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In Cape Town.

Reports of Jewish Activities in the Mother City.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

All communications relating to these pages should be addressed to "HASOFER," P.O. Box 2373, CAPE TOWN.

Pesach passed off in more or less accustomed fashion. The second of the first two days, coinciding with the public holiday, resulted in Yom Kipur attendances at the various synagogues. In the two major *shuls* there is now full choral provision, and the choirs gave an excellent account of themselves, as a result of the careful attention now given to this branch of the service. The services gain much in beauty and attractiveness from this improvement, so that *shul* attendance becomes quite a pleasure to many to whom it seemed previously somewhat of an ordeal. The Gardens Synagogue service was more particularly noteworthy for a fine sermon by the Rev. A. P. Bender, who, taking as his text 2 Kings, xxiii., 22, "Surely there was not holden such a Passover," emphasised its present application in relation to the recent opening of the Hebrew University.

There has been so much advance of late on the part of the two *shuls*, in the desire to develop, and the interest of the public, that the absence of a minister at the Roeland Street institution becomes particularly noticeable. Viewing all that has latterly been done by this congregation towards bettering the services, it seems strange that there should be such an omission, which becomes more glaring every day with the progress in other directions.

JOINT CHEVRA KADISHA FOR CAPETOWN.

At present each of the two *shuls* has had its own burial ground and special committee to perform the last rites for those whose earthly membership is cut off by death. Some time ago the Board of Guardians made overtures to both to endeavour to get them to hand over these duties to that body, the main reason, I understand, being that, as there is invariably a fair surplus at the end of the year's working, the Board would have a useful source of revenue to carry on its laudable labours, from whose legitimate sphere burial duties are not far, if at all, removed. These negotiations broke down, mainly, I believe, because the smaller congregation could not afford to forego the income derived. But the raising of the whole matter has been fruitful in another direction. On Sunday and Monday last, representatives of the two congregations met to discuss the possibility of forming a joint Chevra Kadisha, or Burial Board. Though there have remained several questions still to be decided, I am informed that the principle has been agreed to, and that further conversations are proceeding towards a full settlement. This new step towards communal unity is sure to be welcomed by all, and is yet further evidence of the excellent spirit which is increasingly animating our communal leaders and institutions, amongst whom previously a certain antagonism was not altogether absent.

With continued progress along these lines, one begins to feel sanguine of the near approach of some sort of federation of institutions and a communal council.

COMBINED YOUTHS' SOCIETIES' MEETING.

On Saturday evening, 4th April, a meeting was held at the Graduation Hall of the Capetown University to mark the opening of the Hebrew University. It stood under the auspices of the Students' Jewish Association, with the co-operation of the Maccabean Association, Cape Jewish Guild, and the Jewish Girls' Association. There were about 700 members present, which is not many less than the full membership of the societies concerned. An attractive souvenir programme, in Hebrew and English and showing photos of the projected buildings, was sold for a few pence and gave entrance to the hall. On the platform floured the Union Jack, the Zionist flag, and the University crest.

The meeting was not only a fine one in itself, but was a happy gesture on the part of the youth, which is really chiefly affected.

Mr. H. M. Bloch, B.A., President of the Students' Jewish Association, was in the chair, and gave the opening address. The other speakers were Rev. A. P. Bender, Professor of Hebrew; Dr. Sir J. Carruthers Beattie, Vice-Chancellor of the University; Professor F. Clarke, Professor of Education; and Advocate S. Turtledove, representing the combined societies. The speeches were most enthusiastic and stimulating, but as they have already been fully reported in the daily press, and were on, what is now, a well-worn theme, I do not propose to deal with them here. Interspersed between the speeches was an exceptionally talented musical programme consisting of: a pianoforte solo, by Miss Adelaide Newman; a song, by Miss Mildred Korelstein; a recitation, by Miss Lily Agranat; a song, by Mr. Joel Myerson; a trio of the Misses

Newman, Grace Arundel and Marguerite Arundel. A cable of congratulations was sent to Jerusalem.

The gathering, it is true, was a tribute to the new University, but, to my mind, was more noteworthy for the harmonious combination of the various societies. They had momentarily, under the influence of a great inspiration, achieved unity. It was a manifestation of what Erez Israel has achieved, and an indication of what it will achieve in respect of Jewish life throughout the Diaspora. Already, in a small way and in a big way, it is collecting and consolidating the scattered members of Israel, scattered either physically or spiritually. Is it not time that instead of waiting for such great occasions to exert their transcending influence, we should allow ourselves to be consciously influenced now and always by this new spirit of unity and brotherhood, which Erez Israel, and the deeds which are being performed there, are engendering? Apart from the Jewish Students' Association, which stands on a special footing as a University Society, is there any fundamental reason why the other three societies should not merge to gain the benefits of an increased usefulness and power which one big all-embracing organisation could confer? I believe the time is ripe for a consideration of this vital question, vital for the aims which each society has at heart. Let the principals of each ponder the matter and seek points of contact rather than differences, and I feel sure that subsequent *pourparlers* would not only succeed but would herald a rosy dawn for Capetown youth, and set an example to the rest of South Africa. It only needs somebody with initiative to break down the reserve and overcome the *amour propre* which at present imprisons the minds of those who could see the matter through. Who is going to show the public-spirit, and if to fail, to fail gloriously, setting, at any rate, a foundation for some later builder?

STUDENTS' JEWISH ASSOCIATION.

The previous Saturday evening this society held its opening social to welcome the new students. The society's steady expansion resulted in a new departure in the way of larger accommodation. Instead of the Hiddingh Hall, the much larger Graduation Hall was used for the earlier part, and an adjournment was made to the basement new hall for dancing. Mr. Bloch, the President, welcomed the new students, and was supported by the Rev. Bender, patron of the association. A short musical programme was also provided. A welcome feature was the number of non-Jewish students who attended, for it cannot but exist beneficially on the already excellent relations which exist. On the other hand one cannot look with so much favour on the presence of a liberal sprinkling of non-students, over and above the few representatives of other societies who had been courteously invited. First, students themselves should be very reluctant to seek partners outside the University, and secondly others should have sufficient self-respect to absent themselves from an affair which is not intended for them. It is time the committee looked into the matter and endeavoured to find a satisfactory solution, for I am sure they do not wish to see the significance of this excellent annual institution destroyed.

THE ORPHANAGE.

The annual meeting of which I was only able to send a telegraphic report, owing to the space called for by the celebrations meetings, was noteworthy for several things besides its length, lasting, as it did, from 3 to 6.30 p.m.

Mr. Ise Levy, the hon. auditor, echoed the report in I had already made when I reviewed the annual report in a previous issue, on the score of extravagant expenditure. Coming from such a quarter, criticism is entitled to special respect. Replies pointed out that two special sub-committees of the keenest financial critics had investigated, and had only been able to effect very minor economies, and moreover, that the office expenditure was necessary in order to get the financial support and income to maintain the institution. That the committees were unable to cut much, I am quite able to believe. It is drastic alterations, not economies, that are called for. It is in the office expenditure that improvement must be sought. It is going to take more than to state that it is necessary to spend about £1,300 to bring in a total of £6,000 in subscriptions and donations to convince the public. Much would come in with very little organisation; so large a sum to bring in the rest seems to point to very elaborate machinery.

The principle of sending older orphans to Palestine, as already wired by me, was agreed to unanimously. What