

A Jewish Division.

I note that operations have begun for the erection of a magnificent Public Library building in the Golden City. I do hope that as a special service to the twenty-five thousand Jewish citizens on the Rand, arrangements will be made for the completion of a special Jewish division. The Library at present contains a certain number of Jewish books in English, Yiddish and Hebrew, but the total is small indeed in view of the many thousands of books of Jewish interest which can be secured.

Some years ago I visited the Jewish division of the New York Public Library. Its growth and prestige is striking evidence of the fact that the Jewish people in every city need and value such a specialised department. The existence of this famous division is a fine example of the compatibility of Jewish literature with the literature of other peoples.

In the three decades of its existence, the Jewish division of the New York Public Library has demonstrated its usefulness to the community of that large centre in a manner that could hardly have been foreseen by those who were responsible for its creation. The Library to-day owns one of the largest collections in the world of Jewish periodicals and other serial publications—a collection invaluable to the serious student and the general enquirer. It has kept in touch with the constant developments and achievements of rapidly progressive Jewish communities throughout the world.

In creating a Jewish division in the new Johannesburg Public Library, the city has the advantage of having as its librarian, Mr. Asher—an expert and erudite library official—who would undoubtedly take a personal pride in this special work.

A Touring Club.

At present it is only the South African Jew of means who can afford a visit to Eretz Israel. I was, therefore, interested to hear of the organisation of a Touring Club in Johannesburg. Under this scheme, each member of the Club is to pay in a small sum—the collective total of which would enable one of them to make the return journey to Palestine in comfortable fashion.

Although the idea is a new one to South Africa, it has been carried out in many countries with the result that quite a number of people have been able to make the pilgrimage to the Holy Land, who otherwise would never have been in the position to do so.

I trust, therefore, that the scheme now being initiated, will meet with ade-

Current Communal Comments

By
'Hamabit'

quate response so that an un-moneyed Jewish citizen—or two—from Johannesburg will proceed to Palestine and benefit from the inspiration of contact with our great National achievements there.

Rosenblatt.

THE expected arrival in South Africa of Cantor Berele Chagy draws attention to the fact that most of the famous Cantors of to-day are domiciled in the United States of America. On the top of the cantor profession there stands, undoubtedly, Cantor Rosenblatt, whose marvellous records of *Chazonuth* are well known in almost every Jewish home in this country. For the last twenty years, Rosenblatt has been singing in America and is to-day at the height of his career. The celebration a few weeks ago of his fiftieth birthday was the occasion for the holding of a great Jewish concert in New York at which a number of famous world-cantors participated.

It may not be quite well known that after his first recital in Chicago a number of years ago—for Rosenblatt has made the major portion of his income from concerts—he was offered by the famous impressario, Campanini, no less than three thousand dollars a night for every appearance, provided he devoted himself mainly to operatic singing.

This offer was refused for the reason that although Rosenblatt is a gifted operatic singer, he does not wish to depart from his role as the supreme interpreter of *Chazonuth*.

Rosenblatt is now making a tour of South America and in a few years time he hopes to settle in Palestine. He is proud of the fact that his eldest son is a Rabbi, who graduated with the highest awards from the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York and was appointed Assistant Professor of Semitic languages.

In view of Berele Chagy being attracted to take up a post in this country, it is not at all an impossible event for Cantor Rosenblatt to come to this country for the purpose of giving a series of concerts.

Memoirs.

I hope that Dr. Weizmann will not be too much involved in the political turmoil upon his return from South Africa. I say this because of the intention he expressed when here to the writer that he wished to devote the next few months to the completion of his book of Memoirs.

It was of interest to learn that Dr. Weizmann is starting his Memoirs, not with conventional beginning of his birth, but from 1902. The whole of his childhood and early youth are to be left out. The *Cheder*, the *Melamed*, the whole of Pinsk and all that which serves so well to create the sentimental background of the conventional Jewish autobiography, is entirely omitted. He is to begin with the year of his entry into the Zionist movement and will immediately plunge into the tale of stormy events and the clash of parties and personalities of that period.

Before Dr. Weizmann came to South Africa, he had already passed the story of his Zionist life up to the 1905 Revolution in Russia and was approaching his English period.

Formerly . . .

A Jewish plutocrat by the name of Berel D. Klotz was dismayed to observe in big letters on the sign of a poor bootmaker in the slum section of a big city, the following:

"Issy Klotz, Bootmaker, brother to Berel D. Klotz."

He sent his attorney to negotiate with the bootmaker for the alteration of the sign. The bootmaker explained that his named was Issy Klotz and that his brother's name was actually "Berel D." After considerable palavering, the *shuster* was prevailed upon to change the sign on receipt of a substantial cheque.

The following week the plutocrat visited the slum neighbourhood and to his intense indignation he found that the sign had indeed been altered, but that it now read:

"Issy Klotz, Bootmaker, formerly brother of Berel D. Klotz."

Get your Friends
to subscribe to
THE
Zionist Record
Only 17/6 Yearly