

News Items, Invitations, etc., should be addressed to the Resident Correspondent, Box 1204, Capetown. Business Enquiries, etc., should be addressed to the Head Office, P.O. Box 20, Johannesburg.

CAPETOWN COMMENTS.

LEAGUE OF GENTILES.

CAPE JEWISH GUILD.

GENERAL NEWS.

(From Our Own Correspondent).

After a period of vigorous social activity, there has been a lull during the past week and nothing of outstanding importance, so far as the local Jewish community is concerned, has taken place.

During November there was a surfeit of fashionable weddings, many Barmitzvah receptions were celebrated and there were other social amenities, whilst, on the more serious side, communal organisations were busy with annual reports, general committees, elections of executives and committees, etc.

The local press during the past week have given prominence to news communicated from Johannesburg regarding the existence of a so-called "Gentiles League," ostensibly established for the purpose of boycotting the Jewish traders.

The "Cape Times" and the "Cape" printed leading articles, whilst the "Review" gave prominence to a special article on the subject.

In each case the journals severely criticise the instigators of this anti-semitic agitation and each condemns in no uncertain manner the movement which has just come to light and which has its birth-place on the Rand.

The "Cape Times" leading article says that if the "Gentile Society" is what it is described to be, its aims are quite in conflict with the well being of the Society and the just government of men. The journal continues: "We have in this country already racial problems, which are sufficiently acute without super imposing yet another. . . . We do not want any Ku Klux Klans of Fascisti in South Africa, and we have never yet heard that anti-semitism as a national plan ever brought advantage to any nation in any part of the world."

The leading article then deems it appropriate to "touch once more on certain facts revealed in our migration statistics which may in some measure account for the subterranean growth of the mischievous spirit which finds embodiment in the Gentile League." Figures, recently published by the Census Department, are then quoted, of course, as they affect Hebrews, and, says the journal. "the figures are such as to suggest that the Union Government should give the most careful attention to the problem." The leading article concludes with the following:—

"No question of anti-Semitism is involved. It is simply a question of South Africanism, and we believe that the great majority of the 65,000 Jews who are in South Africa to-day and are helping to build up its wealth and its prosperity would agree that the indiscriminate inpouring of so many hundreds of Southern and Eastern Europeans every year, as long as the other fountains of immigration are dry, is not desirable in the interests of South Africa.

"This, of course, is only indirectly related to the question of the 'Gentile Society,' which we regard

as a foolish and dangerous attempt to thrust upon South African Jewry a racial approbrium which it does not deserve. We hope and believe that, as it is foolish, it is also insignificant."

The "Cape" in its leading article dismisses the whole subject with the following:—

We are inclined to think that too much notice is being taken by the Press of the "League of Gentiles" recently formed in Johannesburg to boycott Jews. On the other hand this is a "secret" society; and all "secret" societies are insidious, unmoral, and pregnant with possibilities of serious trouble. For instance, in America that delectable organisation, the Ku Klux Klan, is terrorising social life in some of the States and has even reached the wicked foolery of having huge processions of masked men, carrying banners of hate against Roman Catholics, Jews and Niggers—a nice discrimination. Equally there might be a secret "Klan" against Wesleyans, Vivisectionists and Chinese. All these secret movements are contemptible and cowardly. If any man or body of men in Johannesburg or elsewhere has a grievance against a class of Jew or the whole body of Jews, he ought to have the courage to say what it is. The Secret "League of Gentiles" is a dark and dirty business. There are good Jews and there are bad Jews; as there are bad Christians and good ones.

The "Review" equally ridicules this latest ebullition of anti-Semitism, and whilst no official statement has yet been issued on behalf of the Jewish community, one can feel satisfied with the attitude taken up by the Press so far in this matter.

Attempts have been made to obtain interviews from prominent members of the community by the local journals, but those approached with commendable restraint have declined to express any opinion.

At this stage nothing can be gained by taking public cognizance of this manifestation of unreasonable racialism. Too much importance need not be attached to this organization, and were it not for the publicity given to it in this country and culled by the Press of other countries, then it could perhaps be entirely ignored. At the same time, as a community, we can undoubtedly meet such idiotic attacks, and, representing organised South African Jewry as it does, one can safely leave the handling of this matter to the Board of Deputies, who are no doubt keeping themselves au fait with this and any other form of anti-semitism that presents itself.

* * * *

The Jewish women of the Cape Peninsula are arranging to welcome their distinguished Jewish sister the Hon. Mrs. Ernest Franklin, President of the National Council of Women of Great Britain. A reception will be held at the Mount Nelson Hotel on Wednesday, the 9th instant, when Mrs. Franklin will speak on Work amongst women. Practically every Institution in the Peninsula will be represented.

The arrangements are in the hands of a capable Committee headed by Mrs. T. Saphra and Mrs. Geo. Isaacs.

* * * *

The Jewish Guild continue to provide excellent social fare for its members, and the cordial reception accorded every effort by the Committee has led them to go further afield in their endeavours to introduce a variety of sections.

The latest is a "Choral Section" and this promises to be well supported. Preliminary arrangements have been made and an early start can be anticipated. Under the directorship of Mr. Joseph

JEWISH NOVELISTS.

(Specially contributed to the "S.A. Jewish Chronicle.")

By Dr. MANFRED NATHAN, K.C.

When we have regard to the immense contributions of Jews to modern literature, and to their universal activity in journalism, it is more than surprising that they have not accomplished more in the field of fiction. Those who criticise the Jews are apt to dwell on their want of constructive capacity; and, if this be a true charge, it may account for the comparative failure of the Jew in the writing of novels. Confining our attention only to English literature, we find that it is many years since Jews have made any really striking contribution to it. Of course, most people will point to the novels of Disraeli; but while it is true that at one time they had a great vogue, there can be little doubt that that vogue has immeasurably declined. Disraeli painted brilliant word pictures of life in his day, especially in political and aristocratic circles; but they are pictures of a life that has passed away; and the novel of contemporary life, unless it contains characters and incidents which have a universal appeal, is bound to have a more or less transient existence. How few of his characters there are who really live! Whereas Scott, Dickens and Trakeray have created a populous gallery of immortal characters, there are but two or three of Disraeli's who survive—if they do survive. The irony of the thing is that Disraeli, who in his novels

Cohen one may look forward to much harmony in the club rooms in the near future.

The newly formed orchestra is making rapid strides, and the Capetown orchestral combinations must look to their laurels! At any rate looking ahead a little there is every possibility that the Guild Orchestra will be the means of saving the social sections money which is now incurred by engaging outside orchestras to discourse the necessary music at dances and other social functions.

Those who took part in the recent presentations of "Sugarman the Shadchan" can be assured that their efforts were keenly appreciated and the numerous requests for repeat performances amply demonstrate the success they achieved.

An excellent concert took place on the 1st instant at the club rooms, which were well filled by members and friends. A delightful programme was submitted by Miss Harris, Miss Stein, Mr. Joseph Cohen, Mrs. S. Winer and Miss Hinda Honikman. Mr. Phineas Lewis was the accompanist. Following on the concert there was a "Names of Celebrities" competition and the usual dance.

* * * *

The Committee of the Cape Jewish Board of Guardians in their "monthly summary of activities" which they now send to their members, state that for the month of November they dealt with 37 applicants for relief, in which connection the sum of £62 4s. 6d. was disbursed. Weekly and monthly pensions absorbed £146 and £4 1s. was spent in railway fares. An amount of £74 0s. 3d. was received in subscriptions and £59 15s. 11d. in general donations. £114 19s. 6d. was realised in collections at various functions and £15 15s. was contributed towards special cases.

* * * *

Mr. and Mrs. J. Robinson and daughter arrived from Durban on Friday and proceeded to Muizenberg, where they intend making a stay of three months.

took great care to avoid dealing with Jewish life, is to-day read chiefly by Jews. But they cling to the Disraeli tradition on sentimental grounds, and not because his novels are worth caring for on account of their plot construction, their vivid character-drawing, or their dialogue. During the mid-years of the nineteenth century two novels by a Jewess, Grace Aguilar, made their appearance—"The Vale of Cedars" and "Home Influence." They attained a large circulation. With a deep religious vein running through them, they were meritorious productions; and they deserve to be read by a later generation of Jews. Still, even they do not contain any characters who rise unbidden to the memory. A long period elapsed before the appearance of Israel Zangwill. He turned, wisely, to the rich and unworked mine of his own people's characteristics, and attracted attention with "The Children of the Ghetto." With his fund of humour, and his descriptive powers, he was able to draw telling pictures of Jewish interiors, and in a measure to convey to the outer world something of real Jewish life. But Zangwill, also, failed in the art of character-drawing, and in this respect his novels lack "grip." They are full of cleverness, and of the display of an immense, if diffuse, erudition, but no one can say that a novel of Zangwill's ever held him spellbound. The only character of his who may live is the hero of "The King of Schnorrers," although there is, perhaps, too much farce in the book. "Dreamers of the Ghetto" and "Tragedies of the Ghetto" made a good impression when they appeared—but who, out of curiosity, would go and enquire what those books of short stories contain? It is possible that Zangwill may be remembered by his "Children of the Ghetto," though it, also, depicts a by-gone age. His "Grandchildren of the Ghetto," in the last part of that story, are now grandfathers and grandmothers, in their turn. Yet here, again, the sentiment and loyalty of his brother Jews may keep Zangwill alive for a space. About the same time we had "Aaron the Jew," by B. L. Farjeon. It is a better-constructed tale than any we have mentioned, but it had no great vogue. One wonders how many editions were published. Certainly, the story is not remembered. Next came Mrs. Frankau (Frank Danby); but, instead of writing a serious book, she dealt with her subject—as far as Jews were concerned—in a vein of satire and ridicule, as in "Pigs in Clover"; and her effort has spent itself. Her works, also, will be relegated to the cemetery of dead books of which Lord Rosebery spoke. Her son, Gilbert Frankau, has been more successful—although he has not written of Jewish life. His "Peter Jackson, Cigar Merchant," has been commended by men who fought as one of the few convincing narratives of the Great War in fictional garb. And what of the rest? There is G. B. Stern, whose "Tents in Israel" is full of smartness. But—it likes me not. No—the real, vivid, stirring tale of Jewish life is still to seek.

H. J. DENNIS,

EXPERT ADVISER ON ALL LICENCES,
86 PRESIDENT STREET, JOHANNESBURG.
Phone 3106 Central. Box 6208.

Begs to notify all General Dealers that he is doing all necessary work in regard to the New General Dealers (Control) Ordinance, 1925, for the sum of 10/-, which includes cost of Notice in Provincial Gazette.

ADDRESS AFTER END OF NOVEMBER:
94 PRITCHARD STREET,
Cumberland House, opposite New Law Courts.