

Harmony of Effort.

ALTHOUGH the examples of Benoni and Germiston are often quoted to illustrate the feasibility of successfully organising Jewish charities in a given locality, very little has been heard during the last few years of the establishment of a new United Jewish Institution in any other centre throughout South Africa.

I was particularly interested, therefore, in the renewed effort being made in Pretoria towards settling what is locally known as the "vexed question of amalgamation." I trust that the idea is not to cause the disappearance of already existing societies doing good work. There is a difference between amalgamation and federation. It is more feasible to "federate" existing organisations than to "amalgamate" them all into one big body. Both in Benoni and Germiston, the "United" consists of a federation of local active Jewish institutions. Each society continues to act as hitherto, but each has appointed representatives, who sit upon a central executive committee of management. By these means, the local community controls all its various philanthropic and communal work and much duplication and wastage is avoided.

There can be no strong reason why a United Jewish Institutions of Pretoria should not come into formation. It is true that in any larger centre, the difficulties connected with the federation of existing activities is greater. Strong determination, however, and a genuine desire for unity can accomplish the required result. Is there sufficient of this amongst our kinsmen in the Capital?

Wise Again.

IN spite of the furore caused some years ago by the outspoken praise of Christ on the part of Dr. Stephen Wise, that internationally famous reform Rabbi, has again devoted his address last Christmas morning to an eulogy on the doctrines of Jesus.

It seems strange that any Jewish religious leader can publicly declare that Jews ought not to regret, but rather be filled with joy at the birth of Jesus, since he "has done more than any other human in history to change the face of the earth."

Dr. Wise further added, "Christmas marks not the birth of Christianity, but just the birth of a Jewish child of Galilee: Jesus, son of a Jewish home in Nazareth, who lived and taught and died as a Jew. It was Jesus who, when asked to define his faith, answered not in the terms of creed or dogma but in the words of the Hebrew Bible written in the only tongue he knew and could use."

When Rabbi Wise made his previous declaration, a group of Rabbis in Poland met and publicly cursed and excommunicated him from the Jewish fold. The latest pro-Christ utterance of Rabbi Wise is causing much concern to our brethren in America.

Current Communal Comments

By
'Hamabit'

A New Composer.

A new Jewish composer has come upon the horizon. At the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, musical history was recently made by the first performance of Lewis Gruenberg's opera "Emperor Jones." The work was most enthusiastically received by a distinguished and representative audience. It seems that this young Jewish composer has done what for a hundred years or so many other composers tried and failed to do. He has actually composed a genuine American opera with flashes of unmistakable genius in it.

Lewis Gruenberg is the first American Jewish composer whose opera has been performed at the Metropolitan Opera House. For decades, efforts have been made at the production of a genuine American opera. It has been left to a Jew to compose an opera, which is likely to bring musical and operatic prestige to America—a consolation devoutly desired by thousands of opera fans in that country.

Gruenberg is forty-nine years old, affable and pleasant to talk to. He has about him the pensive art of a poet. In him a composer of genuine significance has now come into his own and the music of Gruenberg will shortly be heard all over the world.

Conversionists.

HEARING of a lecture advertised to be delivered by a lady who styled herself a "Hebrew-Christian," I was intrigued on a recent evening to become a member of an audience at a local Dutch Reformed Church Hall. There were some three hundred people who listened to the story of the "conversion" and amongst those present was a considerable portion of my co-religionists, who had no doubt turned up also for curiosity's sake.

I am afraid that the address delivered by the "converted" lady was not extremely convincing. One wonders what particular good there is in an activity of this nature except to involve the Dutch Reformed Church in expenses which might well be used for the alleviation and uplift of poor Afrikaners.

The idea of a converted Jew or Jewess addressing meetings of this nature is not entirely new to South Africa, although it may sound new to the present generation. In the Transvaal, particularly in the early days, the Cachets—converted Jews, originally hailing from Holland—

were well-known for their activities, and were men of standing in the Dutch Reformed Church. One of them sometime in the 1870's started an unsuccessful "soul-snatching" campaign among Capetown Jews, and was replied to effectively by the late Rev. Joel Rabino-witz in the *Cape Argus*.

Recently, I came across, by pure chance, an unfamiliar Africana item written by a popular author of his day—R. M. Ballantyne—entitled *Six Months at the Cape* (London, 1879). Ballantyne travelled to the Cape in company with Frans Lieh Cachet. Said our author: "He (Cachet) was argumentative; so, you know, am I. He was also good-tempered, therefore we got on well. He is of the stock of Abraham—I liked him the more on that account." In spite of this good opinion, this Frans issued in 1882, a severe anti-British "De Worstelstrijd der Transvaal."

It may not be generally known that Professor J. du Plessis, of Stellenbosch University fame, in his "The Evangelisation of Pagan Africa" refers to a certain converted Jew by the name of F. M. Liberman. It was this Liberman who is credited with performing pioneer work in connection with the rise of the modern Roman Catholic missionary church work in Africa. And it was this converted Jew who founded in 1841 the "Congregation of the Holy Heart of Mary," which became later one of the principal agencies in spreading that church's doctrines among African natives.

Real Names.

WOULD you kindly tell me what the real names of the following are: Eddie Cantor, Al Jolson, Samuel Goldwyn, Francine Larrimore, and Ricardo Cortez, asks a correspondent who is evidently a keen film-fan.

The real names are as follows:—Eddie Cantor (Izzy Itzkowitz), Al Jolson (Asa Yoelson), Samuel Goldwyn (Samuel Goldfish), Francine Larrimore (Frances Adler), Ricardo Cortez (Jacob Krantz).

Sleeping.

A *Maggid* came to a small town in Lithuania and delivered a long *droscha*, full of *pitpul* on a Sabbath afternoon at the local Beth Hamedrash.

The following morning in the course of a conversation with the *Gabbe* of the synagogue, the *Maggid* asked the latter what he thought of the previous day's *droscha*.

"As a matter of fact," replied the *Gabbe*, "I did not sleep a wink last night."

"Were you then so deeply impressed?" asked the *Maggid*.

"Well it's not quite that," replied the *Gabbe*. "You see I have such a nature that when I have a good sleep in the afternoon, I cannot possibly sleep at night."