

Ministers

I WAS interested to hear that a young graduate from the Jews' College in London is about to pay a visit to South Africa — the country of his birth. No doubt he is prepared to consider an offer for him to occupy the pulpit in any important Hebrew Congregation. I do hope that such an offer will reach him and that this young South African minister will not have to seek for a post in an overseas country.

What is likely to stand in his way here is the fact of his youth. There is a prevailing idea among congregational workers that a spiritual leader must be a man of ripe years and extensive experience. It would be well if this young minister could secure his first experience in South Africa itself.

In any case, I would remind those interested of the example set by the Yeoville Synagogue, Johannesburg, when it appointed some six years ago a young man as minister who had only just completed his studies at the Jews' College in London. The appointment of Rev. A. T. Shrock has proved that in encouraging a South African minister, a good piece of work has been accomplished. In this case the synagogue has an ideal minister and the minister has an excellent congregation. The degree of Doctor of Philosophy recently conferred upon the incumbent of the Yeoville Synagogue's ministerial post is a compliment not only to the recipient of this fine scholastic award, but to the congregation which has given its minister an opportunity of keeping up his studies in the midst of multifarious congregational and communal duties.

Danby

I NOTE that Oxford University provided an interesting news item in the overseas papers recently. The bald statement that "the King has approved the appointment of Canon Herbert Danby of St. George's Cathedral, Jerusalem, as Regius Professor of Hebrew at Oxford," seems superficially of academic interest only, unless one knows that Canon Danby, a Hebrew scholar of all-round brilliance, happens at the same time to have a first-rate knowledge of Rabbinics, and is one of the foremost interpreters in English of modern Hebrew literature.

That such a man should be appointed to this important Chair of Hebrew means that the Jewish approach to Hebrew learning is going to come into its own again, and that English scholars are going to be brought into contact with modern Hebrew, and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Dr. Danby who has lived in Jerusalem since 1919, numbers the scholars of the Hebrew University among his close friends, and talks to them in fluent modern Hebrew. Scholars all over the world acclaimed his translation of the Mishnah, published two years ago, as "the greatest contribution to Jewish learning made, in recent years, by any non-Jew." Ten years ago, his translation of Professor Klausner's "Jesus of Nazareth," from Hebrew into English, gave the world some idea of modern Hebrew scholarship. And three years ago, his translation of the same author's "Short His-

Current Communal Comments

By
"Hamabit"

tory of Modern Hebrew Literature" opened up a new field for those who could not read Hebrew.

Dr. Danby lives in a beautiful house (on the road leading up to the Hebrew University) where Jews and Christians are equally at home. He has always stated that he is not able to bear the thought of ever leaving Jerusalem. The call of Oxford was one, however, which could not be resisted. Whilst Canon Danby loses a great deal in leaving Palestine, the Jews in England are gaining a man who will bring Oxford and Jerusalem—and all that they stand for—a little closer together.

Milhaud

THE other evening I listened in a Johannesburg home to a delightful sonata for two violins and piano—a work of great depth and conception, by Darius Milhaud.

This significant modern composer was born in Provence and is of Jewish parentage. Milhaud, some time ago, composed "Poemes juifs," in which he achieves a soul-stirring eloquence with the simplest means.

In his Jewish music he never aims at archaism. He is as little concerned with reconstitution (genuine or illusory) of the old types as with adapting traditional tunes to modern music. But the settings of songs and hymns, the poemes the "Melodies populaires hebraïques," express the fervour and impassioned spirituality of his race. His artistic creed is that in music nothing really matters except melody. He is not endowed with a particularly great capacity for creating ample sustained melodies. But in most of his songs, and especially in the Jewish sets, Milhaud achieves genuine lyricism. It is in that domain and in chamber music that we may be sure of finding his work at its pithiest and best.

Some of Milhaud's music has just been produced by the League of Composers in New York City and has been greatly acclaimed. If any evidence is needed concerning the creativity of modern Jews, here is another instance of a world figure in the cultural domain.

Goldsmid

THERE are many graduates of the famous University of London residing in South Africa. They and others here will be interested to learn that during this month there will be celebrated the one hundredth anniversary of the granting of the Charter to the London University by William IV.

It is hardly known that among those who battled to gain a Charter for the London University were those eminent Anglo-Jews in their day—the Goldsmids. Both Sir Isaac Lyon Goldsmid (1778-1859) and Sir Francis

Goldsmid (1808-1878) did much for the progress of the University in the great metropolis. They also played a notable part in the struggle for Jewish civil emancipation in England. Sir Isaac's career is better known to the students of Anglo-Jewish history. A friend of Lord Macaulay, one of the most famous figures in the English literary life of his day and who was, too, a champion of the cause of Jewish emancipation in his country, Sir Isaac incidentally, was

the first English conforming Jew to receive the title of Baronet from the Crown.

Among Sir Isaac's descendants to-day in England could be counted several names of men who are performing distinguished communal work for their fellows. One readily calls to mind, in this respect, the personality and labours of Sir Osmond d'Avigdor Goldsmid.

An Actor

WHENEVER a play with a Jewish character is produced on the London stage these days, it appears to be fairly safe to look for the name of Abraham Sofaer in the cast. I hear that this "tall, dark and handsome" Jewish actor has now established himself as one of the finest interpreters of "strong" characters on the English stage, and not unnaturally he is particularly successful in interpreting Jewish parts.

Like all famous Jewish actors, he has produced a very personal view of Shylock, playing him without cunning or meanness, but with dignity and restraint. Sofaer recently appeared as the Jewish doctor in the late Schnitzler's "Professor Bernhardt," which was produced for the first time in London. This play, long famous on the Continent, treats the Jewish question from an original and dramatic angle. It tells the story of an eminent Jewish doctor who forbids a Catholic priest to attend a dying girl on account of the disturbing effect his visit might have on her mind. This naturally leads to complicated racial and religious disputes. The religious part rather depends on Vienna for its atmosphere, but the racial aspect is topical and universal.

Sofaer gave an admirable performance. His is a new name on the Jewish dramatic horizon, which will be heard of prominently in the near future.

A "Sacrifice"

A YOUNG theological student at a Jewish seminary was about to deliver his maiden sermon in a synagogue in a large American city. He excused himself for not partaking of the sumptuous meal prepared by his hostess, the wife of the President of the congregation.

"I can never do justice to my sermon after a heavy meal," he explained.

The hostess was unable to go to the synagogue, but on her husband's return she enquired, "What about the young rabbi? How did his sermon go?"

"Oh," replied the husband, "he might as well have enjoyed our meal."