

"Scientists"

I HAVE lately met quite a few of our co-religionists who have become adherents to the Christian Science movement in South Africa. I was speaking to a Gentile friend about the matter and he declared that "Jews made very good and enthusiastic scientists for, in addition to accepting the principle of true healing, they also discovered their Redeemer." He showed me a printed list of medical practitioners who adhere officially to the Christian Science movement and I noticed quite a few Jewish names amongst them.

In all probability most of these people still regard themselves as Jews, and I should not be surprised if they were members of Hebrew congregations. Their Jewish friends do not think of regarding them as *meshumodim* and seem to consider the adherence (even though official) to a belief like Christian Science as merely an eccentric whim.

I am afraid it can hardly be considered in this light style. Jewish adherents to Christian Science must realise that the movement is a church activity in which a belief in the divinity of Christ is a fundamental tenet. How anyone can ally himself intimately with the Christian faith and still feel that he can remain a member of the Judaic religion, is beyond me!

Olympics

I WAS proud some months ago when I heard that a South African lad won the amateur boxing bantam-weight championship at the Maccabiah Games. This was indeed a credit to the sterling athletic prowess of young Jewry in this country. I closely watched the career of Dave Katzen after his return from Palestine and was somewhat disappointed to learn that he had turned professional. He could have gone still higher in the amateur game and would certainly have had a great chance for inclusion in the next British Empire Olympics. That event, however, will not take place until 1937, and Dave was being mentioned as a "sure" member of the South African team of amateur athletes to attend the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin.

I cannot help feeling that the South African amateur fighter's decision to turn professional must have been influenced by his decision not to participate in the Games in Germany — to which he would assuredly have been invited to compete.

I note also that Sid Kiel, the young South African champion hurdler, is being mentioned as one of the athletes to compete in Germany. Kiel comes from good Jewish stock, and I think it is hardly likely that he will ever be persuaded to participate in competitive games in a country where his people are being so degraded and where the true spirit of sportsmanship has been so besmudged.

"Bans"

AN interesting competition was recently held by the "New Statesman"—that fine intellectual English weekly. Some of the replies indicated the utter absurdity of certain new theories current in Central Europe. Prizes were offered for six bans

Current Communal Comments

By
"Hamabit"

"to be put up by any nation or community, race or skin, with reasons calculated to appeal to the official mind." These bans had to be appropriate. It was pointed out, for instance, that "it would be of no use banning Jews from country life, since Jews are notoriously town lovers."

Here are some of the replies to this delightfully ironical competition:

"Germany to ban Zionism because Hitler disapproves of trial by Jewry."

"Englishmen in Palestine to be banned from Jewish clubs. This drastic step to be taken because English notions of cleanliness and sanctity of business contracts were not up to the Jewish standard."

"All Chinese laundrymen to be banned, since there is something abhorrent in the human soul in wearing underclothing which has been intimately handled by an inferior race."

"All coloured people forbidden entry into any civilised country because the known habitual tendency of these persons to go without clothing at all seasons of the year is outrageously offensive to the inherent modesty and virtue of the people of such civilised countries."

The above bans seem ridiculous enough, but their imposition by countries at the present time would not be much madder than many bans being at present promulgated.

The competition above referred to has been able to catch the note of silly superiority which goes down so well with a certain type of mind spreading in such large numbers among millions of apparently intelligent people.

Opera

I HEAR that the new season of the Royal Opera House in Rome was opened with the production of the "Dybbuk," the music for which was written by the well-known Italian composer, Signor Lodovic Rocca. The choreography of the opera follows faithfully the original Jewish play, which was for the first time performed last year at the Milan La Scala.

The production of this work is an interesting development. The original play by Sh. Ansky was produced in Warsaw fourteen years ago by the Vilna Troupe of Yiddish players. The first performance took place in a small hall and the decorations were of an orange-box character—simple, crude and only just adequate. The strange and exquisite charm of the dramatised legend soon began to attract large audiences and for over a year the "Dybbuk" was uninterruptedly played. I saw a performance at the time whilst on a visit to Europe, and I was enchanted.

The fame of the play travelled outside of the confines of Poland and productions of

the translation were made in Germany, England, America and in other lands.

Ansky's work also contains a number of haunting folk tunes, which he had gathered during the course of his travels amongst his brethren in the hinterlands of the Russian pale of settlement. It would be interesting to listen to the manner in which the Italian composer, Rocca, has turned these simple tunes into operatic melodies.

If the performance at the Royal Opera House at Rome is successful, we can hope that the "Dybbuk" will find a place in the repertoire of other opera houses throughout the world. In that case it will be the second instance of a Jewish theme being used for an operatic purpose. The first is that of the famous "La Juive"—which has a Jewish story interwoven with delightful music. This latter opera is still an important item in opera repertoires in many countries.

Blovstein

A BELOVED figure in Palestine was Dr. Jacob Blovstein, whose death took place in Tel-Aviv recently. Blovstein was educated in Italian universities, and distinguished himself as a publicist and translator. He wrote a number of books on philosophical and ethical subjects in Italian and German. He translated Spinoza's letter into German and Kant's "Critique of Pure Reason" into Italian. The former translation was considered a great event in German literature.

In spite of the fact that a great career awaited him in Europe, he left for Palestine some fifteen years ago and devoted all his energy to adult education. He it was who founded the famous Beth-Am, in which he arranged regularly popular lectures, debates, "living newspapers," for the education of working people.

In spite of his popularity, Blovstein lived in dire poverty. To a friend of his he once complained: "The many sleepless nights that I spent on books—why did I waste them? If that is the way my life has to be, I might as well have taken a good week's sleep."

Worth the Price

I HEARD of an interesting incident which occurred during the recent High Festival period. A small congregation in one of our dorps engaged a gentleman to *daven* for Rosh Hashonah and Yom Kippur. The committee of the congregation had never met him before, for he was a recently-arrived immigrant.

When the cantor conducted his first service on the eve of Rosh Hashonah, the intonation was so bad that the committee was in despair. When he began to conduct the services next morning, the worshippers found that they could not stand it any longer and the *gaboim* of the synagogue ascended the *bimah* and pleaded with the cantor to descend.

"We will give you the £25 we promised you, but do not continue with the service"—was the appeal made to him.

The chazan replied: "For *davening* I asked £25. For not *davening*, however, I shall require £50."