

Oudtshoornites

BEING a Jewish minister for 50 years and occupying one post during all this period, is no mean accomplishment. It is not surprising that congratulations have been received on all sides by the Rev. M. Woolfson, who has loyally held the post of minister of the Oudtshoorn Hebrew Congregation for half a century.

The Jewish community of Oudtshoorn is one of the oldest in the country and has always maintained a fine atmosphere of orthodox Judaism. This community has incidentally given a surprisingly large number of men and women to the arts in South Africa.

Moses Kottler, the eminent sculptor, comes from Oudtshoorn. Dr. George Sacks, the well-known young writer, is an old Oudtshoorn boy. Sarah Goldblatt, the fine Afrikaans writer, originally came from Oudtshoorn. Mabella Penetto, the fine singer, is also from that centre. Gordon Wegger, the author of "Company Law" — a recognised standard work on the subject—is an old Oudtshoornite.

An Anomaly

AN interesting sidelight on the recent visit to this country of the world-famous violinist, Mischa Elman, was his arrival with his wife—a charming Jewish lady who delighted all those who had the privilege of meeting her.

I mention this because it is a strange anomaly that most of the famous Jewish musicians appear to go outside Judaism in seeking their wives. Vladimir Horowitz, who is reckoned to be the finest piano virtuoso in the world to-day, is married to an Italian, the daughter of Arturo Toscanini. Incidentally, Horowitz has been confined to a sanatorium the last year. Fritz Kreisler has been married to a non-Jewess, an Englishwoman, for almost a quarter of a century. Rudolf Serkin, the pianist, married to a Christian, a Miss Jascha Heifetz married Florence Vidor, the moving picture actress, although she was a number of years his senior. She is non-Jewish.

The late Ossip Gabrilowitch was married to Mark Twain's daughter, and was also buried as a Christian. Schnabel, the pianist, is married to a non-Jewess.

On the other hand, I am glad to mention that Efrem Zimbalist married a Jewess, the noted singer, Alma Mahler, Leopold Godowsky's wife is a Jewess. Josef Lhevinne, the noted pianist, is married to a Jewess. Piatagorsky, the noted cellist, married the daughter of Eduard de Rothschild, of Paris.

The Jamboree

A Jewish journalist, who visited the Scout Jamboree near Amsterdam recently, relates some interesting experiences. He attended one of the main celebrations and was amazed that 28,000 Scouts singing the

Current Communal Comments

By "Hamabit"

Hebrew song, "Kadima Hapoe!"

He turned for information to Lord Baden-Powell's tent.

"I came to see you about the Hebrew song that the Scouts just sang."

The aged Chief Scout became somewhat alarmed and said: "Why? Have they made any mistakes?"

He then informed the journalist that the organising committee of the International Jamboree invited all the constituent bodies of the various nations to submit march songs. These were to be selected and put on the official list of international Scout music. The Palestine section submitted their Hebrew song with music and their small group have also performed it before the adjudicators.

"Kadima Hapoe!" was then selected as one of the five foreign tunes to be sung at the final celebrations. The journalist also noticed a goodly number of Jewish youngsters amongst the 43 nations represented. A special tent was turned into a synagogue, and Rabbi Frank came from Amsterdam to conduct services. A kosher kitchen provided Sabbath food for the youngsters. Amongst the wireless transmissions from the Jamboree there was also a short Hebrew speech and several Hebrew songs.

Brainin

THE celebration of the 75th birthday anniversary of the veteran Hebrew publicist and writer, Reuben Brainin, has stirred up anew the controversy regarding his deflection from Zionist ranks in which he had been one of the most prominent spirits in his early days. He still stands condemned by his former admirers for his association with a "movement which opposed and condemned everything he worked for the greater part of his life."

It will be recollected that Brainin, some years ago, went to Russia and came back somewhat enthusiastic about the regime in that country. He openly allied himself with collecting funds for the settlement of Jews in the Crimea and during his travels, he came to this country to raise funds for this purpose. For his activity in this connection, he was condemned by a world Zionist congress court, who held that his action was traitorous to the national movement.

In his old age, Brainin lives quietly in New York, only occasionally contributing some of his memoirs to the current Yiddish press. Whatever one may think of his political activities, it will always be recognised that Reuben Brainin contributed a giant's share to modern Hebrew literature.

A Bookworm

THE death of M. Shoham, the talented Hebrew poet, has come as a great blow to Hebrew literature. He lived in Warsaw where he was in charge of the Stiebel Publishing Company. The story of his entry into Hebrew literature, is an interesting one.

Some 20 years ago there lived in Warsaw a rich Jew who had a great passion for books. He collected a library of 20,000 most valuable volumes. One day he came to David Frishman, the Hebrew writer, and told him that he was somewhat worried; he had one daughter and no sons. Who would look after his books when he was gone?

Frishman advised him to go to a *yeshivah* and pick out a *chosen* for his daughter and take him into his library. The man followed Frishman's advice and chose Shoham. The latter was given every comfort, enjoined not to worry about making a living, but to devote himself entirely to study. The young man plunged into the sea of books, and after some time began to publish dramatic poems, chiefly on Biblical themes. For many years he was virtually buried amongst his books and was hardly known in the Jewish writing world. He was only 42 years old when he died.

The One Topic . . .

THROUGH some words which occurred in a letter I received from a friend of mine in Palestine, I have secured a quaint sidelight on the manner in which our people are reacting to the vital events occurring there daily. My friend was present as a guest at a banquet given by well-to-do folk in honour of the wedding of their daughter. No fewer than 400 guests gathered to celebrate the happy event. The faces, however, of those present were grave, voices were hushed, and the decorum was irreproachable.

My friend—being a journalist—decided to move among the tables and listen here and there to the subject of conversation. It was always the same—concentrated on one topic. He then noticed the bride and bridegroom whispering to each other and impishly passed close behind them. It was, of course, flagrant eavesdropping, but he was eager to know what a newly-married young couple would be talking about on the day of their wedding.

He might have spared himself all the trouble and effort, for the betrothed lad was whispering to his newly made young wife: "It is an outrage! Promise me you will never be in favour of Partition."

A Fault

MOTTELLE noticed Zorach reading a letter.

"Who is that letter from?" inquired the former.

"Why do you want to know?" asked Zorach.

"Really, Zorach," complained Mottele, very much piqued, "you are the most inquisitive person I ever met."

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