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ON TRANSVAAL SOIL

J. M. Sherman's Stories and Poems

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Reviewed by Richard Feldman

THERE has been much thunder on our Jewish cultural front, but little rain. Few new plants have grown, and some of the old wither because of the lack of nourishment.

The community's spokesmen from pulpit and platform, and from the printed page, continue shouting for more culture, but they do little to promote its growth.

A Jewish Book Exhibition was organised. Are we not the People of the Book, and what more need we to do but remind the world of our achievements and our scholarship? But no consideration has been given to the Jewish writers in this land, and the publication which was issued on the occasion exposed a literary poverty that bordered on the complete void.

More recently a Jewish Art Exhibition was organised and we basked in the sunshine of the few Jewish artists with an international name. Here, it is true, the works of South African Jewish artists were shown, but there was no direct effort to bring closer together the Jewish public and its artists, and to give those who need it, some collective support and encouragement.

Let me give an example. Herman Wald, the sculptor, has produced a most excellent piece of work that conforms to the demands of those who want a Jewish subject in a work of art to make it Jewish. His huge figure "Kria," symbolises the suffering of one grievously bereaved but proud and intent to face the future. It is the symbol of present day Jewry.

This great piece of work has not yet been cast, and may be lost because collectively the community is not interested, and some have suddenly discovered that a piece of sculpture is an "image" and opposed to Jewish religion.