

A Speaking Cantor.

I was one of the many who trudged their way on Saturday morning last to Doornfontein, for the purpose of hearing the first service conducted by Cantor Berele Chagy. I had not previously visited the recently erected *Beth Hamdrash*, and was rather surprised when I discovered that a certain large building, —erected in quite and simple style—was the place of worship I was seeking. The synagogue was packed to overflowing and it took the combined efforts of several committee men to pilot me through the excited crowd in order to get to my reserved seat near the *bimah*.

The sweet voice of Chagy pleased me. He is a Cantor with a personality, and a man who has a marvellous knowledge of his profession. What I could not understand, however,—and am still rather puzzled about—is the cantor's habit of addressing the congregation from time to time. I am afraid I did not come early enough to listen to his first interruption, but the second one I did hear. I am conservative enough to have been greatly surprised at this procedure. When the cantor had finished some beautiful singing, he stopped at a certain part of the service and informed his audience that the choir they were listening to that morning was only four days old and therefore they must have forebearance. He also appealed to the audience to keep order and suggested that as a mark of respect to the *baal habatim*, those who were gathered there that morning should stay until the end of the service.

Some years ago the great synagogue in Wolmarans Street engaged a "flying" cantor. I think it can be now said that the *Beth Hamdrash Hagodel* has engaged a "speaking" cantor.

Zamenhof.

TWO thousand men and women from all parts of the world gathered in Paris during last month to attend the twenty-fourth International Congress of Esperanto. This language creation—as is well-known—was the work of Dr. Lazar Ludwik Zamenhof, who hailed originally from Bialystok in Poland. He once said, "Had I not been a Jew the idea of Esperanto would never have occurred to me."

The spreading of his own race amongst the nations of the world—all speaking different languages—aroused in Zamenhof the idea of an international language. Esperanto caught on tremendously at the time and there were great hopes aroused that the whole of the world would soon have a knowledge of one language which would help in the direction of interna-

Current Communal Comments

By
'Hamabit'

tional understanding and enlightenment.

The intense enthusiasm aroused at the time of the creation of Esperanto gradually began to wear off, but ardent supporters are still to be found in almost every country throughout the globe. The movement of Esperanto has concentrated itself, unfortunately, mainly with idealists. In this way, the practical use of this international language by millions of people—as originally conceived by Zamenhof—has not quite materialised.

In his early youth, Dr. Zamenhof was the ardent adherent of the *Chibath Zion* movement and was one of the founders of the first *Choveve Zion Society* in Warsaw. His chief life-work was his remarkable translation of the entire Bible into Esperanto.

Jewish Plays.

SOME remarkable amateur talent amongst Jewish youth was shown during the recently-held Repertory Fortnight in Johannesburg. I am sure that similar talent is to be found throughout the country. Rarely, however, is this talent to "play the theatre" applied by our youth on a specific Jewish subject.

The reason given in the past has been that there are no plays of Jewish interest published in English. Jewish dramatic societies will, therefore, be interested to hear that Ludwig Lewisohn has done an English translation of David Pinski's fine play, "Treasure." This was presented last month at the Garrick Theatre, London, by the Jewish Drama League and the performance drew well-merited praise. It will be recollected that it was under the inspiration of the Jewish Drama League that N. Elstein wrote his remarkable play "Israel in the Kitchen," dealing with life in a working class Jewish home in Manchester. The latter can also be secured in printed form.

I have now received a copy of plays of Jewish life, compiled by Harry Zimmerman. This contains five one-act plays, which are well worth producing by Jewish amateurs in this country. When such plays are shown here, an encouragement will also be given to budding young dramatists to write plays depicting certain aspects of Jewish life in South Africa.

A Bronze Bust.

ON Tuesday of this week, Sir Carruthers Beattie unveiled a bronze bust of the late Hyman Lieberman at the City Hall of the Mother City. It will be recollected that Lieberman occupied the chair of Van Riebeck for three consecutive years. During his period of office, he welcomed many distinguished visitors to these shores, among them being the Duke and Duchess of Connaught. He was publicly presented by the citizens—as a mark of esteem—with his portrait in oils.

The late Hyman Lieberman was also a most earnest congregational worker, and for a period of thirty years was a member of the committee of the Gardens Synagogue. When he died in 1923, his bequests included a Lieberman Wing at the Art Gallery. Although up to the very last, Lieberman spoke with a slightly foreign accent, he had become, from his early residence here, one of the most keen and loyal of South Africans.

The placing of a bust of Lieberman in the vestibule of the Capetown City Hall, with the busts of such men as the late Cecil Rhodes and the late J. W. Jagger, is a fitting compliment to a man, who devoted so much of his life to the betterment of the city in which he made his home and which he so loved.

An Adviser.

A *schnorrer* recently came to a very wealthy Jewish manufacturer and asked for a job.

"What can you do?" asked the manufacturer.

"Well," replied the man, "I cannot do any physical work."

"I see," replied the manufacturer, "but maybe you are qualified for some mental work. Are you a bookkeeper?"

"To tell you the truth," replied the man, "I have no training at all. But I am a very good adviser. I can advise you on anything."

"You don't say," was the reply of the manufacturer—pausing a moment in surveying the man. "You are engaged. You have now become one of my employees. The first thing I want you to advise me about is how to get rid of you."

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