

In and Around the Town.

58, Burg Street,
Thursday.

ON CHARITY.

Mr. H. J. Stodel has commenced, in real earnest, his movement to bring about federation of local Jewish charities, and his aim is to unite seven charitable agencies under an organisation which it is proposed to name the Cape Federation of Jewish Institutions. In a very comprehensive statement he has issued, a portion of which will be found in another part of this issue, a brief reference is made to the history and evolution of charity collection and distribution from the earliest times to the present day. Thus we are told that in biblical times the corners of the fields were reserved for the poor. The tithe or tax as a contribution to charity is recognised in Biblical Law. In the Temple at Jerusalem, a cell of silence was provided where donors deposited food and other gifts, which the poor called for, unseen by their benefactors.

A JEWISH COMMUNAL TAX.

Later, the early synagogues were houses of shelter for the poor and the stranger. Congregations appointed special officers to collect funds on festive occasions and at funerals to provide for the needy. Still later, in certain Jewish communities in Europe, legal power was obtained to tax their members for the support of the poor and the sick. Failure to pay the Jewish communal tax was punishable by ostracism, and after death by the burial of delinquents beyond the gates of the communal cemetery.

In more recent days in other communities the "Korobka" or Meat Tax was levied on all Kosher meat, so that every Jewish home which could afford to eat meat helped to pay its communal debt to the poor. In the big majority of cases the Jew gave willingly, in a minority of cases they gave because the law compelled them.

INDISCRIMINATE ALMSGIVING.

In the days and places described by the immortal Zangwill in his "King of the Schnorrers," the wealthy attended on the eve of the Sabbath and on Yomtov eve, at the gates of the synagogue and distributed alms. A class of professional schnorrer arose and had his clearly defined territory and subjects, who paid his weekly or periodical pension. The charitably disposed were imposed upon, and the more modest deserving but less enterprising poor languished in poverty. As time went on, this indiscriminate almsgiving and impositions gave place to organised relief by the elders of the community, and Boards of Guardians, Orphanages, Homes for the Aged and Societies for the care of the sick came into existence.

In larger communities it naturally followed that there was more activity, but greater activity and

denser Jewish populations brought about redundant institutions, overlapping, duplication of effort, waste of energy and a frittering away of labour and money which could have been better utilised and to greater advantage if there had been more centralisation and more intensive concentration.

"A RELIGION OF LIFE."

In this week's Sedra, Leviticus, chapter 18, verses 4 and 5, we read: "Ye shall do my judgements, and keep mine ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgements, which if a man do, he shall live in them: I am the Lord."

The Rabbis commenting on the words "Vo'chay Bohem," and he shall live in them, remark "Vilo Sheyomus Bohem," that he may not die in them. Judaism was not given as a religion to suffer by it, but rather as a religion which gives life and strength to those who observe it, thus the Torah is called the "Ertz Chazim," the tree of life.

There are only three precepts for which a Jew was supposed to offer his life and are as follows: Denying the Unity of God, committing murder, and the marrying of one of the eleven prohibited near relatives. For all the other precepts a Jew was not expected to sacrifice his life, yet for centuries our ancestors were imbued with the spirit of self-sacrifice and for precepts which our young generation to-day disregard, nay, even abuse, they were prepared to, and actually did, offer their lives.

The question has often been asked as to whom is to blame for this change of condition. A great number of our brethren try to find fault with the institutions, with the teachers, in fact, with everybody except with themselves. Let them look facts in the face, and they will come to an entirely different conclusion, "Vo'chay Bohem," let them live as Jews, and set the example to their children of a truly Jewish life. Let them show to their young that Judaism is a religion of Life, and not of burden and desolation. Then they will find that the young will follow in their footsteps.

KOTTLER'S ART.

A letter appeared in the "Cape Times" on Monday, 29th April, signed "An Admirer of Both," we reproduce it here.

"Sir.—I have just heard that Mr. Kottler, the sculptor, is sailing for England this week, and hasten to appeal, through your columns, to the Jewish community and the Christian admirers of Mr. Bender, to make immediate arrangements to retain the wonderful bust of him which Mr. Kottler has executed..

"As a work of art it would be an acquisition to Cape Town, and in addition it would be a graceful tribute to one who has done so much for the social welfare of the community.. Don't let us wait till Mr. Kottler is dead to show our recog-

niton of his genius, and let us also show our love for Mr. Bender while he is still happily with us."

A WELL-DESERVED REPRIMAND.

It is already two years since this bust was completed. That we Jews are slow to act is almost a truism; that we should have our duty pointed out to us by a non-Jew comes as a well-deserved reprimand.

Last week in "Out of the Ordinary" there appeared an interview with Mr. Moses Kottler, by Rozilda, in which my colleague urged the desirability of purchasing the bust before it left the country. I can only repeat:

"We fervently hope that this unique opportunity to do honour to our well-loved minister and friend will not be allowed to pass by."

A JEWISH FOLK-LORE CONCERT.

Apart from the fact that it was not altogether a Folk-lore Concert, the entertainment given at the Zionist Hall last Saturday night in aid of the Zionist Hall Building Fund was a success, and Mr. Boris Rome, the director, is to be congratulated.

On occasions such as this it becomes obvious how urgent was the need for a larger hall. The audience would have filled the little Mother Hall again and again. We were not surprised, therefore, when Mr. H. M. Bloch, on behalf of the Committee, announced that the adjoining property in Hope Street had been acquired in order to provide the necessary kitchen accommoda-

tion. The hall, he explained, was being used for many large entertainments such as they had not anticipated. A fireproof curtain was another essential. Until they got that they would continue to be compelled to turn away many prospective hirers.

THE PROGRAMME.

The programme, which was excellent in quality and variety, erred as usual on the long side, the interval coming at 9.45 instead of at 9.

Miss Minnie Kahn at the piano accompanied with much good taste, and gave her services unstintingly throughout the evening. Of the singers Mr. Boris Rome was most pleasing; his fine voice was heard with much pleasure and his artistic treatment of songs in playful mood, such as Deedle-Deedle-Dum, was altogether praiseworthy.

Among the other items were violin solos, Mr. A. Lorie; cello solo, Lily Haft; recitation, Mr. Losman; songs by Miss Feinhols and Mr. Harry Gorfinkel and dances by pupils of Miss Miriam Kirsch. Among the dancers Miriam Geffen, who is the fortunate owner of a personality which cannot be spoilt by praise, was as usual outstanding.

THE GARDENS SYNAGOGUE CHOIR.

The Synagogue Choir, conducted by Boris Rome, contributed some jolly folk songs, which were much enjoyed. There is one word of ad-

(Continued on page 283).

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What Shall I Read?

By Aleph Beth.

A Virtuous Woman, by Daphne Muir; Chatto & Windus; Darter Bros.

There is something barren and stricken in this life-story of a virtuous woman in South Africa, something inevitable and dreary, like the veld in time of drought.

Whether the life of a woman who does her duty religiously and narrowly is as drab and uninteresting in any other country as it is in this is a subject which will bear discussion: Daphne Muir's book, if read seriously, will weight the scales heavily on one side.

Flippant folk may say, "A thing of duty is a bore for ever." But the race of stern God-fearing people from whom Sanni sprung viewed life differently.

"Religion to them was a stark reality, admitting of no deviation from a well-established road. The pathway to heaven, though stony and narrow, was perfectly well defined, and upon either side gaped Hell, a blazing, corporeal Hell of sulphur and brimstone into which any slip would send them reeling."

Sanni never once slipped from this path. She married Sarel le Roux after a brief wooing, neither ardent nor impetuous.

"It was more like a game of chess in which there were moves and counter-moves, giving and taking, pledges, not of affection, but of more solid quality, such as sheep, and land, and water-rights.

"His love for Sanni was no great thing, for sex in him was a trifling affair, to be quenched adequately and then forgotten. A man of his race and time could have no community of interest with the woman he married. Women had certain obvious characteristics, certain obvious duties. They were necessities. In this belief Sarel had been brought up."

Sanni accepted this attitude placidly, bore it her life through, bore also numerous children, stolidly uncomplainingly, tending them with care and some amount of individuality.

Her children grew up, married, left her.. Many grandchildren came into the world. Her husband died after fifty years of married life.

Sanni lived through two wars. In the Boer War she lost two sons. She bowed her head to the inevitable. Then the Great War came, but Sanni was eighty years old and past caring.

When her death drew near, and her children and grandchildren knew it, even though she still sat at the head of the table with her Bible before her, all gathered round her. On her last night the women took it in turns to sit up and pray with her.

"Corinna, taking the second watch, prayed for life for herself. She prayed for opportunity and wider horizons. It seemed useless to pray for her grandmother. She was not going to die. She had never lived.. Eighty years in a

place like this, where nothing ever happened, could not be called Life. Her grandmother had been dead ever since the day she was born."

Two of the best stories in this book are stories which were not written.

What happened to Sanni's brother-in-law, Klaas, the dreamer, who left his inheritance to answer the call of the Unknown? He simply faded out "into the blue," only sending his infant daughter back home when he died. What happened to Sanni's son, Sarel, who, despite his stern Boer up-bringing, became a Roman Catholic priest? His spiritual struggles should have given the author a splendid opportunity to give a psychological study. That she did not write it is one of the minor tragedies of the book.

ALEPH BETH..

IN AND AROUND THE TOWN. (Continued from page 277).

vice I would like to offer in connection with this choir. A first essential to choir singing is discipline. This necessary quality was lacking, boys laughing, moving and even talking throughout the songs. The singing itself, though of most promising quality, was inclined to noisiness and strain.. The first was due to lack of concentrated discipline, the second to the unnatural position adopted by the choir. Mr. Rome himself, we feel sure, would never attempt to sing with his hands behind his back. With such promising material and with the excellent training such as Mr. Rome is no doubt able to give, a choir of high attainment should be realised in the near future.

TALMIDE EZRA—A HEBREW PLAY..

A very earnest and pleasant-spoken young man came in to see me the other day. He informed me that the Talmidè Ezra, the pupils of the Hebrew Circle which meets regularly to study and speak Hebrew in commemoration of their late teacher, Mr. Homa, are giving a Hebrew play in the Zionist Hall on 11th May. The drama is a Zionist one, by A. Carmon. It is in three acts. It ought to please all those interested in hearing Hebrew as a living language.. It deals with a little boy in Russia who is a fervent Zionist, though his parents are not. The lad decides to run away to Palestine. He meets with many adventures in Alexandria, where he encounters a young friend of his, Jacob, who is also a Zionist. Opportunely a sailor appears and they depart for Jaffa. In the third act joyful Chalutzim are seen singing merry songs in a field. The parents come to Palestine, too, there is a reconciliation, and everybody is happy ever after.. The characters are: E. Kluk, Amnon, the boy; S. Glazer, Jacob, the friend; E. Kupowitz, Mordecai, the father; H. Volozinski, the mother. The proceeds of this enthusiastic effort will be used to purchase Hebrew books for the use of this little Hebrew circle and the use of any others interested in Hebrew. The seats will be 3s. 3d., 2s. 3d. and 1s. 2d. I hope that this performance will meet with the patronage it deserves.

A SAD EVENT.

I regret to have to announce the death at the New Somerset Hospital on Friday night, the 26th of April, of Shloima (Solly) Ruchod-

zki, aged 15 years, of the Cape Jewish Orphanage. This young boy was one of the orphans brought from the Pogrom areas of Eastern Europe in 1921. He was suffering from heart trouble when he came. This is the first death that has occurred at the Cape Jewish Orphanage.

A TRIBUTE.

I have received the following tribute from Solomon's classmates (Standard 9): The recent sad loss of Solomon Ruchodzki has deeply affected his school-fellows, and in particular the members of his class. We had hoped for months that he would recover, and his death has come as a grievous shock to us. We were all very fond of him and shall always remember him as one of the outstanding and most promising characters of our class. He was cheerful, bright, enthusiastic and always keen in the discussions that arose out of the great interest he had in every branch of schoolwork. Though not active in the playing fields, as a result of his ill-health, he followed the school games with the interest of a keen sportsman. We shall always preserve the memory of a departed and deeply regretted school-fellow.

HAPPY SEDER NIGHTS.

It was a happy and kindly thought that prompted certain ladies and gentlemen to leave their own table for the "Seders" and to participate in the usual religious "feast" arranged at the Cape Jewish Aged Home and Cape Jewish Orphanage. In the latter institution, the principal, Mr. Berezinsky, presided over the festive board, while at the former the Rev. Mr. Kibel conducted the ceremony. At both institutions there was a fine feeling of homeli-

ness, the Hagadah being recited with religious fervour and zest. In both institutions the "Aphikomen" was "found." How noble to make our aged and orphan so happy!

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