

Lecture on Achad Ha'am.

Rabbi Gervis at the Palestine Club.

On Saturday evening, the 1st inst., the sixty-seventh meeting of the Palestine Club was held at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. I. Adelson, St. Andrew's Road, Houghton. Mr. I. J. Hersch presided and introduced Rabbi I. M. Gervis, who delivered a lecture on "Achad Ha'am—Zionist and Philosopher."

The lecturer said that the Jewish people stand to-day on the threshold of a new epoch in their history. The pillar of our national life was being shaken, and Israel was hovering over the face of realities. The most burning question was, "Whither are we going?"

"To continue in obscurity was impossible," declared Rabbi Gervis. "To begin all anew an absurdity, but to close our eyes to the obstacles and difficulties would mean nothing else but national suicide. Our task, therefore, is to study and make every effort to grasp the situation. Our national existence is a complexity of endless problems. The survival of our national identity is the universal puzzle. Our universal faith is beyond the comprehension of modern civilisation."

It was because the above was the keynote of present happenings that he had chosen to speak on Achad Ha'am that evening. It was this great writer, philosopher and thinker, who had appeared on the Jewish scene at a time referred to by historians as "twilight." The hopes cherished by Israel, which had been inspired by the Chovevi Zion, were beginning to decline, and the movement was practically on the verge of insignificance, for the colonisation work in Palestine had not been successful. Achad Ha'am became in that historical transition the chief guide. He pitilessly attacked the old schemes, and his greatness was recognised from the very beginning. He did not only devote himself to criticism, but pointed the direction to new ways. He became, as it were, the Shofar who continually sounded the alarm.

The lecturer went on to give a fine outline of the attitude of Achad Ha'am towards Jewish problems and to indicate the remarkable influence which his words had over his generation. The Basle Programme seemed to Achad Ha'am one-sided.

"It was purely political and economic in character," said Rabbi Gervis, "and Achad Ha'am held that this political character narrows down the Zionist ideal. Whilst fully admitting that we must work for the creation of an extensive and well-ordered settlement in Palestine, he also demanded that our national culture should not be neglected and that a spiritual and cultural life should be established on a national scale." It was Achad Ha'am who had said, "Don't force the Messiah to come; the Messiah is bound to come."

The lecture created a good deal of interest, and Mr. A. I. Miller proposed a vote of thanks to Rabbi Gervis, which was heartily agreed to.

A vote of thanks to the host and hostess for their kindly hospitality was proposed by Mr. David Dainow.

CANTOR INSPEKTOR'S CONCERT.

The first appearance of the Cantor Inspektor upon a concert platform occurred on Thursday evening last when he sang at the City Hall, Johannesburg, at a function held in aid of the funds of the United Hebrew Schools of Johannesburg.

The Cantor's fine tenor voice filled the great auditorium and his items were much appreciated by the audience. He sang arias from the operas "La Juive" (Halevy) and "La Tosca" (Puccini) with a fine sense of dramatic climax. His Yiddish songs pleased the audience immensely, but he undoubtedly shone in his excerpts of *Chazomuth*. It is noticeable that the duration of his stay here has increased the volume and quality of the Cantor's voice.

The supporting artists were Mr. I. Magid, a young violinist who has great talent, Master J. Sachs, who rendered a capable version of the "Hungarian Rhapsody" and Mr. John Connell, who played selections on the organ.

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A Charming Performance.

One of the most beautiful amateur musical performances ever seen in Johannesburg was held on Sunday evening at the Jewish Guild, when "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" with full song cycle of Liza Lehmann's "In a Persian Garden" was produced.

The music is of a rich colourful character and depicts well the Eastern mystic atmosphere of the great poem. The voices of Florence Karnovsky (soprano), Jean Gluckman (contralto), Rev. S. Backon (tenor) and Sydney Schragger (baritone) blended in an effortless manner throughout the whole performance and rarely have these well known local singers been heard to better advantage.

The speaking parts of Omar and his slave were taken by George Absolam and Fay Gluckman. The wise words of Omar were eloquently rendered by Mr. Absolam and Mrs. Gluckman gave a moving portrayal of the slave.

Mr. Ernest Solomon and Mr. Sydney Schragger were the producers. The music was under the direction of Mrs. Grace Solomon, who was also the pianiste. The other two members of the orchestra were Rita Weisholtz (violin) and Henry Miller ('cello). The scenic and lighting effects were of a high order and were in the hands of Messrs. Raymond and Harold Fisher and Theo. H. Levy.

The performance gave evidence of earnest rehearsal, as a result everything went off without a hitch.

It was a completely satisfactory amateur performance and congratulations must be extended to the artists and organisers. On Wednesday evening a repeat performance was given for the benefit of the funds of the Johannesburg Jewish Women's Benevolent Society.

ASTORIA KINEMA.

Rod La Rocque, who plays a sauve, picturesque "bad man" in "Beau Bandit," the thrilling outdoor adventure-romance, which commences at the Astoria Kinema, on Monday, 10th November, has become famous for his dialect ability. In both "Beau Bandit" and "The Delightful Rogue," a previous success at the Astoria, his parts demanded broken English of the Latin-America.

The picture is rich in the powerful beauty of the open range and built around a powerful story of the old west. The scenes are not confined to the narrow limits of a sound studio stage. Instead it is filmed outdoors in almost its entirety, giving it a sweep and a movement possible only with the use of nature's own scenic sets.

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