

Gurland.

I remember some years ago attending a farewell function in Capetown to a South African Jew who had decided to give up a comfortable existence here in his old age in order to spend the last of his days in Eretz Israel. I recollect well that whilst everyone was sad on that occasion, the guest of the evening was in merry mood. He was, after all, going "home" and only felt joy at the thought of the privilege accorded him. On arrival in Palestine, this old man became young again and his joy of the life in Eretz Israel has gradually made him a greatly beloved figure in the *Yishub*.

Recently old Gurland—for it is of him that I speak—celebrated his eighty-first birthday. In spite of his age he appears to be in the "prime of life" and as keen as any young *Chabutz* in assisting in the development of our homeland.

I echo the good wishes of many friends in South Africa for the continued good health of our Grand Old Man in Zion.

Songs.

The work of a Johannesburg composer, Ernst Lowenherz, whose original songs are to be heard at a concert in May, reminds me of another composer who was the centre of an unique musical gathering in London a few weeks ago. I refer to Sir Frederick Cowen, who is now eighty years of age and accompanied his own songs before a company of four hundred musicians and composers, when he was the guest of the Musicians' Club.

The vitality of Sir Frederick, who is still composing important works, is a thing to wonder at. It is amazing. At the age of eight, he composed his first opera and made his first public appearance at the age of eleven. Besides his operas and oratorios, Sir Frederick has composed over two hundred songs. It is of interest to record that Sir Frederick retains close association with the Jewish community in England and last year delivered a lecture on music at the West London Synagogue.

Incidentally, Ernst Lowenherz has set to music six songs, the words of which have been written by a South African Jewish poet—although they are not of Jewish interest. The works to be heard at the forthcoming concert will contain Afrikaans, German and English songs. I wish Mr. Lowenherz would experiment in setting to music some of the Hebrew poems of a scholar like Dr. Landau. The rendition of such compositions on a South African concert platform should prove interesting.

Current Communal Comments

By
'Hamabit'

Cardozo.

A chorus of praise appears to have been set up at the appointment of Benjamin Nathan Cardozo as a Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States of America. For years Cardozo has been recognised as the foremost jurist in New York and lawyers and students of jurisprudence throughout the English-speaking world have written of him as one of the select small group of great American jurists now living.

It is of interest to record that Cardozo, who is a member of a distinguished Sephardic family, is a bachelor of sixty-two years of age. For five generations the family has worshipped at the Portuguese Synagogue in New York, of which the newly named Justice is also a member. An uncle of Judge Cardozo, the Rev. Lyons, was *chazan* of the Portuguese Synagogue sixty years ago. One of his early ancestors, Gersohn Mendes Seixas, was a trustee of Columbia University in the days of the Revolution.

Washington.

I am sure that great men would smile in their dust if they could but know of the anniversary celebrations of their births, which are held from time to time with such passionate enthusiasm. The two hundredth anniversary, however, of the birth of George Washington is being sincerely commemorated by millions of Americans. The tribute is to one who fought for the equality of mankind and the right of existence of all religions.

The relations between America's first President and the Jews were altogether of an epistolary nature. The few letters which passed between him and Jews that have been preserved, show Washington to have been a man who deeply despised bigotry. He wrote at a time, too, when Jews were under political disabilities in many lands; when America had just presented for the consideration of mankind a new political idea. I think Washington will be remembered as a man who conquered nothing but oppression—and who wrecked nothing but political wrongs. Without injury to any other people, he founded a great democracy.

I might speak much here of the manner in which the present generation of Americans have strangely departed from the basic ideals of the founder of their country. It would be a great pity, however, to spoil in the slightest degree the atmosphere of adulation prevailing during this striking bi-centennial celebration.

Hitler-Haman.

The near success of Hitler in the German elections, coinciding as it did with the recent celebration of Purim, has led me to the consideration of the similarity that stamps the two demagogues as of the same mould.

Like Hitler, Haman had risen to high political position . . . "After these things did the king promote Haman and advanced him, and set his seat above all the princes that were with him."

Haman made the destruction of the Jews a national policy of his administration . . . "Haman sought to destroy all the Jews that were throughout the whole kingdom of Ahasuerus, even the people of Mordecai." Strikingly similar is the purpose of the Hitler party expressed in a thousand ways. On August 22nd, 1931, Count Reventlow, a Hitlerite member of the Reichstag declared: "It is our duty to exterminate the Jew."

It will be remembered that it is written of Haman that he said to his King . . . "There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from all people; neither keep they the king's laws: therefore it is not for the king's profit to suffer them. If it please the king, let it be written that they may be destroyed."

Almost like an echo across the ages comes the voice of Hitler in a proclamation: "He (the Jew) does not fit amongst us. He lives according to different inner and outer laws from ours . . . It is to him we owe it that we are to-day the pariah of the whole world."

How far will the analogy go? . . . The destruction of the Jews was averted by Queen Esther and the tables turned against Haman, who was hanged upon the gallows . . .

Reasons.

During the late war two Jewish soldiers found themselves fighting side by side in the trenches. They struck up a friendship.

"Tell me," asked one, after they had become acquainted, "why did you join in the war?"

"I have no wife and I love war," replied the other.

"What about you?"

"Well," answered the first soldier, "it is quite the opposite with me. I have a wife and I love peace."