

## Schreiner

RECENTLY there passed away near Capetown Samuel Cronwright-Schreiner, the husband of the late Olive Schreiner, the famous South African writer. Cronwright-Schreiner was also an author of some renown. It is in his "Life of Olive Schreiner" that one finds some reference to his wife's association with our people.

It has been stated that Olive Schreiner was of Jewish descent, and occasionally she called attention to this supposed contact with the cause of Jewry. Among other matters, her husband records in his volume that the first short story ever written by his gifted wife dealt with a Jewish theme, detailing some of the experiences of a Jewish pedlar in the Cape.

Olive Schreiner gained the regard of her Jewish friends when, in the early part of this century, she published a vigorous protest, entitled "A Letter on the Jew," which dealt with the persecution of the Jews in former Russia. That epistle still has its value to-day, and it would be a good idea to republish it now. Some of the extracts of her letter are to be found in Dr. J. H. Hertz's book, "A Book of Jewish Thoughts."

Among Olive Schreiner's friends in her early days was Mrs. John Brown, the daughter of Henry Solomon—a member of an old Jewish family long connected with St. Helena. Mrs. Brown, who died at a great age, was the first to read the manuscript of Olive Schreiner's internationally-known "The Story of an African Farm." The book was dedicated to Mrs. Brown.

It may be recalled, too, that another intimate friend of Olive Schreiner in her London days was Eleanor Marx-Aveling, a daughter of Karl Marx, the great economist.

## A Firebrand

KARL KRAUS, the German-Jewish critic, whose death took place in Vienna recently, was one of the most remarkable personalities which Austrian journalism has produced. In temperament and in his militant criticism, he somewhat resembled Horatio Bottomley in the hey-day of his career. Nobody was immune from the fiery pen of Kraus. Unlike Bottomley, however, he was a highly educated man and a most versatile litterateur. He spent his life in dire poverty and distributed his income amongst charitable institutions.

For over forty years Kraus published a monthly of his own entitled, "Fackel" (Firebrand) and in literary circles he was known by that name. He filled up the whole paper himself with stormy articles against the deities of his generation. He was chiefly opposed to the commercialisation of literature, journalism and theatre. For this reason, he despised Reinhardt, accusing him of having sold his talents for the sake of box-office receipts.

Whilst Kraus was mainly a destructive critic, he was, nevertheless, responsible for the discovery of several leading German writers. He helped to popularise Franz Werfel; later, however, he attacked Werfel's "religiosity" which took on a somewhat Christian aspect in the work "Paul Amongst the Jews."

# Current Communal Comments

By  
"Hamabit"

Kraus admired Freud's researches in psycho-analysis, but despised the atmosphere of holy reverence which surrounded the latter. Although he was not a Zionist, Kraus wielded his pen against the spiritual emptiness of Jewish life in Germany. He was one of the few independent spirits in European literature, the type which is disappearing under the stress of political events of an entirely new order.

## Culture

THE brightest spot in German-Jewish life is the *Kulturbund*, an organisation for the dissemination of Jewish culture. Pessimists may speak of the total destruction of German Jewry, but it seems to me that a community which is able to build up in the most unfavourable circumstances one of the greatest cultural organisations in Europe, cannot be defeated. In Berlin alone the organisation has twenty thousand paying members! I wonder whether there is any other Jewish cultural organisation in the world that can boast of such a large membership.

It will be argued that this organisation is a product of Hitler's anti-Jewish laws, whereby Jewish actors, artists and writers were compelled to turn to their own culture. But let it not be forgotten that in Poland, where there are seven times as many Jews as there are in Germany, Jewish performers and intellectuals have also been boycotted for the last fifteen years. Nevertheless, Polish Jews have produced nothing that can compare in solidity with the *Kulturbund*. In addition to Berlin, there are branches of the *Kulturbund* in Koeln, Breslau, Hamburg and Frankfurt-am-Main. Several hundred artists are employed by this organisation. It has a dramatic theatre of its own, an orchestra and a panel of soloists for concerts and cabaret performances.

I also observe that the theatre of the *Kulturbund* has already to its credit a number of distinguished plays, such as Lessing's "Nathan the Wise," Hirschbein's "Green Fields" and works of Stephen Zweig, Schnitzler, Wasserman and Dymow. Its opera company has produced "Samson and Delilah" and "Nebuchadnezer." The choir of the *Kulturbund* recently gave a series of folk-song performances which were successful.

When I compare this list with the anaemic type of fare given by Jewish clubs in this country, I confess to a feeling of regret at our incompetence.

## Huberman

UNDISMAYED by the present conditions in that country, Bronislaw Huberman is, I notice, making final arrangements for the Palestine Symphony Orchestra. Against the advice of some of his well-meaning friends, he resigned his post in the Vienna Academy of Music and stated publicly that he is not likely to give any concerts in Austria in the near future, as he is devoting himself entirely

to the new Palestine Orchestra. He has also given up his comfortable home in Vienna.

During the Salzburg festivals, Huberman carried on negotiations with Toscanini. He felt that it would not be fair to ask Toscanini to appear at the first concert as was originally intended. Toscanini, who is a non-Jew, is over seventy and under the unstable conditions prevailing in Palestine, it would be too much of a strain for him to go there in the near future.

I understand, however, that the aged Italian master will conduct the orchestra at the end of the year. After some concerts in Palestine, the orchestra will go to Egypt. Amongst the soloists and conductors who are booked for the orchestra are Adolf Busch, Jassy Dobrowen, Hans Steinberg, and Michael Taube.

The energy and devotion with which Huberman attacks his ambitious task deserves the admiration of the whole Jewish people. Despite the reign of terror in Palestine this fine artist—who by many is looked upon as the leading violin player of the day—is intent on carrying on with the work he had started. In this respect, he has shown himself to be a true *chalutz*—the pioneer of a Jewish musical effort which will be an event in the world of music.

## A "Criminal"

THIS is the story of a Jewish criminal in Communist Ukraine. It was published in the Charkov daily "Der Shtern": "An elderly Jewish pedlar appears from time to time in the collective farm Kalinin. Bent under his sack, he strolls from door to door announcing his ware: 'Old clothes, spot cash for old clothes, rags and bottles!' Looking at him you would think that the man is a hawker by trade, so innocent he looks, so honest . . . In reality, however, he is plying a most dangerous trade; he is a Mohel in disguise! Recently it was observed that he carried on secret negotiations with a school teacher, who is the mother of a newly born son. The child was taken by the 'hawker' to a nearby hut where he was duly circumcised. In another case—this time the wife of a party member—the mother was afraid to agree to the operation in case it would jeopardise her husband's position. It was therefore agreed that the *brismilah* take place during her absence on leave and ostensibly against her will . . ."

When I read this story, I was reminded of the Jewish legend concerning the *lamed vav tsadikim*—thirty-six righteous men—by whose merit the world exists. According to legend these men were very plain people: Porters, shoemakers and . . . hawkers.

## Longer—

Berele: Is it true that women live longer than men?

Chayim: Only widows.