

THE SOCIETY OF JEWISH JURISPRUDENCE

(Specially written for the "S.A. Jewish Chronicle"
by Adv. J. Herbstein.)

A recent divorce action in London between Jews (Prager v. Prager, Feb. 3rd, 1926), showed how great was the ignorance of Jewish Law. So noticeable was this that the English Law Journal of 6th February, 1926 was led to comment as follows:—

"How widespread is the ignorance of Jewish Jurisprudence has been indicated only this week by the considered judgment of Mr. Justice Hill in a divorce case in which the differences between our marriage law and the Jewish was remarkably illustrated—not entirely to the disadvantage of the latter . . . A little wider knowledge of the Jewish legal system . . . might have produced a different result."

Not only is this ignorance manifest amongst non-Jews, but even amongst our own people there is an amazing lack of knowledge of those great principles laid down by the great jurists of previous days. The natural revival has brought in its train an increased interest in Jewish matters. In the general sphere of cultural life there has been a great awakening; and this has had its effect in the realm of Jewish law.

In 1920 the Society of Jewish Jurisprudence was formed in Palestine under the guidance of Mr. Justice Gad Frumkin of the Supreme Court Bench and Mr. Norman Bentwich, the Attorney General and Hon. President of the Society. The aim of the Society is threefold:—

1. The ascertainment by scientific, historical and dogmatic research the character and ways of development of Jewish law.

2. The creation and development of a legal scientific language in Hebrew.

3. The establishment of a Hebrew terminology for legal and related scientific subjects.

Eventually it is hoped to establish in Jerusalem a scientific institute for research in Jewish Jurisprudence and a special legal library.

In October, 1925, through the instrumentality of Mr. Justice Frumkin a branch was formed in London and its establishment was enthusiastically received. Mr. A. L. Langdon, K.C., the Director of legal studies for the Bar has accepted the position of Hon. President and the Vice-Presidents are the Chief Rabbi, Dr. Joel Blow, R. E. L. Vaughan Williams, K.C., and Dr. W. R. Bissehop. It has the support of leading English lawyers like Sir Leslie Scott, K.C., Prof. Bellat and of other societies for comparative law.

On March 12th, 1926, the English Branch held its first meeting, when Dr. Samuel Daiches delivered a lecture on "Jewish Law of Divorce." Mr. Justice Hill (who sat in Prager v. Prager) presided and in his introductory remarks said that he had no doubt that he had been asked to preside because he had lately shown a total ignorance of the Jewish law of divorce. It was very gratifying to him to know that in future the judges would be able to obtain information from practitioners who knew as lawyers what the Jewish law was. Mr. Justice Bateson moved the vote of thanks to the lecturer and declared that he had learnt a great deal.

The fruits of the work so far done by the society have been collected and published in the official legal magazine of the society "Homisphat Ha Ivri"—"The Law of the Hebrews." Space does not permit, unfortunately, of a discussion of the learned

and scholarly articles. Suffice it to mention that among the contributors are Mr. Justice Frumkin, Mr. Norman Bentwich, Mr. Dickstein (one of the Editors), Mr. Hash (the other Editor), Dr. Sisensstadt Barsilai, Mr. Kantorowich and Mr. I. Cheinowich. The publication is in Hebrew and is printed in Tel Aviv and compares most favourably with other magazines of its kind.

The society is filling a real want in Jewish life but is, of course, dependent for the efficiency of its work upon the extent of its membership. The subscription has been fixed at £1/1 per annum and this entitles each member to a copy of "Hamisphat Ha Ivri" the Hebrew Law Review published by the society and of the transactions of the English Branch (in English).

I have been asked by the Hon. Foreign Secretary to enlist the support of Jewish lawyers in South Africa and I shall be only too pleased to receive subscriptions. These may be sent to me with full details of name and address at 14, Queen Victoria Street, Cape Town. It is hoped that many will join and so enable the society, in the words of the Law Journal "to bring a real light to bear on many of our problems, and thus render a distinct service to the social cause as well as to legal science.

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THE HEBREW HIGH SCHOOL.

WEDNESDAY'S CONCERT.

The concert which was held at the Town Hall in aid of the funds of the "Talmud Torah" in Wolmarans Street was not by any means as largely attended as might have been anticipated and we venture to think that the fault was a good deal that of the concert committee. With so many Jewish papers in the town and so many Jewish editors and other authorities on the necessary publicity to be obtained the committee might wisely have co-opted one or more of these gentlemen and so evolved a scheme which would have appealed to the man and woman in the street and so drawn their attention to the occurrence. As it was, the ordinary individual was hardly aware of the holding of the concert while the more opulent were warned off by reason of their being no arrangements to reserve seats and the consequent fear of crush and bother at the doors. However, those who did put in an appearance were not dissatisfied at the programme which was presented and which included the following items, together with encores:—

1. Song, "The Blind Ploughman" (Coningsby-Clark), Mr. Sydney Schragger; 2. Song, "Ich liebe dich" (Greig), Miss Fanny Taback; 3. Song, "Grals Erzaehlung"—Lohengrin (Wagner), Rev. S. Pinkasowicz; 4. Song, "To the Forest" Mrs. Weyhausen; 5. Violin Solo, (a) "Intrada" (Tivadar Nachez), (b) "Hymn to the Sun" (Rimsky-Korsakoff-Franko) (Le Cog d'Or), (c) "Mazurka" (Wieniawsky) Mrs. Selma Whitehouse; 6. Piano Solo "Polonaise E Major" (Liszt), Mr. Sydney Resonbloom; 7. Song, "Pyrame et Thisbe" (Tremisot), Mrs. Weyhausen; 8. Songs (a) Verborgenheit" (Hugo Wolff), (b) "A—Dudele" Jewish Folk Song, Rev. S. Pinkasowicz; 9. Songs (a) "The Rose enslaves the Nightingale" (Rimsky-Korsakoff) (b) "The Song of the Palanquin-Bearers" (Martin Shaw), Miss Fanny Taback; 10. Song "Auffenthalt" (Schubert), Mr. Sydney Schragger.