

Book Notices.

"The Jewish Encyclopædia." Vol. X. Philipson-Samoszcz. New York and London: Funk & Wagnalls Company. 1905. Price, \$6.

It is impossible to regard the appearance of the successive volumes of this great work with other than a sentiment of profound admiration for the patient and exhaustive labor of Dr. Isidore Singer, the general editor, and his co-laborers. They have gone into every field of literary and historical research, they have examined the archives and official records of every civilized nation to find what Jews have contributed to the arts and sciences, to the sum of human life and thought. They have given us this most comprehensive and accurate survey of Jewish history, biography, literature, biblical and Talmudic lore, religion, philosophy and jurisprudence. The editors are now aiming to have the work completed on the anniversary of the arrival of the first Jewish colonists in America two hundred and fifty years ago.

The present volume opens with the "earliest portrait of a Jew," painted by Rembrandt in 1632. In the article on Rembrandt the interest taken by the great painter in the Jews of Amsterdam is recalled and a list is given of his portraits and other works of biblical and Jewish interest. This volume contains no less than four hundred and seventy-four biographies representing ninety-four professions and thirty different countries. It will be seen that the encyclopædia is a veritable "Who's Who" of Jewish men of mark. While in point of numbers the rabbis lead, it is remarkable that a very large number of these notable men were, or are physicians and writers on medicine. As a matter of fact, until recently the medical profession was about the only one open to Jews in many European countries. Literature, art and music also claim many distinguished names.

Perhaps the greatest interest in this volume will attach to the long and interesting articles on the history of the Jews in Portugal, Russia and Poland, and in the cities of Rome, Prague, Pisa, St. Petersburg, etc. These valuable records are brought down to the most recent times, and such cities of the New World

as Pittsburg, Plymouth, Quebec, etc., have also appropriate treatment.

It is to the shame of Russian Christianity and civilization that the latest period of her history should have been marked by the most cruel and rigorous oppression of her Jewish subjects. It is said that of the legal enactments concerning the Jews framed in Russia from 1649 to 1881, no less than six hundred, or one-half of the total number, belong to the reign of Nicholas I. (1825-1855). The policy then begun has borne bitter fruit and has left a stain that can never be effaced upon the fair name of the Russian people.

The sketches of Rabbinical legend and folk-lore continue to be of great interest. Many Jewish proverbs are recorded in this volume, some of which are both quaint and wise, e.g., "The character of a man may be recognized by three things—his cup, his purse, and his anger." "When wine enters in the secret slips out." "A lie has no feet." "Truth is the seal of God."

The excellent article on "Punctuation," by Prof. Wilhelm Bacher, of Budapest, gives the little known history in concise form of the Hebrew vowel points. Another article of great value is the sane and clear statement of Prof. König on the subject of biblical poetry and recent metrical theories. J. F. McL.

"New Forces in Old China." An Unwelcome but Inevitable Awakening. By Arthur Judson Brown. Author of "The New Era in the Philippines." New York, Chicago, Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Co. Pp. 382. Price, \$1.50.

The centre of gravity is quickly shifting in eastern Asia. Under the tutelage of the island empire of Japan and the safeguard of the Anglo-Japanese treaty, the great empire of China will soon witness the most astounding development of its whole history. The three great transforming forces operating in conservative old China our author describes as Western trade, Western politics, and Western religion. "There is something," he says, "fascinating, and at the same time something appalling, in the spectacle of a