

Jacob Gesundheit

I AM rather proud of the fact that the brains of a group of South African Jews are associated in the remarkable development now taking place in connection with the Tiberias Hot Springs in Palestine. Chief amongst these is our old friend, Mr. Jacob Gesundheit of Capetown, who is Chairman of the company and is at present in England in its interests.

There seems to be every possibility that the hot springs in Tiberias will yet become a fashionable health centre. Wealthy Jews, who in the past went for a "cure" to Kissingen or Carlsbad, are likely to go to Palestine instead. There can be no doubt of the fine benefit accruing to the country should these pilgrimages eventuate.

Tiberias

I EXPRESS the hope that South African Jews, who have in the past experimented in the "cure" places of Europe, will consider the idea of visiting Tiberias, which is incidentally one of the most historic towns in Eretz Israel and was built in the days of Herod Antipas, the King, in C.E. 16, naming it after his Imperial patron. That king wanted it to be a centre of Hellenism, and despite its Greek temples, schools and baths, Tiberias became one of the strongest centres of Hebrew culture in the second century. Here the Jerusalem Talmud was compiled by famous Amoraim of the third and fourth centuries as well as the fixation of the Hebrew vocalised text of Scripture, the Massorah in the ninth century. For centuries Tiberias was the chief Jewish town in Palestine, and its head was entitled "Gaon of Tiberias, Head of the School of Israel."

Traditionally, it is stated, that in Tiberias are to be found the tombs of Jochabed, Miriam and Ziporah, mother, sister and wife of Moses, as well as those of 24,000 pupils of Rabbi Akiba, the hero of the mystics. The great Maimonides has his burial place there, and if the manuscript reading of the renowned traveller of mediaeval times, Benjamin of Tudela, is correct, the bones of one of our greatest poets, Jehudah Halevi, are supposed to be found in this ancient place, which has now a Jewish majority on its Town Council. Tiberias had a remarkable revival some four centuries ago owing to the efforts of Don Joseph of Naxos.

Those hot springs, to which Mr. Gesundheit and others are giving attention, were already well known in the days of the Roman Empire. According to the fragmentary documents discovered by the late Dr. Shechter in the Cairo Genizah, one gathers, too, that among the correspondence which took place between the Gaon of Tiberias and the heads of the Exile in Babylon, are to be found begging letters from Jews who repaired to the hot baths of Tiberias to be cured of all mortal ills.

Yosselle Rosenblatt

A SWEET voice in Israel was suddenly closed by the death in Jerusalem

Current Communal Comments

By
'Hamabit'

during mail week of Cantor Yosselle Rosenblatt, at the early age of fifty-one. He was only four years old when he began to sing. The lad made public appearances in synagogues in Eastern Europe at the age of eight, and at fourteen he was already writing synagogue music. Rosenblatt was appointed Cantor at Pressburg at the age of eighteen, after competing for this most desired post with fifty-six cantors.

In 1906 Rosenblatt became Chief Cantor of Hamburg, and retained that post until 1912, when he went to America as Cantor of the First Hungarian Congregation of New York. He later became a famous member of the concert platform and would have been a wealthy man had he not suffered a tremendous financial loss in connection with the publication of an orthodox Jewish weekly paper. It was in order to meet his debts honourably that he took up film work and even appeared as a turn in vaudeville theatres. Before doing so, he severed his connection as cantor of his congregation.

Rosenblatt's son is a young rabbi in New York, and was recently appointed professor of the Semitic Languages at the Jewish Theological Seminary. It had been the great Cantor's intention to settle in Palestine and bring his whole family there.

Names

THE limits to which Hitlerites are going towards "injecting" the German spirit into that enlightened country is further illustrated by the decision to Germanise so-called Jewish first names. The historic name of "David" is henceforth to be "Deutschland," and the revered name of "Nathan" is to be "Nation."

I wonder if the Rt. Hon. David Lloyd George would be pleased to be called "Deutschland" Lloyd George. There was a Nathaniel Hawthorne in American literature. He will now have to be known as "Nation" Hawthorne in-so-far as there are any German appreciators of the talent of this great literary artist.

The whole idea is so extraordinary that one wonders wherein lies the demarcation line between Hitlerism and insanity.

The Rokeachs

THERE has just passed away in a city in Wisconsin a man who made a fortune in the manufacture of kosher soap and other food products which come within the jurisdiction of our dietary laws. The late Israel Rokeach was a native of Kovno, Lithuania, and went

with his father to New York in 1890. Realising the large number of orthodox Jews in the great metropolis of the new world, who still used water only in their ablutions, the Rokeachs struck on the idea of manufacturing kosher soap and other kosher toilet requisites. At a later period they introduced into their factory the manufacture of various food products which had been previously made exclusively in the Jewish home. These products "caught on" and the firm of Rokeach

became widely known throughout the whole of the American continent. The business so developed until it became a millionaire concern.

It will be recollected that in 1928, Israel Rokeach established a fifty thousand dollar mortgage fund to aid *chalutzim* in Palestine.

Ancient Israel

I LEARN that interesting discoveries have been made by the Joint Expedition now being carried on in Palestine. During last month the Expedition, which resumed its work for the third year at Sasbaste, Samaria, uncovered the area of the Israelite palaces at the site which was formerly the capital of Israel.

Ancient Jewish tombs, found in villages outside of Jerusalem, have recently been explored. A number of ornamented ossuaries and implements from the Hellenistic and Roman periods were discovered. A large number of ossuaries were found on the western slope of Mount Scopus, where the Hebrew University is located. This cave was found still closed by a stone slab and contained twenty-three ossuaries kept in an inner cave and various burial shafts. Five were found to have inscriptions mostly in Hebrew characters. Several were decorated with carvings on their exteriors. Earthenware lamps and other utensils of approximately the Hasmonean period were discovered in the same cave.

This illuminating prehistoric research work in Palestine is all being carried out under the auspices of the geology section of the Hebrew University, jointly with the British School of Archaeology and the Harvard University.

Logic.

"HOW do we know," asked Chaim, "that our father Abraham wore a *yarmulke*?"

"That can be easily proven," replied Zorach. "For father Abraham must have worn a *yarmulke*."

"But how can you really prove it?"

"Well, it is written in the Bible that *Va-Yelach Avraham*—and Abraham went."

Continued Zorach: "Now if Abraham went, it stands to reason that he would not go without a *yarmulke*."