

An Operatic Cantor.

THE EXPERIENCE of listening to a cantor singing operatic arias before a concert audience is a rare one for us in South Africa. Especially is this so when the cantor is not a visitor, but is actually engaged as permanent *chazan* with a leading local congregation. That experience, however, was the lot of a large audience —of which I was a member—on Sunday evening last, when Cantor Berele Chagy gave his first local recital in Johannesburg.

I am afraid that I am still sufficiently old-fashioned to have contemplated with considerable perturbation the public récital of what I consider to be sacred and intimate songs of the Jewish people. I came away from the performance confirmed in this opinion, although I must frankly admit that Cantor Chagy rendered all the various sacred and semi-sacred items with fine dignity, coupled with an artistic height of great rarity.

I hold, however, that the interpretation of such melodies, should only be heard within the sacred precincts of the synagogue. To hear them rendered elsewhere—no matter how beautifully—is, in my opinion, a descent to be deplored.

Adult Education.

IN THIS country Jewish education ceases when the boy or girl has left Talmud Torah or cheder classes. As a result our young people are growing up with an extraordinary ignorance of Jewish history and the achievements of our people in the past. Religious education after the adolescent period is being sadly neglected here indeed.

Unfortunately our existing institutions are suffering so badly through lack of support that it would be almost unwise to suggest the establishment of a new institution. Yet an Academy for Adult Jewish Education is urgently needed in South Africa. Such an institution would have its branches in various centres and afford to the adolescent youth an opportunity to continue their studies in Jewish history and Jewish religion.

In other countries such organisations for Adult Jewish Education exist and are doing fine work. If only a greater interest would be shown in Jewish education generally in South Africa, the work above outlined could be well carried out as a department of the S.A. Board of Jewish Education.

Money.

I SEE that Henry Ford has been spread himself in the columns of certain newspapers ament the sound economic sense possessed by the Jews. "They make a lot of money and they spend a lot," he declares, "and this procedure is a healthy conduct and keeps money and life in circulation."

Current Communal Comments

By
'Hamabit'

Whilst one can highly appreciate these words from the industrial king of America, I wonder whether Henry Ford is entirely correct in his reading of Jewish characteristics. Do Jews really make a lot of money? The answer by no means is a positive one. If an economic survey of the world's wealth could produce authoritative figures as to what races are the best money makers, it would be found that the Jews are by no means in the front ranks.

Jews have still a great reverence for intellectual and spiritual achievements. That is the reason for their overrunning the medical, legal and learned professions. That may also explain why they are so well represented in all the research laboratories and in the teaching professions.

What is, however, true, is that Jews are good spenders in the sense that they like to enjoy the pleasures of life. Among luxury buyers, Jews are proportionately at the head of all other races. It is this strange combination of spiritual longing and materialistic desires that is so misunderstood and which creates the impression that Jews love money more than anything else in the world. This is, of course, not true, but Jews are keen appreciators of the power which money can wield.

Poor Einstein!

I HAVE heard with mixed feelings the news that Professor Einstein has accepted the professorship at the New Institute for Advanced Study to be housed at the Princeton University. A genius of his sensitive calibre requires a quiet milieu. On his temporary visits to America, the great professor smiled through the vociferous ballyhoo, which marked his every public appearance and he bore with infinite patience the vulgar assaults made daily on his private life by the press and by the multitude of thrill-seekers.

Now that Einstein has to reside permanently in America—or at least, during most of the year—there can be no doubt that thousands of publicity agents are already concocting stunts in which they hope to inveigle the father of the theory of relativity. Hundreds of Jewish institutions are probably planning to invite the professor to banquets, meetings and receptions.

I can only express the fervent hope that our brethren in America will respect the private life of the greatest scientist of this age, whom economic conditions have unfortunately compelled to accept a professorship in a country of high-pressure-salesmanship.

Dramatising Religion.

OUR BRETHREN in New York are notorious for experiments in the fields of Jewish religious worship. A striking and sharp departure was recently introduced by Rabbi Sondeling, who is making a big effort to dramatise Judaism. Recently twelve hundred people were present one night to see how a *Slichoth* service could be rendered. These people got their money's worth.

Two of the finest radio announcers in New York intoned the Hebrew and English phrases with a deep richness. From time to time the resonant voice of the rabbi would echo in the vast stillness. The choir, composed of striking women gowned in startling costumes, was visible to the audience. The rabbi's effort to get the audience to join in communal singing appears not to have been quite successful.

Sondeling seems to be a remarkable and majestic looking Jew, who has the possession of intelligence, courage and vision. His "dress-suit" religion, however, is a strange anomaly in Judaism and is hardly likely to meet with any great success.

"Spare the Rod."

A CORRESPONDENT writes to me as follows: "I have a notion that I have come across a line in Hebrew literature very similar to the familiar admonition to parents—'Spare the rod and spoil the child.' Could you let me know whether there is a line of a similar nature?"

In reply, I would say that there is a Hebrew proverb which reads as follows: "He that spareth the rod, hateth his son; but he that loveth, chastiseth him betimes." I have no doubt that the maxim of common usage, which is quoted by my correspondent, was taken from—or at least was inspired by—the Hebrew proverb which is above quoted.

Silence.

A JEW recently joined the St. Thomas Church. Shortly afterwards he met a friend of his "Well," said the latter, "I hear you have joined the church."

"Yes, it's fine," replied the former.

"Yes—you like it?" asked the loyal Jew.

"Yes, it's great," replied the convert; "but I wish you would join, too."

"Why do you want me to join?"

"So that I would have someone to talk to."