

Services

ON a recent Sunday there were no less than four special services in the local synagogues. These were all held in celebration of the festival of Chanukah. Each synagogue had some special feature to attract worshippers. As a result, however, of the various "attractions," each synagogue had but a sparse attendance.

I consider it would be better if all the synagogues would unite in holding one joint special Chanukah service. This is done in London, and as a result the Chanukah service there is of a fully choral and military nature. In Johannesburg, the ministers, cantors and choirs of the various synagogues could well participate in such a joint service. This would attract a large number of worshippers and the great synagogue in Wolmarans Street would be well filled for so imposing a Chanukah service.

I throw out this suggestion to synagogue committees and hope that next year we shall see the holding of the first joint Chanukah service in Johannesburg.

Ornstein

THE recent celebration of the centenary of Melbourne has excited more than local interest, and the latest Australian Jewish periodicals to hand give glowing descriptions of the Jewish aspect of the affair. I find in the course of an article dealing with the history of Jewish life in Melbourne a grateful reference to the labours of one—Reverend A. F. Ornstein.

An older generation of South African Jewry will remember him. A scholarly gentleman and an active communal worker, Mr. Ornstein was, from the years 1882-1895, connected with the Capetown Hebrew Congregation. Before arriving here, he was minister to the Melbourne Congregation, and editor of the "Australian Israel." Born in London in 1836, he was a teacher in the Jews' Free School, London, and later on, minister to the Portsea Hebrew Congregation. About the year 1860 he became principal of the Birmingham Hebrew National Schools. He made a tour of America in 1875, and in 1876 he became principal of the Aria College, Portsea, an institution for the training of Jewish ministers.

Mr. Ornstein was keenly interested in the education of the Jewish child. One of his earliest activities in this country was the sponsoring of a proposal to establish a regular day school in which Jewish children get both secular and religious instruction—a dream still so far not fully realised.

An Interviewer

A LITTLE lady who is contemplating a visit in the early future to South Africa is Betty Ross, who has just published an interesting book entitled, "Heads and Tales." In this, she writes of her meeting with crowned heads and leaders in various parts of the world.

Miss Ross is one of the most brilliant interviewers in newspaperdom. Some of the people she has interviewed are the Emir Abdulla, King Feisal of Iraq, President Masaryk, H. G. Wells, Sir Oliver Lodge, Mahatma Gandhi, George Bernard Shaw,

and a galaxy of great and lesser men and women.

This talented journalist, who is an attractive personality, is eager to come to South Africa in order to interview the Prime Minister and General Smuts and other of our leaders in all walks of life. Betty Ross might well be described as the "wandering Jewess" of journalism. Her contributions are eagerly read by millions of readers in various parts of the world.

Isaacs

AN elderly gentleman who recently piloted the King's son, the Duke of Gloucester, round Melbourne was Sir Isaac Isaacs, the Governor-General of Australia.

The distinguished Australian has a career strangely similar to his namesake, Rufus Isaacs, now Marquis of Reading. Both are sons of Jewish merchants. Both entered the legal profession as clever boys of good family. Both became Benchers of the Middle Temple, London. Both became Queen's Counsel, and both were M.P.'s. Both were Solicitors-General of their respective Governments, and both were Attorneys-General and finally both became Lord Chief Justices and both are Privy Councillors.

When Reading became Viceroy of India, it looked as though this queer parallelism was ended. The two met in London and joked about it. Then Isaac Isaacs was made first Australian Governor-General and the parallel was restored. Both had been supreme heads of two Empire countries.

Reading, however, is still a short head in front of Isaacs. He has a peerage. There is an expectation in Australia that Sir Isaac Isaacs will be made a peer after the return of the Duke of Gloucester to London and his report to the King of the magnificence of the Australian reception.

A Year Book

THE honour roll of distinguished Jews who paid the extreme penalty as victims of the present regime in Germany, as well as a list of the scholars who were ousted from lecture halls and universities and appointed to positions of honour in the schools of various countries, are among the outstanding features of the latest issue of the American Jewish Year Book, which I have just perused.

The volume contains a wealth of information of inestimable value to the student of Jewish life. There is a special article dealing with the discussions on minority and refugee questions at the 1933 Assembly of the League of Nations. This was revoked by degradation of Jews and Christian descendants of the Jews, which caused the flight from Germany of some sixty thousand refugees.

Current Communal Comments

By

"Hamabit"

All Jewish events throughout the year are presented in chronological order and the reader obtains a fine bird's eye view of all the important happenings of the year. The work is published by the Jewish Publication Society of America, which has done such excellent work during the last thirty-six years in circulating the "Jewish Book."

I note incidentally that there are approximately fifty subscribers in South

Africa to this fine publishing society. This is rather a pity as apart from the privilege of having so excellent a Year Book, the members are entitled to all new volumes published during the year.

Alphabetic Discoveries

THE world moves on, and as time supplies new pieces for the puzzle of the past, a different picture of ancient history is presented.

Sir Charles Marston, world-famed archaeologist, announces that by discoveries unearthed, he has unmistakably final evidence of the historical accuracy of the Old Testament, as well as proof indicating that it was the ancient Israelites and not the Phoenicians—as the world has long believed—who invented the alphabet.

I see that Sir Charles has discovered a new piece of writing on an ewer found in the ruins of the Biblical city of Lachish, twenty-five miles from Jerusalem. The date of the writing has been set as between 1295 and 1262 B.C.E., about 200 years after the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt.

This piece of writing gives proof that the ancient Israelites could write and also indicates that they brought alphabetic writing into Palestine 600 years before the Phoenicians.

A Hit

THE late Jewish tragedian, Jacob P. Adler, was endowed with a keen sense of humour, which was constantly brought into play in his younger days.

A friend of his, who was playing with a Jewish stock company, once bragged before Adler of the tremendous success he had made when he appeared in a Philadelphia theatre a few weeks previously.

"Yes," remarked Adler gravely, "it does look as if you had made a hit. The other day a Philadelphia gentleman told me he would give a million dollars to see you act. And he said it in all sincerity."

"Is that so?" cried the other actor eagerly. "He said he'd give a million dollars to see me act? Well, well!"

"Yes," replied Adler suavely, "He is blind."