

## South African Jewish Orphanage.

### Chanukah-Barmitzvah Celebrations.

#### Annual Distribution of Prizes.

"Arcadia," the appropriately-named home of the South African Jewish Orphanage, was *en fete* on Wednesday evening last when, in addition to the children, there was a very large gathering of the Jewish community at the annual Chanukah function held by the Orphanage at which, in addition to a special Chanukah service, the annual distribution of prizes took place and the Barmitzvah of a number of children was celebrated. This year there was a record number of 13 boys celebrating their attainment of the Jewish majority.

Many well-known friends of the Orphanage and communal leaders were present, as well as representatives of Orphanage branches and a large number of ladies and gentlemen who had done good work in the recently-held new membership campaign in Johannesburg.

The proceedings began with a beautifully rendered Evening and Chanukah service by Obercantor S. Inspektor, of the Wolmarans Street Synagogue and Cantor N. Lopato, of the Yeoville Synagogue, assisted by the choir of the latter synagogue under the conductorship of Mr. S. Kantor, with Miss Kantor at the organ.

#### Mr. Kaumheimer.

Mr. B. Kaumheimer, the President, gave an address of welcome, in the course of which he thanked those present for coming to rejoice with the boys who had attained their religious majority and for paying a rightful tribute to a transition which marked a milestone in their lives. Thirteen was not a popular number, but the superstitions concerning it had no place in the traditions and culture of the Jewish people, who, on the contrary, thought fit to bestow full spiritual and moral responsibility on a man of the race at the age of 13. The number of Barmitzvahs this night constituted a record in the annals of "Arcadia," and was in proportion to the ever-increasing number of children at the Home. He wished to thank them for the generous support they were ever ready to give to the Orphanage. Quite recently additional proof of their open-hearted generosity was given in the success which attended the membership campaign and the Jubilee Ball, the latter of which was not only a financial but also a social success.

Proceeding, Mr. Kaumheimer referred to the gold standard, and stated that as far as "Arcadia" was concerned they were still on the gold standard. "For your South African Pound we give you in exchange what were once helpless Jewish orphan and destitute children, developed into self-conscious young Jewish men and women, who are a credit to the Jewish community and to South Africa in general. That you will agree, is the full value on the basis of twenty shillings to the pound.

It was most gratifying, he said, to see such a large gathering, and he invited them to come more frequently so as to judge for themselves that their support and love for the Orphanage were bearing good fruit.

Mrs. W. Sachs, Chairlady of the House Committee, handed the presents to the Barmitzvah boys, after which the Chief Rabbi, Dr. J. L. Landau, delivered an impressive address.

#### Dr. Landau's Address.

Dr. Landau stated that the number 13 expressed the most beautiful and important idea in the Jewish religion. The numerical value of the Hebrew word *Echod*, meaning one, was 13. The Jew exclaimed three times daily in his prayers "The Lord our God is *Echod*. The whole universe was *Echod*—one in God. Then there was another word nearly as important, the numerical value of which was also 13, namely, the Hebrew word *Ahavah*, meaning "love." That community was really happy in which there was oneness and love. It was their duty towards their boys to bring them up so as to have oneness, unity and harmony established in their minds as in their bodies.

Addressing the Barmitzvah celebrants, Dr. Landau said that there should be harmony between the body and the soul, and that the body should be guided by the spirit. The humble Chanukah candle could give light to bigger candles and so in turn could spread light throughout the world, and yet in itself it did not get dimmer. He asked them to remember, firstly, that they were members of the great Jewish race.

He wanted them to learn to work for their people and fellow-citizens, and thus be of benefit to their fellow-beings in the same way as the Chanukah candle gave light to others.

Proceeding, the Chief Rabbi said that they were passing through a very difficult and trying time. Hatred against the Jews was growing daily, in every country they heard of non-Jews attacking Jews. The Barmitzvah boys would grow up and when they went out into the world they must help their people.

#### Mr. Mendelsohn.

Mr. Bert Mendelsohn, the Vice-President, in an address, expressed his congratulations to the Barmitzvah boys and to the prize winners.

Proceeding, Mr. Mendelsohn stated that, as Dr. Landau had remarked, they were living in very difficult times. The world was in a state of unrest and the lot of the Jew, in consequence, took on added burdens. Hostility towards the Jews was on the increase, and therefore it behoved them to prepare themselves for the inevitable struggle when they went out into the world. They must not, at that stage, succumb to the danger of losing their Jewish identity after having maintained it for centuries. Their first essential was character, the second knowledge, and they must do their best to develop both. He asked them to "play the game." He looked to some of them to be leaders of the community, for communal leaders, as a rule, did not spring from the rich or leisured classes. Adversity frequently resulted in greatness. He assured them that those who desired to progress would receive the Committee's support. Their future therefore depended upon themselves.

Short addresses in Hebrew, Yiddish, English and Afrikaans were given by Masters Nathan Bernard, David Aginsky, Sidney Woolf and Harry Myers, respectively.

The distribution of prizes was carried out by Mrs. A. Atkins, a prominent worker on the Committee.

#### The Progress of the Orphanage.

Referring to "Arcadia," Mr. Mendelsohn pointed out that month by month the number of children continued to grow. They had now 294 children, and at the present rate of admission they would be compelled to increase the accommodation at a very early date. Owing to the depressed conditions, poverty was on the increase, and as a consequence applications for admission were increasing. Mr. Mendelsohn made reference to physically and mentally backward children, and he appealed to them to set the ball rolling for a home for those incurable children, which, he said, was a long felt want. There was possibly some space to be found in the grounds in "Arcadia" for such a home, but, of course, it would have to be treated as a separate entity from the Orphanage. He also had another objective, which was the acquisition of a farm in reasonable proximity to town. On such a farm he would like to see the building of a new S.A. Jewish Orphanage, where they could have their own teachers, schools, workshops, and where there could be instilled a love of the land which would prove a stepping stone to the making of Jewish farmers.

Proceeding, Mr. Mendelsohn thanked the Orphanage branches and the Jewish public for their support, the Chief Rabbi for his inspiring address, Mrs. W. Sachs for distributing the Barmitzvah gifts, Mrs. Atkins for presenting the prizes, to Revs. S. Inspektor, N. Lopato, Mr. and Miss Kantor and choir for the beautiful service, and Mrs. A. Goodman for her rendition of the solo. He also thanked the United Hebrew Congregation for permitting their officials to take part in the function, and the donors of the prizes and refreshments.

#### The Result of the Membership Drive.

Mr. Kaumheimer then presented prizes, given by him, to the convener of the district which had collected the most money in the recent Johannesburg new membership campaign, and to the convener of the district which had obtained the largest percentage of new members. In doing so, he said he was pleased of the opportunity of thanking those who had helped in the campaign that was held on Sunday, October 11th, which had resulted in the Orphanage obtaining no less than 973 new members and the sum of £350 10s. 6d. as membership fees.

He was particularly pleased at the interest taken by the younger people, in the hope that that would mark a beginning of their continuous interest in the Orphanage, for it was of the greatest importance for the future welfare of the Orphanage that the younger generation should identify itself with it and in due course take the place of the old brigade which would gradually drop out as a result of old age. The prize for the largest percentage of members went to Mrs. Maisels, the convener for the La Rochelle district, where out of a possible total of 61, 43 new members were enrolled. The prize for the largest amount collected went to the Saxonwold district, of which Mrs. Brasch was the convener.

All present then adjourned to the adjoining room and verandah, where refreshments were served.