

The Torah in Jewish Life

INTERESTING LECTURE BY RABBI KOSSOWSKY.

RABBI I. KOSSOWSKY, Rabbi of the Federation of Synagogues, delivered an interesting address in Yiddish on "The Part Played by the Torah and Eretz Yisroel in the Life of the Jewish People," on Sunday evening last, at the Jewish Guild, Johannesburg.

The language of a people, he said, became identified with the race, and for this reason small countries fought for cultural independence, realising that their language would remain, and help them to exist as national entities. The Jews in the Galuth adopted the language of the country in which they happened to be living, but they really had one great language in common, the language in which they thought, the language of the Torah. There was a theory that religion must touch the heart, not the head. The Torah, however, touched the head, as well as the heart; taught the value of knowledge, and proved that the ignorant cannot know the meaning of religion. The Torah was so simply written that all who read it could understand it.

Rabbi Kossowsky pointed out that only those works written in Hebrew had remained from the past, as, for example, the Hebrew works of the great Rambam which had outlived his other works. This fact was bound up with the Jewish ideal of having a homeland in Eretz Israel, and the ideal sprang from the Torah.

Rabbi Kossowsky spoke in strong terms of

the danger in South Africa of a reform movement, since reform aims to show that the Jews no longer need the Torah, and this would break the chain that bound the scattered race. Reform was undermining the Jewish national force.

It was breeding the danger of assimilation under the cloak of nationalism. He made a strong appeal to combat this movement, a movement which had already had bad results in Germany, but which was new to South Africa.

It was necessary for the Jews to have the ideal of Zion, since to those living in the Galuth Palestine was the spiritual home, if not the literal one. He referred to "the injustice of imprisoning 'illegal' immigrants, refugees whose only crime was that they wished to find peace in Eretz Yisroel." The Jews would only cease to cry when Palestine was theirs. It was their heritage and without their belief in its realisation there would be no realisation.

Rabbi Kossowsky appealed to the younger people to learn the Torah, and praised the work of the Johannesburg Hatechayah. In conclusion, he paid a fine tribute to the late Baron de Rothschild, the audience rising as a mark of respect to his memory.

Mr. M. Ginsburg, chairman of the Hatechayah, thanked Rabbi Kossowsky for his interesting address. Mr. I. Kuper was in the chair.



THE NELSON TRIO

A BRILLIANT MUSICAL COMBINATION

AN unique musical event occurred on Tuesday evening last, when a large audience at the City Hall, Johannesburg, was thrilled by a remarkable joint musical performance by three highly talented Jewish girls—the Misses Anna, Ida and Sara Nelson, who are professionally known as the "Nelson Trio."

The girls, who are 16, 17, 18 years of age respectively, are charming young personalities, who execute their work before the public in an unassuming and graceful manner. This, added to a superb performance, creates a highly favourable impression. They are accompanied by their father, who is a keen musician and composer.

THE CONCERT

HARD chairs and bad acoustics at the City Hall on Tuesday night were forgotten as soon as the first few bars of the Beethoven trio in B Flat were played by the Nelson Trio, whose every member, Ida, the violinist, Sara, the cellist, and Anna, the pianist, is an artist of rare individuality. All are artists in their own right, but in combination they aim at a unity of thought and expression unusual in temperaments that differ so widely.

The pianist, for instance, played the Liszt eleventh rhapsody in a manner reminiscent of Carreno or Elly Ney, in a masculine, virile and brilliant manner. Masterful as a soloist, her accompaniments were almost too restrained. One could have wished for a greater suggestion of the orchestral part in the Tchaikowsky variations, but in the trios due importance was given to the piano part, with perhaps a suggestion of under-emphasis of melodic line. In fact the piano part was too much in the nature of an accompaniment. This applies to each artist in the ensemble when they are heard together. Such strong individualities were almost too careful in their desire for refinement of ensemble and their greatest appeal is therefore as soloists.

The violinist, in the Vitali Chacone, gave

a warm and glowing rendering. She shows great depth of temperament, temperament which threatens to run away with her, the temperament of youth, a generous fault, if fault it is, and one that will be disciplined by maturity.

The Tchaikowsky Rococo variations are rarely played on account of their great difficulty. Miss Sara Nelson not only disposed of the technical difficulties of the work, a great feat in itself, but played them with a dignity that suggested Suggia. A broad, noble tone, perfection of bowing and phrasing, and an unhurried dignity of attack gave an impression of mature sensitiveness far beyond her years. Indeed, one does not listen to those girls as prodigies, but is compelled to accept and appraise them as true artists.

It is a pity, that in response to an imaginary popular demand, they should put trifles on their programmes. Such artists can do justice to the bigger works in musical literature and should be encouraged to form popular taste, not conform to it.

H. S.

Johannesburg Symphony Society

THE recently-formed Johannesburg Symphony Society gave its third concert at the Wanderers Hall, Johannesburg, on Sunday evening last. It was the best of the concerts so far held, and the performance of the orchestra, under the baton of Mr. Joseph Traunck, was a beautiful achievement.

The main item on the programme was Beethoven's "Concerto for Violin and Orchestra." Mr. Harold Ketelby made an extremely welcome reappearance as the soloist in this concerto. He interpreted with deep feeling and fine technique the magnificent strains of this famous piece of music and the orchestra gave full support to his rendering.

The first piece played was Brahms' "Variations for Orchestra on a Theme by Joseph Haydn." These eight variations the orchestra rendered extremely well, giving fine expression to their light, shadow and depth.

The remaining two numbers were Tchaikowsky's "Serenade for Strings," and the Overture to Weber's "Oberon." The Tchaikowsky Serenade is a delightful composition full of charm, and mingled joy and pathos, and these diverse moods were admirably interpreted. The "Oberon" Overture, full of fantasy and fun, was also well performed.

The programme was carefully chosen, with a fine variety and contrast of content. The orchestra has now achieved a fine degree of combination, and their work is being more and more appreciated by music lovers. Despite the inclemency of the weather on Sunday night, the hall was well filled.

E. B.

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