



A Medal

There appeared in the local press a few days ago a news item to the effect that a native in the south-western district of the Cape Province had accidentally picked up an Anglo-Boer War relic in the form of a curious medal inscribed to one "Private Lipschitz, T.G." This Jewish soldier, who had served with the British forces, was a member of the Town Guard of Riversdale. He was not the only member of his race to fight for the British, and, as it is well known, there were many others of his religious fraternity who also participated in espousing the cause of Britain in South Africa in those days.

I suspect that the Private Lipschitz referred to was of Russo-Jewish parentage, for in his day many of those in that part of the country in which he was situated were of East European Jewish stock. It was the prevailing flourishing ostrich feather industry which attracted them to that corner of the globe.

While on this topic, I would like to correct a misconception, which is quite prevalent in our time. It is commonly stated (especially by local anti-Semites) that hardly any Jews fought for the Boers. A study of the facts would show that quite a number of Jews voluntarily and willingly served with the Boer commandos. Occasionally one hears or reads a tribute paid to the latter by well-known Afrikaner folk. Colonel Deney's Reitz in his vivid account of his experiences in the war tells the story of the bravery of a Jew who had fought on the Boer side.

All in all, it is, indeed, a pity that no full account has so far been given of the nature of Jewish activity during that epoch-making period in South African history.

"Stars and Stripes"

The growth of the Jewish community in America as the most important in the world to-day is beginning to be felt even in this country. It was demonstrated recently when an important Hebrew congregation in South Africa diverted from the usual practice of approaching English Jewry for a spiritual head, and went direct to America. Ultimately a minister was appointed via New York.

A further indication of the influence of American Jewry upon far-away communities is the appearance in this country of an eloquent Zionist propagandist and orator from Chicago. This is the first occasion upon which a citizen of the United States has helped local Jewry in the collecting of funds for a national purpose. It is possible that for some future campaign we may even have Dr. Stephen S. Wise — that dynamic personality, who is to-day probably the most eminent American Jew, besides Justice Brandeis.

Current Communal Comments

By "Hamabit"

An instance of the importance of America in Jewish life in another direction, is the information which has reached me that an incumbent for the present vacant post of Director of Jewish Education in this country is being sought for not only in England, but in America. There is a likelihood that it is the latter country which will finally supply a satisfactory candidate for so important a post.

Visiting Nurses

The name of Lilian Wald, whose 70th anniversary was celebrated with great pomp in America, is known to social workers all over the world. Some 50 years ago this lady established the Henry Street Settlement in New York. It was the first institution of its kind founded in a slum area with the aim of sending out visiting nurses to the homes of the poor. The idea at once took on and similar institutions were established all over the world. As far as I know the "visiting nurses" system is also practised in the towns and villages of South Africa.

But 50 years ago, it was an innovation calculated to bring happiness to the poor. Social workers from all over the world went on pilgrimage to Miss Wald's settlement, in order to see how she did it. Her name is mentioned with love and affection in America, and at her recent birthday-celebration Mayor La Guardia and the mother of President Roosevelt, broadcast to the American nation their congratulations to the beloved Lilian.

Miss Wald is the grand-daughter of a German Jew who came to America in 1848. Her father was a physician on the East Side, where she had an opportunity of seeing the poverty and misery of the poorer sections of the community. As a young girl she decided to devote her life to nursing. In the course of her career millions of dollars went through her hands. Nevertheless she now spends her old age almost in poverty. A fund had to be created by the directors of the settlement, in order to provide for her comfort during the eve of her life.

In this connection it is interesting to note that Lilian Wald's first settlement of visiting nurses has been maintained by three Jewish families: the Morgenthau's, the Schiffs and the Lehmanns.

Chopin

The Polish people consider Chopin as one of their own, and once in five years the Government arranges a Chopin competition in Warsaw to which young pianists from all parts of the world are invited.

Prizes are offered by the President of the country, the Foreign Minister and various other notables. This year's competition which took place recently attracted great attention in musical circles of Europe. Whilst the Endek hooligans beat up the Jewish students, shouting that they were a foreign element in Poland, the elite of Warsaw crowded the Philharmonic Theatre eager to listen to performances of the works of a great composer. The first prize was finally won by Jacob Sack, whilst the second went to a Jewish girl, Rose Tamarkin. Only the third place was gained by a Pole.

Musical circles believe that Rose Tamarkin in particular displays signs of a great virtuoso and is likely to become one of the leading pianists in Europe. As far as Sack is concerned, it is stated that he not only excels in Chopin but is a most competent performer of Beethoven, and it is hoped that he will soon appear on the musical platforms of Western Europe.

A Book Society

England is passing through a boom in reading. Hundreds of thousands of copies of serious books are being bought by the public. This is mainly due to the various book societies and book clubs.

I now hear that the Soncino Press has formed a Jewish Book Society. According to a preliminary prospectus, the society will concern itself with every branch of Jewish literature. The first three volumes to be published consist of the long-awaited letters and articles of Zangwill, a book on the folklore of the Jews and a translation of Abarbanel's "Dialoghi d'Amore."

The idea is certainly an excellent one, but I was somewhat disappointed with the high price of subscription. This will be one guinea a year for which the subscriber is to receive only three books! The success of the various book societies in England and America is largely due to the fact that they have departed from the traditional "7s. 6d. standard," and offer a good book at half that price. Everybody realises the necessity of diffusing accurate knowledge of Jewish life, but this can only be attained by making Anglo-Jewish literature accessible to a wider public.

Strange!

Chayim: "When I arrived in South Africa I didn't have a penny in my pockets. In fact, I had no pockets."

Zorach: "How is that possible?"

Chayim: "I was born here."

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