

Luncheons.

I am glad to note that the series of luncheons given to honoured guests by the Jewish Guild in Johannesburg has been resumed this week in the entertainment of the Rev. A. T. Shrock, B.A., the newly appointed minister for the Yeoville synagogue.

It is rather a fine custom, this—of entertaining a Jew whom the community desires to honour. I think, therefore, it was somewhat incongruous on the part of the Guild when it entertained a non-Jew some time ago at one of its luncheons. I refer to the occasion when the guest of honour was Sir Harry Lauder—a wise and canny Scot and a distinguished man of the world. But even Sir Harry with all his cuteness could not claim the slightest touch of Jewish blood in his veins, or in that of any distant member of his clan.

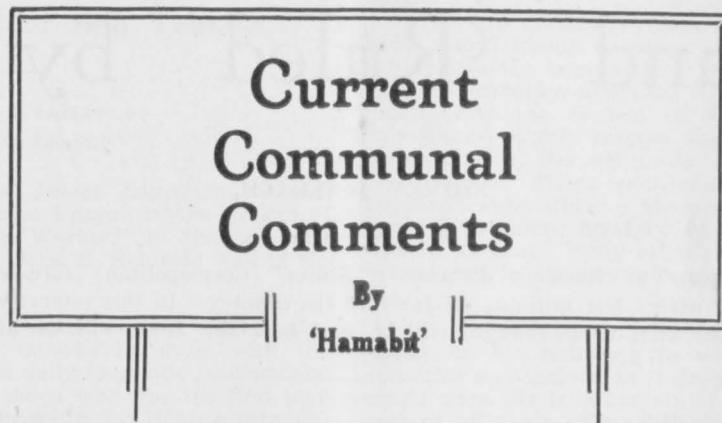
When Sir Harry came up the steps of the Jewish institution and faced his Jewish audience, he was dressed in his famous kilts. This all added further incongruity to the function. There must have been a good deal of inward smiling all round and Sir Harry himself must have rather enjoyed the joke. To give a Jewish twist to the occasion, however, good and clever Lauder made eulogistic references to his American manager, who happens to be a Jew. It was, of course, a most pleasant function—but the Jewish angle of it was rather forced.

"Since Calvary."

An ex-rabbi by the name of Lewis Browne has written a highly irrelevant book. He calls it "Since Calvary" and it is a strong indictment of the Christian Church. Browne is a writer who knows how to record dry facts with a romantic twist, and he traces the rise of Christianity and its decline. He calmly insinuates that the religion is expiring and indicts the Church for its failure to lead in to-day's struggle for social justice. In a different era such indictment of the ruling religion would have cost the author physical torture—if not his life.

Perhaps, however, it is as well for Christianity to listen to a Jew who believes that in its dominance over half the world, it has obtained a success which has brought it failure. The trouble is that the author's indictment against Christianity is applicable equally to Judaism, in fact to all religions. Whilst the fundamental principles underlying our lives are as intact to-day as ever, their vehicle of expression—religion—is in need of repair. Modern intellectuals cannot accept ideas which do not appear to be logical and a respect for tradition has disappeared.

There is a crying need for a new social order—for social justice and equality. Whether the church and syna-



gogue will blaze forth the path depends in the opinion of many—on whether religion as such will take on a new force or gradually disappear.

The Godless.

Anent the above, reports from Moscow reveal that at the Congress of the Godless, the boast was made that the organisation has five million members. This figure is rather startling when one recalls that the entire Communist Party counts a little over a million. It all indicates that the anti-religious campaign in Russia has succeeded rather thoroughly and that Jews and non-Jews in that country wish it to be known that religion is a superfluous luxury. It also means that the social upheaval is stepping forward as an appendage to the economic and political revolution. Where all this will lead to is fascinating thinkers in this country and throughout the world. Dozens of books on the subject are being published.

I cannot believe, however, that the Russian Jew, as an individual, will entirely disappear even under the present Soviet regime. In the melting pot of the events and developments in that country, it is difficult to-day to arrive at a sound judgment. I am, however, convinced—merely from the lessons of history—that the Jew will never become entirely assimilated. I hold that the future will bring forth, as a result of the Russian experiment, a hitherto unknown type of Jew, who is likely to present his particular contribution to the Jewish history of his time.

"Hatikvah."

As a result of much perturbation and argument, the *Hatikvah* is to be included in the new Union Hymnal of Reform Judaism in America. Although millions of Jews have come to look on this refrain as a national hymn to be sung on all occasions, a certain section of the reform rabbis have sought consistently to oppose its recognition. (It may be remembered in this connection that quite a number of rabbis in the United States—comprising orthodox, conservative and reform congregations—refused some time ago to join in the condemnation of the Passfield White Paper.)

This policy has been roundly condemned and criticised, as it obviously

deserved to be. The sabotage of the national movement by certain type of rabbi is still evident to-day as it was in the time of Herzl. It represents the pernicious attitude of a certain section of Jewry at the Versailles Peace Conference when the hands of Israel's foes were upheld at every point. Fortunately there is a large and vigorous group of pro-Zionist rabbis, who have arisen in the new generation. It was this leadership and support

of the reform section in the recent battle over *Hatikvah*, that resulted in a victory for Zionism.

I think that the action in a way is symbolic of a new era of Reform Judaism and it will assist younger rabbis in their attempt to show that adherence to a reform in Judaism should not necessarily mean antagonism to the national ideal.

A Minister's Son.

It is not often that the son of an Anglo-Jewish minister takes to Hebrew learning. An exception, however, is proved in Dr. Charles Singer, who recently presided over the International Congress of History, Science and Technology. Dr. Singer is the compiler of the famous Oxford volume "The Legacy of Israel." He is the son of the late Rev. S. Singer, the author of the Standard Prayer Book—so well known in all Jewish homes—and who was one of the most noted of Anglo-Jewish ministers. The instinct for study engendered in the child of the minister has developed into full flower, for Dr. Charles Singer is to-day one of the foremost contributors to Jewish learning.

A Sad Story.

Three Jews recently visited New York and determined to spend the night in the topmost room of the highest skyscraper hotel. When they arrived at the hotel at midnight, the porter in dismay informed them that the elevator service had broken down.

Nothing daunted, the three travellers determined to walk the forty-five storeys to their room. Jacob promised that in order to relieve the difficulty of climbing he would sing the first fifteen storeys; Isaac that he would tell funny stories the second fifteen storeys, and Solomon that he would tell sad stories the third fifteen.

With musical and anecdotal accompaniment they managed to reach the thirtieth storey. His two fellow-visitors thereupon turned to Solomon and said: "Now it's your turn for the rest of the trip."

"Oy," said Solomon, "what a sad story I have to tell you. I left the key with the porter."