

Art

I WAS pleased to note that the work of two distinguished South African artists have lately received some measure of recognition. Moses Kottler's study "Meidje" has been purchased for the Johannesburg Art Gallery for the sum of two hundred and fifty guineas. The statue is in Cyprus wood about four feet high. It now stands in the centre court of the South African Art Section of the Empire Exhibition. It is an unusual study of adolescence conceived with fine imagination and moulded in rhythmic lines — altogether a masterpiece upon the attainment of which Johannesburg art lovers are to be congratulated.

I am glad the Government bought, last week, three oil paintings by Mr. J. H. Amshewitz. All of these are intended for the new residence of the Prime Minister at Pretoria.

I know that there are a certain number of our own people of wealth who encourage the work of local Jewish painters and sculptors but they are few indeed. Many generous and spacious homes still lack a single picture by any artist of note—much less that of the work of a Jewish painter or sculptor.

We have also a number of institutions in our community. It would be pleasant to see exhibited permanently in some of these buildings the work of a Kottler or an Amshewitz, or even of some lesser known but talented Jewish wielders of the brush or moulders in stone.

Chagy

THOSE of us who are interested in synagogue worship—and there are a goodly number of us still—feel gratified that one of the finest exponents of *chasaruth* in the world to-day in the person of Cantor Chagy is still with us. His intonation of the *shachrith* and the *musaph* services give great pleasure to the connoisseur and deeply move the masses who crowd in the particular synagogue where the famous cantor is engaged.

I now hear that there is shortly to be published in America by the well-known Bloch Publishing Company, a volume of original synagogue music composed by Cantor Chagy. The work, which will be entitled "Tephiloth Chagy," is now in its final preparation for the press. I feel sure that chazanim in South Africa and all parts of the world will look forward to perusing so interesting a work.

There is no doubt that Chagy's presence in this country on a *bimah* of an important congregation has had the effect of improving the general quality of synagogue singing in South Africa.

The Russian Jew

UNLIKE Hebrew, Yiddish is not persecuted in Soviet Russia. In certain parts of the country, notably in Ruthenia, the language is even officially recognised and in the Ukraine it is being used by some of the law courts. Nevertheless, the language is now losing ground in that country. Dr. Engelman, an American statistician, has published recently an analysis of Russian Jewry in which he shows that even ten years ago only seventy per cent. of Russian Jewry declared Yiddish as their

Current Communal Comments

By
"Hamabit"

mother tongue. During the Great War, statistics were compiled by the Joint Distribution Committee showing that 97 per cent. of the Jewish population spoke Yiddish. The contrast seems to be a significant one, for in Russia the adaptation of the Russian language spells total assimilation.

Dr. Engelman also gives alarming figures regarding the spread of mixed marriages amongst the Jews of Russia. In Central Russia there were, in 1926, 532 mixed marriages to every thousand Jewish marriages! It is estimated that the number has largely increased during the last ten years. It would be interesting to know how many of the Jewish marriages were celebrated in synagogues, but in this matter as well as in many other aspects of Jewish life under the Soviets, statistics are not available.

In spite of the figures quoted above, I doubt whether Russian Jewry will perish through assimilation. Judging from what one reads of social life in Soviet Russia to-day, the country is becoming more and more conventional and the people are returning to their old "bourgeois prejudices." Divorce is no longer as easy as it was before, and the family which was the mainstay of Jewish life, is now treated with reverence. This is likely to affect Jewish life in that country and produce a reaction to the decay of ten years ago.

Levy

THERE passed away recently in London Mr. José G. Levy, one of the best-known contemporary theatre managers and dramatic authors. He was fifty-two years of age.

Mr. Levy, who made many a notable contribution to the English stage, was generally regarded as one of the best types of theatrical employer. Stout and unmistakably Jewish in appearance, he was as well-known and respected in Paris as in London, and was on friendly terms with nearly every French actor and playwright. His popularity with the latter was largely due to his mastery of the French language, as well as to his sense of the theatre which enabled him to translate many French plays which pleased the British public. Two years ago, Mr. Levy received the Order of the Chevalier of the Legion of Honour from the French Government in recognition of his services to French dramatic art in England.

Among some of the most popular adaptations from the French which Mr. Levy brought to the notice of English audiences were "Yes, Uncle," which ran for over six hundred performances, and "The Glad Eye," which ran nearly as long as the former. He was responsible, in 1920, for the first season at the Little Theatre in London of the "Grand Guignol" plays. His genial personality will be greatly missed in present-day theatrical circles abroad.

Ehrlich

THE success of the Pasteur film, which was shown recently in this country, has again illustrated how the talking picture can be used for spreading a knowledge amongst the masses of the lives of great scientists. The layman regards a bacteriological test as part of his medico's routine. It is only when he sees such a picture as "Pasteur" that he realises the vast amount of self-sacrifice which precedes every new scientific discovery.

When I saw the Pasteur film, I thought how useful it would be if the public were given films describing the contributions of our own scientists to the welfare of mankind. For this reason, I was glad to hear that an Austrian concern is now busy producing a picture of the life of Paul Ehrlich. The latter, who died in 1917, discovered salvarsan which created a revolution in the treatment of an unhappy disease and saved the lives and happiness of millions of people all over the world. Up till 1908, when he was awarded the Nobel Prize, Ehrlich led a life full of struggle and vicissitude. He suffered mainly because of his having been a Jew, and his pride of race aggravated his position in the hostile world in which he moved.

First and Last

EVERYBODY was talking about the Schlesinger Air Race. There was excitement in the air and finally Chayim Zorach decided that he would go up on a trial flight himself. His wife was shocked at the idea, and his children begged him to desist. His *landsleit* warned him of the possible danger to his digestion. In fact, they told him his life was at stake. But Chayim was determined that he, too, should fly.

So he went to the aerodrome at Germiston and arranged a short trial flight. When it was over, Chayim (who looked rather pale) said to the pilot as he landed from the aeroplane: "Thank you very much for the two flights."

"Why two?" asked the pilot.

"My first flight and my last one," replied Chayim.

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