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“Rand Riches and South Africa”

A Book by Sir Harry Graumann

“RAND RICHES AND SOUTH AFRICA,” by Sir Harry Graumann, K.B.E. Publishers: Juta and Co., Capetown and Johannesburg. Simpkin and Marshall, Ltd., London. Copies obtainable from all South African booksellers.

A WELL-known South African pioneer has set down in simple yet stirring language a vivid account of his life in this sub-Continent. The author of the volume under notice, Sir Harry Graumann, has been associated with South Africa for more than fifty years, and has been a prominent member of the Jewish community. His book may be regarded as a valuable footnote to all the major happenings of our time.

Sir Harry came to South Africa in the 'eighties of the last century. One follows his career from the time when as a boy of fourteen, he sailed from England to the Cape, where he found employment with a wholesale firm at thirty shillings a month. Not satisfied with such a situation, he tried his hand at other commercial adventures and for a time he was known as the “boy broker.” He did some native trading in the Transkei. Later he was intimately associated with the early development of the Barberton goldfields. He was a restless soul and like a “rolling stone that gathers no moss” one finds him at a youthful age tramping on trade and other expeditions in Portuguese East Africa and Rhodesia at a period when few Europeans knew these territories at all. In this connection, Sir Harry tells many rollicking stories, which are an added feature of his book.

Famous Jewish Pioneers.

Names of famous Jewish personages of a past generation abound in this volume. Among others, one discovers characteristic sketches of “Ikey” Sonnenberg, Hirschel Cohen (who by the way, was a partner of Sir Harry in the early Barberton days), Henry Adler, “Sammy” Marks, Isaac Lewis, Carl Hanau, the Barnatos and the Joels. Parallel with the above-named individuals, the author has also much to say about the beginnings of the careers of Sir Percy Fitzpatrick, Sir Abe Bailey and others.

The second half of “Rand Riches” deals for the most part with Sir Harry's participation in the public life of the country. At an early age the author interested himself in the civic life of Johannesburg. Incidentally, he tells many amusing incidents of that city's striking growth.

“Old Johannesburgers will, I am sure,” he declares, “easily recall the beginnings of the fatal year of the Raid, 1896, when for many months street watering was out of the question. During that summer, huge tanks were employed for carting water round parts of the city where the taps were empty. Sometimes, when the bottom of a tank approached, unfortunate householders received more mud than wholesome drinking water in the buckets held out by them. It was during this period that bathing became an almost unobtainable luxury, except to the favoured few. It is on record that some of the more insistent guests at Johannesburg's best hotels occasionally obtained a soda water bath; it is said, rightly or wrongly, that champagne was also used as a substitute for water.”

Sir Harry was elected Mayor of Johannesburg in November, 1909, while his sister,

Mrs. D. W. Sims, acted as Mayoress. It was during his mayoralty that the Duke and Duchess of Connaught visited this country, and in Johannesburg the Duke, among many other activities, laid the foundation stone of the Town Hall. Sir Harry was especially active during the Anglo-Boer War period when, as Chairman of the Uitlander Committee in Capetown, he had to consult Lord Milner on refugee questions.

Even in some of the important political affairs of the country during the past quarter of a century, Sir Harry has played a fascinating, though indirect, role. He writes, inter alia, of the many contacts he has made with distinguished political personages during the period under review. He reveals, for instance, how he impressed the Colonial

Secretary, Mr. Joseph Chamberlain, as to the need for granting Responsible Government for the Transvaal.

RUNNING through his book is a theme that racial unity should be the dominant aim of all those who desire to witness this country's advancement. With this object in view, Sir Harry has done much to promote harmony, political and otherwise, among all concerned. In this regard he has an interesting passage in his book of how the meeting a couple of years ago between General Smuts and the late Mr. Tielman Roos took place. It was the author and Mr. Morris Kentridge, M.P., who were the responsible parties who brought about the meeting between the former two: a meeting which had far-reaching effects on subsequent political fortunes of South Africa.

After appealing for the strengthening of the bonds of Empire, Sir Harry, in conclusion, opines his view of the future of the gold-mining industry here, pleading that a special consideration be given to it by the responsible authorities on account of its being the major industry of the country.

“Rand Riches” contains a number of interesting illustrations. The book, which should have a ready and widespread sale, is an intrinsic addition to the shelf of South African autobiographical literature.

S. R.

SONGS OF MODERN PALESTINE

WORLD Jewry is keenly watching the developments of our National Home in Palestine. The growth of agricultural, industrial, economic and cultural life in that country is being given due prominence. Adequate importance, however, is not being attached to the artistic life of our people there. Prof. Boris Schatz attempted to cultivate a love for the plastic arts with the establishment of the Bezalel School for arts and crafts. Dramatic and Musical Theatres have been opened in Tel-Aviv, the former by the famous Habimah players and the latter by an opera company. It has been felt that pure art in the genuine Jewish spirit can flourish only in a completely Jewish atmosphere. It is therefore in Palestine that the true song of Zion should be born.

Several small collections of Palestinian songs have already been published, and now we are presented with another collection of such songs. Dr. Jacob Shoenberg is responsible for the publication of this volume, small—in order to make it accessible in price to the masses—but rich in contents, for it contains some 237 songs and dancing tunes, a number of which were real gems in folk-lore.

With a few exceptions the songs appear in print for the first time. The texts (all in the Hebrew tongue) are by the best known Hebrew poets and some are taken from the Scriptures. Included are compositions by Anhalt, Sejra, Engel, Postolzki, Schertok, Matatyahu, M. Rabinowitz, Sch. Rosowski and others. There are children's, workers', builders' songs of jollification and inspiration (rustic and urban) for various holidays and dances. Of particular interest are the melodies in canon-form as well as the numerous “Horah” tunes. On glancing through the book, one can visualise the *chalutzim* singing the songs, marching both to and from daily work, whilst their wives sing the lullabies to the children, and terminating in the evening by a gathering in a Beth-Am dancing the Horah and Rondo.

The songs are constructed on the conventional European minor mode, suggesting that they still bear the East European origin, obviously imported by the new settlers. A few songs, however, suggest

an original rhythm, probably influenced by Palestinian surroundings.

There is, however, one keen disappointment. In spite of all the many songs that have been published in Palestine and those in this attractive little volume—there is still missing the new Jewish National Song. Who is going to create this composition?

Generally, the book under review is a welcome addition to the Jewish musical library, and can be recommended for use in schools, societies and in homes. It affords ample scope for those interested in Jewish music to arrange the material available for public performances, and in this way popularise the modern Palestinian song. No lover of good Jewish music should fail to possess this volume.

J. I.

Biography of General Smuts

Mrs. Millin's New Book Well Received

THE first volume of Mrs. Sarah Gertrude Millin's latest work, her biography of General Smuts, was published in London last week and has been highly commended in the English press. The London “Daily Mail” hails it as “a great book and one that will take its place among the dozen great English biographies of this century.” The “Manchester Guardian” declares that it is a finely written study and one which “sheds much interesting light on the thought and action which competed for supremacy in different periods in General Smuts' eventual life.”

Reviewing the work in the “Spectator,” Lord Lothian described it as “a wonderful inspiring story admirably told.” He declares that General Smuts is a hero after Mrs. Millin's heart — a blaze of intellect and action, and that she gives a penetrating study of this outstanding world personality. Robert Lynd in the “News Chronicle” describes the work as “a brilliant and scrupulously faithful narrative” and declares that if a World Federation of States could be brought into existence, there are many who would vote for Smuts as the best possible president.

The work is being eagerly awaited by readers throughout South Africa.

RED DAISY TEA is delicious and refreshing. Try it.