

Durban

DURING a recent visit to Durban, I was, as usual, impressed by the fine Jewish spirit prevailing amongst our people there. The magnificent club building is ever a sheer delight to the visitor. It must be one of the finest institutions of its kind in the world and certainly in the British Empire. That a handful of Jews could have accomplished so splendid a result is a tribute to their unified activity.

I was pleased to learn that the two Hebrew congregations have now joined forces—although I hear that there are to be two Presidents with a joint Executive. Such unification makes for the further welfare of this active community.

I am concerned, however, with the fact that so far no choice has been made as to the Minister of the united Hebrew congregations of Durban. The occupancy of this post is important not only for the Jewish people of the town but for the whole of Natal—and as a matter of fact for South African Jewry.

It appears that the requirements of the post demand a Rabbi who will be able to satisfy the needs of the two congregations in the realm of orthodoxy. He is to be a man possessed of wide Talmudical scholarship and a knowledge of modern spiritual development. He will also need to be a gentleman who will inspire the modern Jewish youth and who will, through his wisdom, culture and oratorical gifts, bring prestige to the Jews among the Gentiles.

Sympathy will be felt for the newly-appointed joint committee of the congregations of Durban in the task confronting them to select a suitable incumbent for the vacant post.

I trust, however, that our Durban friends will not hesitate too long, but will have the courage to choose a suitable Rabbi from the many applications which, I understand, have reached them from all parts of the world. The choice which Durban Jewry will make in this important connection is being awaited with great interest by the rest of South African Jewry.

Dr. Eder

I WAS sorry to learn that Dr. M. D. Eder has just passed away in England. He was seventy-one years of age and a most interesting personality. For many years he was a member of the famous Fabian Society of which Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells were the founders.

Some twenty-five years ago, Eder began to take an interest in his own people and coming under the influence of the late Israel Zangwill he was prominently connected with the now defunct Jewish Territorial Organisation. It was as a representative of that body that he joined the Zionist Commission which went to Palestine early in 1918.

From that year until 1923, Eder acted as political representative of the Zionist Executive in Jerusalem and was elected a member of that Executive at the Congresses held in 1921 and 1923. On his return to England he was elected President of the English Zionist Federation.

Current Communal Comments

By
"Hamabit"

I had the pleasure of knowing the late Dr. Eder. He was not a man of whom the general public was aware, as his work was mainly behind the scenes. He was a highly cultured personality and one of the leading psychologists in England; he was the author of a number of important medical works. In his passing another valiant English Zionist has been lost to the national movement.

Werfel

FRANZ WERFEL, the famous novelist, has been having a hard time lately. His novel "The Forty Days of Musa Dagh," in which he described the Turkish massacres of the Armenians, was banned in Turkey. Then again Armenians in Soviet Russia committed the book to the flames on the grounds that it endangered the relations between Turkey and Russia. Some Jews complained that Werfel might have chosen as a theme for a novel the pogroms in the Ukraine, which were no less terrible than the massacre in Armenia.

The latter argument is rather unjustified and displays a great deal of narrow-mindedness. When I read "The Forty Days" I was reminded of Israel Zangwill's epilogue to his book, "The Voice of Jerusalem." Speaking of the Armenian massacres he says:

"Hitherto through the long centuries the crown of martyrdom has been pre-eminently Israel's. And as day by day during this war of wars there came to me by dark letter of whisper the tale of her woes in the central war-zone, I said to myself: 'Surely the cup is full, surely no people on earth has such a measure of gall and vinegar to drain! . . . But I was mistaken. One people is suffering more. That people, whose ancient realm held the legendary Eden, has now for abiding place the pit of Hell. I bow before this higher majesty of sorrow. I take the crown of thorns from Israel's head and I place it upon Armenia's.'"

Recently Werfel was entertained by Jewish writers at a banquet in New York. The function was attended by many Armenians who came to pay homage to the man who had given the world a picture of their sufferings.

"Jew's Harp"

THE other day I was perusing a fascinating volume entitled "The Musical Instruments of the Native Races of South Africa." It is written by that well-known local enthusiast in matters musical, Professor P. R. Kirby, of the University of the Witwatersrand.

I found a few references as to the use of the Jew's harp among natives. Professor

Kirby, claims that the use of this instrument is quite popular among our darker folk.

Few people are aware that the name of the Jew's harp is in no way connected with the Hebrew people. Only in England and America is it called a Jew's harp. The Scotch call it a "trump," the French a "trompe." In a work by the famous Bacon the instrument is referred to as a "Jeu-trompe." Later, in

Beaumont and Fletcher's plays it appears as a "Jew-trump." Hakluyt, the renowned collector of travel literature, was the first to refer to it as a "Jew's harp"—a name that stuck.

There have been many fine executants of the Jew's harp during the centuries that have passed; one of its greatest players was Koch, a Prussian soldier of the age of Frederick the Great.

"Without Tears"

THE desire on the part of English-speaking people to know Hebrew has led to an interesting development. A certain company in London has arranged for a course of carefully graduated practical lessons to be imprinted on gramophone records. Besides lessons in Hebrew, the records contain Hebrew speeches delivered by the late Nachman Bialik, by Dr. David Yellin and a number of others.

I understand that the course is creating a good deal of interest in England, but so far I know of no one who is learning Hebrew in South Africa through this particular method. I am keen on hearing from any of my readers who may have sent for these language-records. The claim is made of them that they teach one how to learn "Hebrew without tears."

A Saving

AN elderly Jew presented himself at the house in Paris of the late Baron de Rothschild, the distinguished philanthropist. He found it difficult to secure entry until he made a startling statement to the latter's secretary.

"I can tell the Baron how he can make five million francs," declared the visitor.

Upon this information being brought to the Baron, he asked that the newcomer be shown in. After a preliminary talk he was asked to state his proposition.

"I understand, Baron," he replied, "that you are ready to give ten million francs as dowry for your daughter in marriage."

"That is true," replied the Baron.

"Well," said the visitor, "I have a son who would be willing to take your daughter for five million francs."

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