

## OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

By Rozilda.

### The Eisteddfod Dispute.

Many of our Jewish parents are very perturbed. The South African Dance Teachers' Association has decided at the eleventh hour to cut itself adrift from the Annual Eisteddfod. It is for parents now to decide whether they will allow their children to enter for the Dancing Section at the City Hall or for the isolated Dance Festival at the Zionist Hall. Both they may not do, for the dates virtually coincide.

The decision of the D.T.A. comes as a great surprise to all in Cape Town who have watched with pleasure for a number of years the many-sided activities of the Eisteddfod.

The educational value of the Eisteddfod has grown as its scope has widened until the ideal of an annual festival held in honour of the arts has almost been in sight. Now comes a petty quarrel which insinuates itself into the pursuit of this ideal, with the result that those energies which should be diverted to the arts are spent instead in cultivating a difference.

#### The Quarrel.

At the last Eisteddfod a tactless remark made by the young adjudicator of the dancing section aroused a storm of protest and dissatisfaction from the audience. She had criticised not the candidate, but the candidate's teacher (who was, by the way, not a member of the D.T.A.). The Eisteddfod Committee requested the adjudicator to apologise. After a consultation with the local Secretary of the D.T.A., she refused to do so. Returning to Johannesburg after the Eisteddfod, Miss Sturman, the adjudicator in question, enlisted the support of the S.A.D.T.A.

A correspondence ensued which spread itself over a year. The questions at issue have not yet been settled.

#### The D.T.A. Point of View.

The D.T.A. consider that the interference with an adjudicator in the course of her duty by any Committee is undesirable, and further that the demand of the Eisteddfod Committee for a public apology on the part of an adjudicator for an opinion expressed is in the nature of an insult.

The S.A.D.T.A., being the largest dancing teachers' association in this country, with 85 per cent. of the dance teachers included in its membership, claims at least equal rights with any other dance teachers' association to nominate an adjudicator for the dancing section. Mr. Wood, the Secretary of the Cape Town D.T.A., says: "The Eisteddfod Committee did not ask us for nominations for an adjudicator this year. The adjudicator selected this year is a member of the local branch of the London D.T.A. which has a membership of twelve all told. That is why we broke away from the Eisteddfod."

"It seems necessary to remind the Eisteddfod Committee that members of the South African Dancing Association teach all branches of dancing, including Cecchetti, classical, operatic and ballroom. The Eisteddfod therefore is not alone in having its dance section 'open to all methods of dancing.'"

#### The Eisteddfod Committee's Point of View.

The Eisteddfod Committee claims that the Eisteddfod is organised for one purpose only, viz.: to advance the Arts, in which is included dancing.

"The dancing section of the Eisteddfod is open to all schools of dancing.

"The appointment of the adjudicators for the Dancing Section (and every other section) of the Eisteddfod rests with the Eisteddfod Committee, and in previous years the Committee has obtained the assistance of the D.T.A., who have submitted names from which the Committee has selected an adjudicator. This has always been a friendly and courteous arrangement which has not placed any obligation upon the Eisteddfod Committee to accept the nominations of the D.T.A.

"In February this year the D.T.A. informed the Eisteddfod Committee that they would not be prepared to submit a list of nominees for the 1929 Eisteddfod to be held in June. In these circumstances the Eisteddfod Committee on 22nd April was compelled to appoint an adjudicator in the absence of any suggestions from the D.T.A.

On the 26th April the D.T.A. offered a list of nominees, but by then the adjudicator had been appointed.

"Hereupon the D.T.A. at once decided to organise its Dance Festival in opposition to the Eisteddfod and instructed its members not to enter their pupils in the Eisteddfod. Pupils already entered were withdrawn."

#### Miss Helen Webb.

An interesting and almost amusing sidelight on the controversy is that afforded by Miss Helen Webb. Miss Webb was the injured party last year, for it was her methods which were criticised. Amusingly enough, the adjudicator who started the trouble, Miss Sturman, was a former pupil of Miss Webb's.

When a demand was made by the Eisteddfod Committee for a public apology by the adjudicator, Miss Webb was asked to join her voice in the demand. She was unwilling to do so, however, preferring to let the judgment stand; but on being pressed she asked that Miss Sturman should add the words "in my opinion," to her criticism. This concession was not forthcoming, and Miss Webb philosophically shrugged her shoulders.

Not being a member of the D.T.A. she was not aware of the correspondence between that body and the Eisteddfod Committee, and only knew that the dispute still persisted when it appeared in the press.

"It had not been my intention to enter pupils for the Eisteddfod this year. My pupils have been burdened of late with a number of displays and examinations. I thought I would give them a rest and incidentally spare their parents the expense.

"When the controversy became public I was requested by a number of parents to enter their children by way of protest against the action of the D.T.A."

Miss Webb has a great admiration for the work of the Eisteddfod, which she considers has done much to promote and develop the art of dancing here. "No other town of this size and population can support so many dance teachers as we have here."

She thinks it is bad for children to have to witness such bickering as has been going on. Miss Webb is entirely on the side of the Eisteddfod Committee.

#### The Broader Issue.

The whole quarrel and its incidental exposures of pettinesses ill becomes those who have at heart the advancement of art. Such dirty linen as there was to be washed should have been done in private and long ago. The dispute was essentially one of organisation, or should we say, lack of it. It should have been settled between the two bodies concerned.

The lay public is not interested in the personal differences in the points of view of either side.

The issues involved in the principles of trade unionism such as obviously influenced the D.T.A. should not have been allowed to interfere with the larger educational outlook.

Neither should the self-assertive emotional impulses of "a regiment of women" have been allowed to interfere with this larger issue.

Looking at the dispute from a broad educational point of view, we can demand of each participant whether it is prompted solely and wholly by a disinterested and sincere love of art.

Is the action of the D.T.A. in separating itself from the Eisteddfod in the interest of the child? Is it in the interest of the parent? Is it in the interest of the art of dancing itself?

We have written this article, in which we hope we have set out both points of view fairly, for the benefit of our many Jewish parents who

have been such ardent patrons of the art of dancing and the Eisteddfod in the past.

We would ask them to decide for themselves whether it is good to separate dancing from the sister arts of music, singing, elocution and poetry; whether it is advisable to follow blindly the advice of a group of disgruntled women who cannot put their differences of opinion aside for the sake of the art which they serve.

We should like our Jewish parents, than whom none are more eager to promote the welfare of the younger generation, to exercise their own individual judgment in making their decision, and we would urge them not to allow themselves to be swayed by a partisanship for any cause other than the good of the children themselves.

ROZILDA.

### Book Reviews.

#### "Nature First and Last."

Messrs. Watts & Co., 5 Johnson's Court, Fleet Street, London, E.C.4, have just published this interesting book, written by C. Law, a Fellow of both the Chemical and Physical Societies of London. In this work the author has set himself the task of providing a reference to the subject of Natural Knowledge, holding with B. Jowett that "few men, very few men, think for themselves." He deals with the subjects of Wrong-doing, Right-doing and Evolution, Supernaturalism, the Idea of Spirit, the Normal and the Diseased Brain, Reputed Freedom of Will, etc., and whilst some of his views are very advanced, he has certainly succeeded in providing a volume which will arouse thought and induce further investigation and research in this most interesting subject. The book is published at the modest price of 2s. 6d., and will well repay reading.

#### "The Laughing String."

This is the first novel by a promising new author, Hildegarde Huntsman, and deals with the struggles of a girl, Anna, against the handicap of a peculiar upbringing in a Bohemian home. Miss Huntsman writes in an attractive style and her characterisation is good. Her story of how Anna, by a noble act, brings happiness to Paul, the real love of her life, and his wife, the friend of her school days, is told with sympathy and understanding. Anna makes her supreme sacrifice and wins the friendship of her father, Andrew Clayton, a self-absorbed yet totally delightful artist.

The book is published by Messrs. Thornton Butterworth, Ltd., 15 Bedford Street, Strand, London, and is obtainable at 5s. 6d. from the Central News Agency Ltd. and all other South African booksellers.

M. H. K.

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