

Recognition

I HAVE heard lately of an unique compliment being paid to an official of a local synagogue. It is the usual criticism that Hebrew congregations in this country rarely appreciate adequately the services of their incumbents in office. It is, therefore an unusual action on the part of the Beth Hamedrash Hagodel in Johannesburg to have recently made its *chazan* a life member of the congregation.

Cantor Chagy well deserves the great compliment paid to him. Besides the rare art he shows in his beautiful rendition of synagogue liturgy, he has by his dignified bearing during his five years' stay in Johannesburg, brought further prestige to the synagogue he so faithfully serves.

What interests me chiefly is to observe that a local synagogue can rise to an occasion of this kind and publicly demonstrate its appreciation of service loyally carried out by one of its chief officials.

"Gentlemen"

LAKE Placid Club is high amongst the exclusive clubs in America. Only the very select have access to it. The club supports art, literature, and music. No Jews, however, appear to be accepted as members.

Recently the club announced a competition for the best musical composition. The competition was conducted on strict lines. The adjudicators were not permitted to know the names of the entrants. Everything went off smoothly, but who could have foreseen that the author of the selected composition would be a person of the Jewish persuasion? His name is Louis Greenberg, the composer who created music for Eugene O'Neil's "Emperor Jones," and who has already won for himself considerable recognition.

The managers of Lake Placid Club have it said—accepted the ruling of the adjudicators. They would not, however, invite the composer to the special concert arranged in connection with the competition when the winning musical work was played.

It appears that the tarnishing of the new club's "exclusiveness" by awarding the prize to a Jew could be deepened by the kindly and gentlemanly act of asking the winner to conduct his own original composition at the special function organised for that purpose.

Shanghai

A FRIEND of mine sends me some interesting details which he had received from a correspondent in Shanghai. From these I gleaned some interesting facts about the position of Jews in the besieged city. About 100,000 Jews are affected by the military operations. Of these, 500 in Shanghai and 200 in Hong Kong have their all as a result of the air bombardments. The Jewish relief in-

Current Communal Comments

By "Hamabit"

stitution, named after Eli Kadoori, that well known philanthropist, has issued a statement that it is not able to cope with the many cases of distress. The local rabbinate issued an appeal for help.

The majority of the European Jews in Shanghai live in the international settlement. There are amongst them numerous English, American, French, Dutch and German Jewish citizens. Very tragic, too, is the position of the Harbin Jews who several years ago fled to Shanghai, after the occupation of Harbin by the Japanese.

The numerous White Russians, who were amongst the emigree circles in China, have now raised their heads. There have been threats of pogroms. Jewish Youth Organisations in Shanghai and Tientsin are now obliged to form self-defence organisations, and the first duty is to prevent a panic amongst the Jewish population. Tientsin is the second biggest Jewish centre in the Far East.

And so, in every conflict of importance, are sections of our people ruthlessly involved.

Eger

IN connection with the hundredth anniversary of the death of Rabbi Akiba Eger, I was interested to read that the Jewish community of Eisenstadt is holding a special memorial exhibition illustrating the work and influence of the great rabbi. Eisenstadt, by the way, is the only Jewish community in Europe which maintains a certain amount of political autonomy. On Sabbath the gates of the little town are closed to traffic. This is, perhaps the reason why, unlike many other renowned rabbis, so much material has been preserved in connection with the life of Rabbi Eger.

Some twenty-five years ago, descendants of the rabbi decided to form an association of the Eger family. A thorough search was made throughout the world and over 250 descendants joined the association. At the present Eger exhibition in Eisenstadt, there is displayed all the material relating to this remarkable family association which united a group of Jews from all parts of the world.

I have heard that a descendant of Rabbi Eger lives in a mining camp in Northern Rhodesia. Is he also a member of the Eger Association?

A Wrestler

SPORTS columns in the American Jewish press have been featuring lately a young Jewish wrestler who is described as a true Samson from the land of the Philistines. His name is David Ben Shalom and he hails from Palestine!

Two years ago this fine athlete won a championship at the Maccabiade and has since then visited several cities in Europe and performed well in many important bouts. Amongst those who were defeated by Ben Shalom are Donati, the champion of Italy, Yago, champion of Austria, and Martinov, champion of Bulgaria.

The promising battler boasts of a bit of *yichus*, for his grandfather was the Chief Rabbi of Pressburg, and his father occupies a rabbinical position in Hungary. The young wrestler himself attended the *yeshivah* for a number of years and has a good knowledge of the Talmud.

It is not often that rabbinical families bring forth giants of physical strength. It would be interesting to meet this wrestler who can quote large portions of *gemorrah*. A few words from the Talmud whispered to an opponent might help to get him properly into a Japanese arm-lock, from which it would be difficult to escape; or some quiet words from the *tenach* might trap the other fellow into a Boston crab and in this way get a welcome decision.

It would be interesting to meet this fighter who was an ex-*yeshivah bochur*, and I hope that one day David Ben Shalom will be seen battling in Johannesburg with a non-Talmudic co-religionist — like the fierce but smiling Ben Sherman.

A Soldier

AN interesting visitor passed through London in mail week. He was Rabbi Michael Aaronson, of Cincinatti, who is blind as a result of wounds received in the Great War. He was on his way to France as a member of the American Battle Monuments Commission, on which he represents the Jewish faith.

It is said of this fine soldier-rabbi that when he returned home from the front, he was entertained by a group of friends. When pressed to drink more than one glass of wine, he replied: "I'd better not, for I won't be able to see a thing."

A Habit

A "SCHADCHAN" introduced a young fellow to a fair maiden. They went for a walk together, and the next day the young man said to the "schadchan":

"I like the girl, but she appears to limp. Does she do this regularly?"

"No, not regularly," replied the "schadchan," "only when she walks."

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