

OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

By Rozilda.

WHY A YIDDISH SECULAR SCHOOL?

A secularist, says Chamber's Twentieth Century Dictionary, is one who holds that education should be apart from religion. Do the promoters of the first Yiddish Secular School in South Africa propose, then, to exclude religious teaching? Is it to be understood that the ultimate goal of the Yiddish Literary Society is a secular undenominational school where all ordinary school subjects such as arithmetic, English and Afrikaans are taught through the Yiddish medium? Consider the problems presented by such a school in this already bilingual country.

Two Official Languages.

There are two official languages in South Africa, English and Afrikaans. These our children must learn. Educational authorities have found by experience that four hours per week for the second language, be it English or Afrikaans, is ample time in which to give the child a speaking, writing and singing knowledge of that language.

The Jewish Secular School proposes to devote eight hours per week to Yiddish. Hebrew, it appears, will only be taught "in the later stages," whatever that may mean. But what of Hebrew in the earlier stages? Is it to be neglected entirely, or are the children to attend another school after this one is over, say, from seven to nine, in order to acquire that very necessary knowledge of Hebrew?

An Eight-hour Day.

The law provides that adults shall not work more than eight hours a day. These children about to attend the Yiddish school, as well as those who go to the old-fashioned Cheder, will already have had five hours at school before commencing the second afternoon session. Thus they will be compelled to work for seven hours in school, apart from time required for any homework set by one or both schools. In addition many will have to take lessons in dancing, elocution or music, and practise as well. This surely is too great an imposition on growing children.

The Universal Language.

Every Jew will acknowledge that there is one universal language which is common to all Jews, whether they come from Russia, Holland, Portugal or Egypt. Hebrew is the link which still keeps us from being strangers to our own brothers the world over. Scattered as we are, it is essential that we have a common tongue. Yiddish will never be able to serve the purpose of keeping the whole race together.

Not Properly Taught.

We must say that we are in sympathy with the Yiddish Literary Society when they tilt at the teaching of Hebrew. Hebrew is not properly taught in most Talmud Torahs. The mere babbling of "broches" in Hebrew by people who

do not understand them is ridiculous, useless, and of no value. When a foreign child comes to South Africa it knows no English. Yet modern methods are such that within a short time the child can converse in his new language and can read such books as are suitable for his age. He does not require an English book with the Yiddish version next to it.

Our children visit Synagogue on Festival Days. The girls come in with their prayer books, but generally they cannot find the place nor are they able to understand the Hebrew of the Chazan.

A child who has learnt Afrikaans can go into the Dutch Reformed Church and follow the service. A child who has learnt French can enter a room and understand the conversation. But a child who has learnt Hebrew can only understand the "broches."

Sentimental Attachment.

That there is still a good deal of sentimental attachment to Yiddish traditions and Yiddish customs one can readily understand. With such a sentiment we can and do sympathise, and we would be the last people to advocate the breaking down of any sentimental links with any phase, however small, of our history.

But that sentiment, we urge, is not universal. It attaches to only a small section of our people. It is homely, it is individual. It is a delicate thing, bound to be crushed in the weary grind of children tired out after a long school day.

Foster a sentimental affection for the traditions of the past if you wish. Tell the children stories from Yiddish literature, teach them the homely little Yiddish songs, give them food for thought about the significance, past, present and future of the Jewish people.

Do so, by all means, but do it pleasantly at home, and not irksomely at school. Make being a Jewish child a thing of joy and not a bore for ever.

MODERN ART IN SOUTH AFRICA.

That the inculcation in this country of even a tolerant attitude towards modern art is uphill work none can deny. Head-strong young men like William Plomer and Roy Campbell, whose opinions of the intellectual possibilities of South Africa are couched in terms unfit for quotation, flee in disgust from a land which they call a "blasted heath." Struggling artists with aspirations are swallowed up in a quagmire of mediocrity from which they can never afterwards escape, and young people have no chance of becoming even distantly acquainted with the works of modern artists, because hitherto neither originals nor reproductions were ever brought out here.

The Van Riebeeck Galleries.

We view, therefore, with much hopeful pleasure the pioneering efforts of the Van Riebeeck Galleries, 61, Burg Street, who are

gradually bringing out examples of the work of the best modern masters.

Among reproductions I saw there the other day a Cezanne, a Renoir, a Matisse, a Courbet and a Degas. Slowly the local public is being initiated.

An interesting exhibition of modern originals is now being held there. It includes the work of such representative English artists as Walter W. Russell, Wilson Steer, Ronald Gray, D. S. MacColl, and Henry Tonks.

To those interested in the development of art overseas, the exhibition is well worth seeing.

The Van Riebeeck Galleries are to be complimented on their enterprise. We wish them every success.

LISTENING IN TO LAST THURSDAY'S CONCERT.

When I discussed the Atterburg Symphony with Mr. Pickerill and told him that I did not like it and that I had listened in to it, his reply was: "Yes, but it may have lost much over the wireless." But I assured him that Margaret Fairless' rendering of Beethoven's Violin Concerto had been most inspiring and beautiful. Even over the wireless her tone had been rich and full, her *andante* movement charming, the *cadenzas* as clear and perfect as if I had listened from my accustomed seat in the hall. Mozart's Magic Flute, too, lost neither in charm nor clearness.

It is true that both the concerto and the overture are old friends and that perhaps a new piece of music is rather at a disadvantage when introduced over the wireless. But the fact remains: I did not enjoy the symphony. During the first movement I listened in vain for a motif upon which to build a melody. There seemed to be no sequence to catch hold of. A rather toneless funereal passage with bits of melody that never developed characterised the second movement. The last movement I liked best.

Future composers, it seems to me, will have to remember when creating music, that thousands of people will of necessity only hear them over the wireless. Will some special form of music develop as a result, I wonder.

"MAN AND SUPERMAN."

A Gallery of Very Unpleasant Women.

Why has Shaw set out to malign womankind in "Man and Superman"? His four women here are a deplorable set of characters. Indeed, there is something of Strindberg's demoniacal hatred and disapproval and fear of them in his treatment of the sex, and consequently they become almost caricatures.

Ann Whitefield is a woman in the grip of a purpose, the Life Force. She thinks, however, that that purpose is her own; she marks down her prey, the poor protesting, suspicious male, and eventually secures

him. She is unscrupulous, dishonest, unreal. The ordinary woman-in-the-street cannot acknowledge her as sister. Dora Macdona tackles the part of Ann with good intentions. That she does not succeed in being convincing is undoubtedly as much due to Shaw's deliberate distortion of the character as of her own inability to identify herself with it.

Mrs. Whitefield is weak, ineffectual, hesitant, a strange mother for such a daughter. Presumably she, too, once was obsessed with a Purpose. Where is it now? Isobel James gave a clever and rather interesting version of the part.

Miss Ramsden, the disapproving, puritannical, well-corseted sister is another caricature. Miss Maude Bracewell is to be complimented on having made the most of it.

Grasping, avaricious and dictatorial Violet Robinson (an able study in the hands of Miss Greta Burke) completes this Gallery of Very Unpleasant Women.

No, Mr. G.B.S. we don't like your women a bit!

George S. Wray as John Tanner continues to be his charming iconoclastic self, except in the last scene, where he seems to be a trifle at loggerheads with his part.

While John Tanner *might* have succumbed to the obscure fascination of Ann, we, who know George S. Wray, are inclined to be a little surprised at him. We did not think he could be beaten so easily.

Philip Godfrey, who took the part of the far-seeing, speed-loving and "aitch"-dropping 'Enery Straker, was all that he was expected to be.

George Merritt seemed not quite comfortable as a gentleman. We prefer him as Doolittle the dustman.

An interesting play, witty in parts, but—we prefer Pygmalion!

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