

Gersternkorn.

SITTING in a Kosher restaurant the other day, I observed an individual with a young face set in a full-grown black beard. Bearded men are so rare in the Golden City that I was much intrigued. A few days later in a small Zionist circle I met the man whom I had eyed with interest in the restaurant and found him to be Isaac Gersternkorn, the founder of the Bnai Brak colony in Palestine.

This remarkable type of pioneer had slipped quietly into Johannesburg, but is ingratiating himself into the hearts of earnest Zionists by the simplicity of the story he tells of the brave heroism of a group of Chassidim whose pioneering work led to the establishment of a successful colony. That orthodox Jews with beards and *paus* could till the land, tend cattle, plant orange groves and establish a textile factory—has all proven an eye-opener to a host of doubters.

Gersternkorn's arrival possibly heralds the coming to this country of a new type of propagandist—the *Chabutz* himself—who will for a time leave his work on the fields in order to travel to some far-distant country and acquaint his brethren of the sweat and toil and blood being sacrificed for the resuscitation of our National Homeland.

Kidnapping.

THE indignation aroused by the terrible crime in the kidnapping of the child of Colonel and Mrs. Lindbergh has led to an agitation for the carrying out of the death sentence upon such evil-doers, even when the life of the kidnapped person is not involved.

It may be of interest, therefore, to point out that Biblical legislation is quite explicit on the point of abduction.

"And he that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death." (Exodus 21.16.)

A little more elaborate is the law in Deuteronomy (24.7): "If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and he deal with him as a slave and sell him; then that thief shall die; so shalt thou put away the evil from the midst of thee."

It may be recollected that the rabbis interpreted the eighth commandment also to refer to the crime of kidnapping. In Talmudic jurisdiction, where cases involving capital punishment are mentioned, the crime of kidnapping is included. The law of abduction applied with equal force, whether the person abducted was an adult or a child of one day old.

Current Communal Comments

By
'Hamabit'

There have been some famous cases of abduction in history, the first of which was the Biblical story of the sale of Joseph to the Ishmaelites by his brothers. The abduction of the baby Joash, the son of King Ahaziah, by his aunt, Jehosheba (II. Kings 11.2), was for a worthy purpose, and is recorded with apparent approval by the sacred chronicler.

A Strad.

CUSTOMS officials are notoriously no respecters of persons. But the Egyptian Customs inspectors at Kantara probably hold the world's record for meticulous devotion to duty, if the report which comes from this desert junction is true.

Jascha Heifetz, who is shortly to arrive in South Africa, on leaving Palestine recently, was so careless as to take his violin with him. The Customs inspectors suspected for some reason that the instrument was not the one which he brought up with him from Egypt. Mr. Heifetz did his best to convince them that it was. The process of convincing them took an hour, and the virtuoso was allowed to take his precious violin with him, leaving no doubt some of his frayed nerves on this side of the Suez Canal.

The violin in question is a Stradivarius valued at £15,000. What a tribute to Palestine to think that a Strad. could be manufactured there!

"As Rich as . . ."

THE increasing nature of the distress prevailing amongst Jewries throughout the world has given an ironic connotation to the old adage, "As rich as a Jew."

Jews are in the aggregate a poor people, notwithstanding the success with which they individually manage to cloak any deficiency of material wealth. Perhaps it is because the average Jew is generous-hearted or because he possesses a capacity for making ends meet that he has earned a reputation for wealth.

But that the Jews as a people are far from rich is no matter for surprise, when the economic position in which they almost universally find themselves is taken into consideration. They strive

ever to make hay whilst the sun shines, impressed by the constant thought that their heavens may at any moment be clouded. In other words, 'he Jew lives in most countries under the possibility that his opportunity for finding wealth may be cut short. If he is not compelled to leave the land of his birth, circumstances may arise which make it impossible for him to stay. The anxiety and fear of Eastern Europe is well known and the Jew-hatred going on in Germany is an example of the above outlined thesis.

It is all a grim story and a reflection of the situation—slight as it may be—is brought home to us by the increasing character of distress amongst a certain class of Jew in this country. This year *matzos* were delivered into many a Jewish home through the channel of charity. The situation is made noble by the ready manner in which the poor amongst us are being loyally assisted by those upon whom the blight of misfortune has not descended.

A Scot.

THERE are at present a considerable number of Jewish taxi-drivers in Johannesburg. I heard a story of an encounter which one of these gentry had the other evening with a Scotchman. It was late at night, and the latter was evidently returning from a jolly evening spent with some Caledonian brethren who had finally deserted him.

The Scotchman lived in a suburb situated at a considerable distance from the centre of the city, and the last tram having long ago left, he sought out a private driver whose car did not contain a meter in which the official fares are recorded.

The Jewish taxi-driver said it would cost ten shillings for his fare home. The Scot invited the Jew to toss up a coin.

"If I guess wrongly," he declared, "I will pay you double fare. If I guess correctly, then you are to take me home for nothing."

After some deliberation, the Jew tossed up a coin, and the Scotchman guessed wrongly.

"I'm afraid I will have to walk home after all," he said disconsolately as he stepped away into the night, leaving the Jew somewhat nonplussed.

Charges

The Dubner Maggid was in the habit, as a preacher in Israel, of hurling thunderblasts at the great audiences which came to hear him.

Once one of his auditors was concerned at the way the Maggid scolded his hearers.

"Ihr shtroft die menschen und nehmt gelt," he complained to the Maggid.

To which the latter replied:

"Gott shtroft auch nischt umzist."