

CANADA.

Madame Belle Pevsner, the well-known Zionist lecturer, has received a great welcome in Montreal, and requests for her appearance at various Jewish centres throughout the Dominion are constantly being received by the Bureau Committee of the Canadian Zionist Federation. Madame Pevsner has delivered several lectures in Montreal, and her speeches have been reported in all the local papers. Madame Pevsner has succeeded in interesting many members of the community in the work of the Bezalel School in Jerusalem, and her visit will no doubt be successful in raising extra capital for it.

RUSSIA.

The reactionary deputies of the Duma have once more brought to the front the absurd libellous accusations of ritual murder against the Jews. As reported in last week's issue, the Duma rejected a motion by the reactionaries demanding urgent discussion of the truth of the charge. The rejection did not, however, have the effect of inducing Purishkowitch and his friends to leave the matter as it was, and two days later they submitted another motion, only in a different form. They were anxious to know whether there were not at present some innocent Christians charged with the murder of Yuschinsky, and whether an opportunity would be given to discuss the question in the Duma Committee. This time they were more successful, for such an opportunity was promised. Meanwhile there has been a dramatic development of the revival of the stupid accusation that Jews require Christian blood for religious purposes. The well-known St. Petersburg newspapers, *Rossia*—which is considered to be the Government organ—and the Liberal *Retch*, have simultaneously published a powerful protest against the blood libel signed by 813 Russian Rabbis. In the protest it is declared that there is no Jewish sect that needs Christian blood. It is an invented fable, with the object of inflaming the populace. The Rabbis point out that the charge, which is of mediaeval origin, has not been, and never could be, substantiated, because the most paramount Jewish law is that which commands Jews not to commit murder. Even the blood of animals is forbidden to Jews, and the guiding principle of the Jewish religion is "Love thy neighbour as thyself." As spiritual leaders engaged all their lives in the study of Jewish laws and customs, they are all the more grieved at the falsity of the charge, and they therefore feel it their duty to proclaim before the God of Israel and all the world that there is not the slightest foundation for the shameful accusation. The fact that this protest was published in the Government organ, *Rossia*, is rather significant, and is inspiring Russian Jewry with the hope that the Jew Bailes will shortly be released. It might be added that several prominent Russian writers have formed a committee to collect signatures from famous Russians protesting against the blood charge.

The good news reaches us of the promotion of Major-General Tolmatcheff to the rank of Lieutenant-General in the infantry reserve of the province of St. Petersburg, and of his retirement from the Odessa Prefecture. Ill-health was given as the official reason, but it is an open secret that the General was relieved from his duties contrary to his wishes. Only a few weeks ago a deputation of his intimate friends visited Livadia (the seat of the Court) with the view of frustrating this latest move of the Premier, but the Czar, having once promised to comply with M. Kokovtzeff's wishes, refused to receive the delegates. During the Stolypin régime Tolmatcheff's position was impregnable, and even when the late Premier was ignored by the Prefect, the former could not enlist the Czar's support against the latter. Public opinion became so accustomed to regard the General as a permanent fixture at Odessa that all rumours of his departure were discredited. At Odessa the rejoicings among all sections of the population are of an enthusiastic nature. Even a section of the reactionaries, who recently quarrelled with the Prefect and his assistant, M. Pelican (being unable to agree on the division of the spoils of their common plunder), expresses its pleasure at his retirement, and only a handful of "Real Russians" are shedding tears at their great loss. Throughout the Empire the Liberals welcome the step as a good beginning, and the hope is expressed that Odessa would at last be able to breathe freely, and that a suitable administrator would succeed the General.

ZANGWILL'S VIEW OF ZIONISM.

In mail week the *Christian Commonwealth* published an interesting interview with Mr. Israel Zangwill on the subject of his forthcoming new play, "The Next Religion," which is to be performed in America before the end of the year. In the course of the interview, asked "What is the present position of the Zionist movement?" Mr. Zangwill replied:—"In despair of really achieving a solution of the Jewish question through Palestine, it is becoming a spiritual movement, with the object of linking Jews together in the lands of exile. As this was the very thing that Herzl came to upset, the wheel has simply moved round to the *status quo*. So that Zionism now is exactly as it was before the advent of Herzl, with the difference that instead of being a prayer, it has become a platform



"THE CHOCOLATE SOLDIER."

After a considerable interval His Majesty's opened its doors once more to a Gaiety company, the advent of whose arrival was hailed with undivided pleasure and delight by everybody. The new Wheeler-Edwardes Gaiety company opened on Tuesday before a crowded house, with "The Chocolate Soldier," a comparatively new operette by Oscar Strauss (which authorship, by the way, has been omitted to be stated in the programme), based on Bernard Shaw's play "Arms and the Man." Like "The Waltz Dream," "The Chocolate Soldier" soon became a "hot" favourite all over Europe, and it bids fair to do so here. It is full of sweet rhythmic airs and melodies, and there is a leading one in particular, "Life is lonely," sung by Nadina in the first act, which occurs in every subsequent one as a solo, duet, and chorus, with which the Johannesburg air will soon be ringing. There is not much chorus work in this operette compared with most others. The piece opens, contrary to true honoured custom, with a bedroom scene, where solos, duets, trios, and quartettes follow each other in quick succession. Next to that beautiful waltz theme mention should be made of a duet between Nadina and Bunerli (the Chocolate Soldier), as also of a trio between Nadina, Aurelia, and Mascha. In the second act the opening scene is very pretty and picturesque, giving the chorus some chance to distinguish itself; there is further a pretty duet between Alexis and Nadina; another between Nadina and Bunerli; also a sextette between the principal performers; whilst the closing scene of this act has a distinctly operatic touch. The third and last act is also full of fine numbers of all kinds and descriptions, including the opening chorus; there is a pretty duet between Alexis and Mascha; the "letter-writing" scene is very charming, and so is the humming duet between Nadina and Bunerli.

SOME OF THE ARTISTES.

Miss Mabel Nelson is the possessor of a charming and graceful personality and of a fine, well-trained soprano. She plays the leading part of Nadina, and it was evident from the very first that she will very soon become a great favourite with patrons of His Majesty's. Miss Beatrice Meredith has a pretty mezzo-soprano, and does not yield to the previous lady anything on the points of personal appearance. Miss Betty Shale, as Aurelia, had ample scope to display her fine alto voice. The title role was taken care of by Mr. Percy Claridge, who acted the Chocolate Soldier, a lieutenant in the Servian Army. He is a first-class all-round actor, and has a good voice. Mr. Mylcs Clifton, who took the part of Casimir Popoff, is known to many Randites, having been out here before, and he is as good as ever. He was greeted with considerable applause on his first appearance in the second act, and carried the audience with him right through the piece. As Alexis Mr. Lawrence Legge displayed a first-class tenor voice of unusual strength, and an ideal figure for a stage hero; he also received a very flattering reception, as indeed did all the members of the new Gaiety company. The aforementioned are the principal characters of the piece, and there is no gainsaying the fact that their *ensemble* is excellent, and that the performance of the opening night passed off without the slightest hitch, whilst "The Chocolate Soldier" has every chance of a long run before it. Mention should also be made of Mr. Theo. Wendt, the conductor, who came out with this company, and who has a firm control over the orchestra and singers alike, the former having been increased for this occasion. The costumes are picturesque, and the scenery leaves nothing to be desired.

THE PANTZER TROUPE.

The principal attraction of the new Empire company is without any doubt the Pantzer Troupe of acrobats, and they reach in their sketch, "The Limit," almost the real limit of acrobatic perfection. The way one member of the troupe, holding a cigar in his mouth, balances a colleague, similarly provided, on the two cigars must be seen to be believed. A good many more equally difficult tricks are performed by the combination—all with the utmost ease and perfection. A comic element is introduced, which is screamingly funny, especially the sham "bullfight" and that the whole "turn" is highly appreciated by the public is shown by the continuous recalls they receive.

THE DOHERTY SISTERS.

Most of us know the Doherty Sisters of old, and we only regret that they let such a long time elapse before coming back to us. Their act is highly enjoyable and given with all the old vim; their singing, dancing, dialogues, and "business" are exhibitions rarely seen in Johannesburg, and immensely liked by the audiences.