

Durban Doings.

THE NEW CHOIR.

JEWISH LADIES GUILD.

GENERAL NEWS

(From Our Own Correspondent).

It is no exaggeration to say that the outstanding Communal event in Durban is the arrival at last of the "Shool" Choir. Mr. Lurie and his choristers made their debut on the first night of Passover, and as soon as their first bars rang out, the large and even overflowing congregation that arrived full of expectancy and anticipation, realised that a new note had been struck in the religious life of the town. It was "Ma Touvi—How Good!" The choir from that evening has given almost unalloyed satisfaction. The Harmonies that have continued each Festival eve and Sabbath since, have proved so beautiful that they were listened to with rapt attention. Hardened sinners against the canons of synagogue decorum found in these vocal harmonies a serious rival to the subjects of those religious conversations which have hitherto disturbed the even tenour of the services. Nobody talks now; everybody comes to shool—with the exception of those few "die-hards" whose speciality is the crivvised side and not the religious side of communal labour. "We are on the administrative side" say these Jewish enthusiasts.

The general effect of the inspiring sermons by the Minister (Rev. E. M. Levy, M.A.), the melodious bird-like trills of Chazan, and the glorious harmonies of the choir, has been so profound upon the Durban Community that we feel ourselves now in the ranks of the most organised and well-disciplined communities of the Union. The President (Mr. S. Bloom), and the Treasurer (Mr. A. J. Lipinski), together with the able committee, deserve well of the community for their untiring efforts in the interests of Local Judaism.

The adjourned meeting of the Jewish Ladies' Guild, was an improvement upon its predecessor at which there was no quorum. Mrs. C. Levisohn retains office still, and is by no means heartened at the lack of enthusiasm which, in recent times, has been displayed by this body which has such a brilliant record of communal service behind it. They are beginning to get busy now with the arrangements for the social event of the season—the July Ball.

I am told that the H.O.D. recently had a very successful gathering at which efforts were made to whip up renewed enthusiasm for its ideals. Mr. L. M. Braham, the President, made a most eloquent appeal for Jewish ideals, and the Jewish Religion, in a circular letter to the members which was referred to at the meeting in question.

The half-yearly meeting of the members of the Durban Hebrew Congregation was very poorly attended, but transacted some important business, prominent among which is the conferring of Life Membership (with a seat on the committee) on Mr. F. C. Hollander, J.P., in appreciation of his past services to the congregation and the community. A

compliment was also paid to Mr. P. Wartski—the doyen and last surviving "Voortrekker" of the community. A presentation was made to him of a nice stick, upon the occasion of his impending voyage to the Old Country again. Facetious persons have seen some irony in the selection of a "stick"; but his friends in England need fear him no more than we in Durban do. Mr. Wartski takes with him the warm-hearted respect and affection of large circles in this town, and one and all trust that this trip will mean for him a renewed lease of health and vigour.

The "Circle" recently instituted an innovation in their literary programme in the form of a "Manishtans Night" which took place on the first night of "Chol Hamoed" Pasach. A series of questions was fired at the Minister (Rev. E. M. Levy, M.A.), upon various Jewish Religious Topics. Some of these include "The Blood Accusation," "The Jewish Law in regard to Money Lending," "Why are Jews an asset to any country," etc. The Minister dealt ably and eloquently with these various topics and supplementary questions, and I am told that many in the audience thought at the end that he succeeded in persuading them that, after all, we are quite a fine lot of people. Mr. Stone presided.

Coming to social functions, a large circle of friends foregathered again at the residence of Mrs. Smolensky whose son Sidney was "Barmitzvah." Sidney read his "Parsha" and "Maftir" in the nice manner which all expect from such a good and industrious lad, and so did Master Jones who was also "Barmitzvah" on the same day and read his "Parsha" very nicely too. Both boys took to heart the few stirring words which were addressed to them that morning by the Minister (Rev. E. M. Levy, M.A.), from the pulpit. Returning to the reception held at Mrs. Smolensky's residence in the evening, it was socially a brilliant gathering drawn from all sections of Jewish society. Amongst the notabilities were seen Mr. F. C. Hollander, J.P., Mr. and Mrs. Leo Lipinski, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Lipinski, Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lipinski, Rev. Menachemson, Mr. and Mrs. Lionel Davis and many others too numerous to mention. The extraordinarily large gathering was no doubt due to the high esteem in which the Smolensky family are held by the very widest circles in the town, and especially to the commanding role in the community which was played by the late Mr. Smolensky than whom a more charitable, more genial, more warm hearted Jewish citizen Durban has never had.

And many congratulations to Mr. and Mrs. Shaffer of Vause Road upon the initiation into the Abrahamic Covenant of their newly-born son. The "Bris Melah" took place last Saturday and again Durban knew a large and brilliant throng to witness the ceremony and partake of the generous hospitality at dinner. Rev. Levy presided and in a learned and eloquent address proposed the toast of Mr. and Mrs. Shaffer. Rev. Menachemson (who performed the ceremony), proposed the child. Mr. A. G. Cohen as "Sandek" responded to his toast proposed by Mr. S. L. Jacobson, and Mr. Lionel Davis proposed the "Clergy" responded to by Rev. Levy. "Mazzeltov" to everybody.

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