

Amsheiwitz

I WAS very interested to see during the week the collection of forty-two paintings by famous English artists, made by Mr. J. H. Amsheiwitz, R.B.A., which was on view in Johannesburg at Ernest Lezard's galleries. The collection contained six of Amsheiwitz's paintings in oils. These six, depicting mostly still life groups, are among his minor works rather than among those canvasses which have gained him his reputation. But they are pleasing studies nevertheless, and recall the love of the poetic and fantastic which go to this painter's artistic make-up.

One of Amsheiwitz's most famous works is the large canvas in South Africa House depicting Vasco de Gama's discovery of the Cape. This was presented to the Union Government by Mr. M. Haskel. It is a painting that conveys all the feelings of expectancy one would hope to find in such a subject.

A Pioneer

THE recent death of Mrs. Marks, relict of the late Senator Samuel Marks (1843-1920), calls to mind the eminent services which the late Senator Marks rendered to this country, particularly in the industrial sphere. The younger generation of present-day South Africa may not generally know in what manner the famous Sammy Marks helped to build up the prosperity of this land, and thus I take the opportunity of referring to one or two aspects of our Jewish pioneer's career.

There are many stories told about Sammy Marks. For instance, I came across this flattering statement in a recent issue of a well-known periodical:

"The work of development carried out by the late Senator S. Marks which is to-day visible in the colossal enterprise to be seen at Vereeniging has tended to obscure the fact that he was one of the early pioneers of the Low Country (in the Transvaal) both as regards its agriculture and mining development. It is gratifying to reflect that the land and farming development inaugurated by Messrs. Lewis and Marks is now being energetically and systematically carried out by his three sons, Messrs. Louis, Theodore and Joe Marks."

Such a type of Jew is worthy of South Africa's esteem. And, incidentally, at the moment, there are co-religionists, too, following in the example set by the late Senator Marks.

A New Anthem

I NOTE that Chief Rabbi Kook, of Palestine, has just written a new Hebrew song which he calls "Ha'emunah," ("the Belief.") This song is intended as a National Anthem parallel with Hatikvah. It is imbued with deep religious faith in the fulfilment of Jewish national aspirations, and has been set to music by L. Zephar, a Palestinian violinist.

South African Jewry, I know, will be deeply interested to hear this new composition.

Bergson

THAT great Jewish philosopher, Henri Louis Bergson, recently celebrated his 75th birthday in Paris.

Current Communal Comments

By
"Hamabit"

Professor Bergson, who till 1925 (when he resigned on account of his health) was President of the League of Nations Commission on Intellectual Co-operation, is one of the greatest thinkers of modern days, and is usually associated with Professor Albert Einstein and Professor Sigmund Freud as the outstanding examples of the Jewish genius in all directions of thought. It was in this association, for instance, that Lord Balfour, the famous statesman-philosopher, spoke of these three great Jews when he paid his tribute to Jewish scholarship on the occasion of his opening the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1925.

Bergson's outstanding contribution to thought is his great work "Creative Evolution," which was published in 1907, and immediately occasioned widespread interest. The book had a very deep influence on both science and philosophy and it was chiefly for this work that he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1927.

Professor Bergson, who is himself a French Jew, represents an amazing instance of cosmopolitanism. His mother was English, and his father a Polish Jew who settled in France and became a naturalised Frenchman. In their home life, Madam Bergson always used English, regardless of the fact that outside her home their language was the language of the country—that is to say French. And to this day, Professor Bergson has an equally perfect command of English and French, and is well versed in the literatures of both countries.

Hasidism

THE appearance of "The Hasidic Anthology," a voluminous work covering over 800 pages, compiled by Louis I. Newman, will direct attention to the interest being maintained in the teaching and principles of this marvellous phenomenon in Jewish life. The Hasidic movement, which originated in Podolia in the 18th century, and took so powerful a hold upon the Jewish masses throughout the Pale of Jewish settlement in Russia and in Galicia, has been on the wane in more recent years, with the complete political reorganisation of the districts thickly populated with Jews and through the stream of emigration from those provinces.

Students of Jewish history have felt for some time the need of preserving the philosophy, the legends, the habits and the yearnings of the Hasidim, and many works have appeared by different scholars in which these are treated from various viewpoints. — Schechter's classic essay on the subject is still the standard reference work, not only because of its exact critical estimate and its lucid presentation, but also because Schechter, himself a product of the Hasidic environment, wrote with deep sym-

pathy and understanding of the movement to which he was by temperament and by early training deeply attached. More objective and more detailed studies have appeared by the historian, Simeon Dubnow, by Samuel A. Horodetzky and Abraham Kahana and other writers.

THE lowly origin of the movement, which made it so readily acceptable to the great masses, who revelled in the miraculous performances related of their leaders, who loved to expatiate on the minutest details in the habits and conduct of their Zaddikim, surrounded the lives of the early Hasidic leaders with a glamour and a mystery which found expression in numerous stories and tales, handed from mouth to mouth. These stories, many of which possess rich ethical value, and all of them characterised by a simple faith and deep religious emotion, have been used by novelists and poets, as well as by homilists and public speakers. To the English readers the works of Peretz, of S. Ansky (Dybbuk) and the more modern Meyer Levine have revealed many of these appealing tales in a modernised dress. The present collection by Louis I. Newman is probably the most ambitious enterprise along these lines.

Luther

IN these days in which problems of the Church have assumed a sudden prominence through political attempts at religious domination, and when occasionally some leading churchman comes forward and works off a long-standing grudge against the Old Testament, it is interesting to recall the attitude of a very great churchman, Martin Luther, towards the Jews and the Bible, which they gave to the world.

When the Jews of his time were being persecuted, Luther himself raised his voice in their defence and upbraided the Roman Church of the time for dealing unjustly with them. "They are blood relations of the Lord," he declared when the Papists retorted that in their own way they were trying to "help" the Jews. "If we would help them," said Luther, "we must exercise not the law of the Pope but that of Christian love, to show them a friendly spirit, permit them to live and to work so that they may have cause and means to be with us and amongst us."

The Jews were deeply moved by these kind words of the Christian reformer, and, although Luther afterwards turned from this attitude and reviled the Jews with bitterness and hatred, they have never forgotten his original feeling.

A High Price

A JEWISH storekeeper from the country arrived in Johannesburg and realising that the banks were about to close, was very eager to find a bank as soon as possible.

Seeing a Jewish school boy pass, he stopped him and said:

"Can you direct me to the nearest bank?"

"I will direct you for 1s. 6d.," answered the lad.

"Isn't that a rather high price?" demanded the storekeeper.

"Not at all," replied the little lad, "bank directors are always well paid."