

Readers' Letters

"Browning and the Hebraic Spirit"

From Mr. A. SILBERMAN (Benoni)
To the Editor of the "Zionist Record"

Sir.—I was indeed pleased to read that excellent article, "Browning and the Hebraic Spirit," by Dr. Ezekiel Leavitt, in your issue of the 8th inst.

Dr. Leavitt rightly says that: "Rabbi Ben Ezra was the soliloquist Browning." The words put into the mouth of Ben Ezra are an impassioned outpouring of Browning's own philosophy. The scriptural phrasing and imagery are equally appropriate to the intense (yet restrained) optimism of the poem. Critics have written of this poem, as "the finest exposition of Browning's philosophy."

Your contributor did not mention Browning's Saul, which is based on the narrative in I. Samuel, xvi., 14-23. In this work we find a suggestion of the astonishing vigour and hope that characterise all the works of Browning:

"How good is man's life, the mere living! How fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy."

And again, in Saul, the thought
" 'Tis not what man Does
which exalts him, but what man
Would do."

is comparable to stanzas 23, 24 and 25 in Ben Ezra, which can be paraphrased as follows:

"Beneath the visible output of life,
which is all the world's blunt understanding can appreciate, there are hidden motives striving for noble expression, purposes sincere but frustrated, dim intuitive fancies which stir goodness without finding a language. The sum of these constitutes a man's worth in the sight of God."

Browning thus gave the best expression of his own philosophy in those of his poems which are permeated with the "Hebraic spirit."

Thanking your contributor for his fine exposition.

Yours, etc.,

A. Silberman.

Port Elizabeth

A successful social was recently held by the Women's Zionist League at the new Hebrew school hall. Mrs. J. Merkin presided. After tea, Mrs. B. Matheson, one of the S.A. delegates to the recent W.L.Z.O. Conference held in Zurich, gave an interesting resume of the proceedings of the conference. Mrs. Matheson also spoke on her impressions of the World Zionist Congress at which she was also present.

During the afternoon Miss Sylvia Hoffenberg, accompanied by Miss Alice Kaplan, rendered two violin solos, and the pupils of Miss Friedlander's school presented dance items. In conclusion, Mrs. R. H. Freedman proposed a vote of thanks to the speaker and the artists who had helped to make the function a success.

Volkstrust

A card evening under the auspices of the Zionist Society was held at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. E. Chernin on the 23rd ult. Thanks are due to the host and hostess and the committee for an enjoyable evening. The sum of £3 8s. 6d. was realised during the evening.

The S.A. Jewish Orphanage has received from Mrs. B. Zulman, hon. secretary of the local branch, the sum of £14 7s. 6d., which included subscriptions and collections from local members for August and September and £10 proceeds of the sale of second-hand clothes by Mrs. B. Fine (snr.).

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Riversdale

The annual Rosh Hashonah social of the Riversdale Zionist Guild was held in the Beth Hazephir Hall on the 7th ult. There was a large gathering.

Mr. H. Hyman, president of the Hebrew Congregation, expressed sympathy to the Aronson family, who had recently lost their father, Mr. M. A. Aronson, one of the founders of the Riversdale Hebrew Congregation.

Items on the programme included Yiddish folk songs by Mr. I. Dissler, violin solos by Mr. M. Maltz, songs by Miss Lola Uamkin from Heidelberg, duet by Miss V. Samuel and Mr. M. Maltz, and many other items. During the interval a cake which was presented by Mrs. H. Hyman was sold by American auction in aid of the Hebrew Congregation funds. The sum of £5 9s. 6d. was realised.

Mrs. R. Shemer, chairlady of the Riversdale Zionist Guild, thanked Rev. Zlotnick on behalf of the parents of the Cheder pupils for the able way in which he organised a pupils' choir.

Somerset West

At a recent meeting held in connection with the J.N.F., Dr. Kark and Advocate G. Gordon, the visiting speakers, appealed to members of the community to support the Fund.

Substantial contributions were received from members present. It was hoped that a further amount would result from the efforts of Mr. W. Miller and Mr. I. Perel of Somerset West, and Mr. B. Friedman and Mr. I. Katz, of the Strand, who were asked to interview members unable to be present that night.

Mr. Miller proposed a vote of thanks to the speakers and was seconded by Rev. Berdin.

FROM TOWN & COUNTRY

News of Jewish Activities Throughout South Africa

From Our Own Correspondents.

Calvinia

The annual general meeting of the Calvinia Zionist Society was held on Thursday, the 30th ult., at the home of Mr. and Mrs. L. Reiff. A representative gathering of the community was present. Mr. B. Berelowitz, vice-chairman of the society, presided in the absence of the chairman and delivered the presidential report. His report revealed that despite the departure of several members of the community the society was nevertheless in a flourishing position, thanks to the initiative of the committee.

The report of the hon. treasurer, Mrs. J. Berelowitz, showed that finances of the society were in a healthy state. The election of office-bearers then took place with the following result: President, Mr. L. Reiff; vice-president, Mr. B. Berelowitz; hon. treasurer Mrs. J. Berelowitz; secretary, Mrs. L. Reiff. Committee: Messdames A. Klein and Lester, Miss P. Sack, Messrs. J. Berelowitz, A. Helfet and D. Sack.

Discussion then followed on a variety of matters and thereafter refreshments were served by the hostess who was accorded a hearty vote of thanks by Mr. B. Berelowitz. The meeting proved to be an extremely successful one.

Capetown

In the report of the general meeting of the Cape Jewish Aged Home, appearing recently in the "Cape Times," it was stated that £35,000 would be needed to build the new home in Upper Buitenkant Street. No actual figures as to the cost are as yet available, but the committee is confident that the new home will cost considerably less than the figure quoted above.

Krugersdorp

Over sixty ladies, including representatives from Randfontein and Roodepoort, attended an interesting meeting at which Mrs. H. Davidoff and Mrs. Trevor, of Johannesburg, addressed the gathering on the aim and work of the Union of Jewish Women. Mrs. Goldberg, of Bethlehem, also brought greetings. Mrs. Tilly Roissen presided. Tea was provided by Mrs. Wolk and Mrs. Israel Fulman.

Middelburg (Cape)

On Wednesday, the 22nd ult., the Zionist Society held a farewell social at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Berghaus in honour of Miss Evelyn Mann, prior to her marriage to Mr. Allschwang, of Cradock. Messrs. Capcan, Melmed and Berghaus spoke in praise of the services rendered by Miss Mann during the five years she had acted as hon. secretary to the Zionist Society.

Mrs. Segall read a short account of the life of the late Baron Edmond de Rothschild. Mr. Edelson, a visitor, addressed the gathering on the subject of Succoth.

On behalf of the society, Mrs. Segall made a presentation to Miss Mann, who suitably replied.

Port Elizabeth

Mr. S. Abraham, the honorary sident, entertained the committee, the Chevra Kadisha and a few of personal friends to a *Simchas Torah* function at his residence in Burchardham Road. The gathering was representative of practically every Jewish society and Jewish interest in the city.

Rev. A. Levy proposed, and Mr. Wilentzick responded to the toast of the Chevra Kadisha. On behalf of that society, Mr. B. Bernstein made a presentation to Mrs. Jacobson in recognition of her splendid work.

In proposing the health of Mr. and Mrs. Abraham, Mr. S. Weinman thanked them for their hospitality and expressed gratitude for the interest which Mr. and Mrs. Abraham take in all Jewish communal matters.

Pietermaritzburg

The Jewish Circle and Zionist Society held its annual meeting on the 10th inst. There was a fair attendance. The election of office-bearers resulted as follows: President, Mr. M. Diamond; hon. secretary, Mr. Dora Benjamin; treasurer, Mr. Phoebe Gough. Committee: Messrs. B. Benjamin, J. Benjamin, Ch. Essel, H. Herson, A. Ladman and Mrs. Caminsky.

The marriage of Miss Miriam Kinkel to Mr. Gussy Caminsky was solemnised in the Maritzburg Synagogue on Sunday, the 7th November.

Pretoria

THE annual meeting and distribution of prizes of the Miriam Marks Hebrew School, Pretoria, took place on Sunday, the 26th ult. Mr. L. J. Hack, chairman of the Hebrew School Board, presided, and delivered an address to the gathering, stressing the importance of Hebrew Education and the need for financial and moral support of the Hebrew school. The treasurer, Mr. J. Freedman, delivered his report, which showed a satisfactory financial position.

Prizes were distributed by Mrs. J. Freedman and the whole executive and committee were re-elected to carry on with the work of the coming year. In furtherance of the desire to support Hebrew Education, the organisation of Loyal Women Habonim have decided to affiliate with the Miriam Marks Hebrew School.

The Pretoria Women's Zionist League has now completed arrangements for their annual *Simchas Torah* ball which will take place next year on November 13. According to all indications, this function promises to be an outstanding success.

Mr. Charles Spitz, of Pretoria, contributed two guineas to the Jewish National Fund on the occasion of his marriage to Miss Tilly Levin.

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