expect

503
a still larger party from England
to arrive in the same manner.
The enterprise being warmly
sanctioned by the highest Roman
Catholic Ecclesiastic in London.

Count Pizzamano tells me
that a similar expedition is to
arrive soon from Vienna, so
numerous that a Steamer is
engaged expressly for the party alone.

I may be allowed to express
my opinion that whatever the
original idea of these speculations
may have been, they are now
taken up by greater persons than
the first designers and will be

conducted on a yet larger scale, to
serve political purposes - and it is
not without significance that the
pamphlet of Prospectors for this
undertaking, was headed by the verse
from Holy Scripture "The ways of
Sion do mourn, because none
come to the solemn feasts (Lam. I. 4)
whereas in fact we are accustomed
to see from 10 to 15,000 pilgrims
annually in Jerusalem, only it is
true that the majority of them are
not Roman Catholics.

There were no Ladies in
the French party - All wore
white

white Arab mantles procured in
Marseilles and small gold crosses,
purchased by themselves it is true
but presented to them after a
special mass, by a Bishop. -
Thus they appeared in a kind of
uniform, and people here were
amused at the invasion by a
band of Crusaders

I should add that their progress
through the country was conducted
with piety and decorum. - Some
however betrayed excessive fear at
the rumours of dangers in travelling
through the country, and returned
to Jaffa after visiting Jerusalem,

and its environs: not venturing to proceed to Nazareth, Tiberias and Caesarea.

These rumours were utterly unfounded, but by way of parenthesis I may remark how constantly I find persons of the Roman Catholic religion more alarmed in travelling in this country than others. I attribute this solely to their intercourse with monks and believing the representations of those very timid personages. as to the state of the country: any unknown peasant is by them described to the travellers as Bedaween, and these write it

down so in their Journals.

Without undue reflection on my colleagues the Consuls of France and Austria here. I may state my belief that they keep up the same feeling: they scarcely even leave the streets of the city, the latter consul knows nothing of Arabic language, and their Kawakes tell them any exaggerated stories to augment their own importance which are then repeated to travellers.

I have lately read in the "Triester Zeitung" (to which intelligence is occasionally sent from the Austrian Consulate) that the road from Jaffa

to Jerusalem is so unsafe that no one can travel upon it without a very strong guard. But at the same time people were constantly passing along that road in perfect security singly or in parties: even the timid Jews. And the English families were living in tents in the open country without the least apprehension of molestation - we rode about the country as we please and are personally known to the peasants. My cancelliere and I often made journeys attended each by a single Kawas. And I remember my surprise on returning from Jaffa

3

509
Jaffa about two years ago with one Kawas (his gun left behind in Jerusalem, he had only his sword and I had no weapons whatever) - to meet the French Chancellor and the Consul's adopted son attended by two Kawases all covered with arms. - They had two swords, four pistols, and a blunderbuss each: The Kawases had muskets also. On asking what it all meant they told me that the road was dangerous for travelling.

To return however to my principal subject - we are in expectation that the above

described pilgrimage parties will
become more numerous and frequent
and will serve, together with the
additional influence derivable
from the Consulates of Spain and
of Naples about to be established
here, to create a larger counterpoise
to the expected increase of Russian
influence in Jerusalem and Palestine.

I have the honor to be
My Lord

With the highest respect

Your Lordship's

Most obedient humble servant

(Signed) J. Finck.

Rt Hon^{ble}

Earl of Clarendon

H. G. 4 C B. pc