

Book Notices.

"The Jewish Encyclopedia." A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People, from the Earliest Times to the Present Day. Isidore Singer, Ph.D., Projector and Managing Editor. Vol. VIII. New York: Funk & Wagnalls Co. Toronto: William Briggs. Pp. 705. Price, to advance subscribers, \$6.00.

The eighth volume, just to hand, completes two-thirds of this great work, the most exhaustive and complete ever published about any religion or people. It is an exhibition of remarkable enterprise. The singular thing is that it is published by a great house devoted largely to the production of evangelical literature, and its literary department is the co-operation at once of Israelite and Christian. There is a profound interest, a sublime pathos, in the history of God's ancient people, who guarded so sacredly for centuries the deposit of divine truth committed to their care, and through whom all nations of the earth are blessed. The story of their sufferings and persecutions by Christian hands is one of the saddest pages in the history of civilization.

This great work is a monument of learning and research. It presents the form and spirit of this ancient race as does no other in English tongue. It will be completed during 1905, and will have cost in production nearly \$750,000. The number of editors engaged is over six hundred. In the present volume 1,644 topics are treated, ranging from "Leon" to "Moravia," with 248 illustrations, many of them in illuminated colors.

Among the subjects more fully treated are London, with its important record of the Jewish people in that world centre, in 24 pages; marriage, with its picturesque Jewish rites and customs, in 10 pages; medicine, in which the Jews were the leaders of science for hundreds of years, in 14 pages; the Mendelssohn family, made famous by the philosopher and the musician, in 9 pages; the Midrash, or Bible expositions, in 33 pages; the Jewish view of the Messiah in 7 pages.

We are familiar with the Jewish records in art and literature, but few of us are aware that Lillenthal, the famous

aeronaut, was a Jew. Lillith, to whom Browning's poem, founded on Hebrew legend, describes as Adam's first wife, has a copious bibliography, which is here summarized. The lion in Bible history fills a remarkable place. It is to the credit of the Jews that they refused to sell lions to the pagans, because of the use of them in the circus. The cave of Machpelah, which Abraham bought of the sons of Heth, for the burial of his beloved Sarah, according to legend was also the burying place of Adam and Eve. But to this day this ancient tomb is sealed alike to Christian and Jew by the fanatical bigotry of the Moslem.

The strange rabbinical legends give a spice of romance to the subjects here treated. The manna, for instance, is the subject of many quaint stories, and is reserved as the future food of the righteous in the third heavens.

While the Hebrew Bible has become the common treasure of civilized mankind, the post-biblical literature of the Hebrews has been greatly neglected by all but Jews. This great work brings it before the general reader in the most advantageous manner. The great Hebrew scholars of the present make us familiar with the great scholars of the past. The Jew in legend and in history is treated very fully. His tragic past is vividly recalled in the articles on Lithuania and Moravia. In the former grandduchy they were a prosperous community, a striking contrast to their kinsfolk in Poland, and especially in the States of the Church. In London they suffered from their position as buffer between the king and the barons. Seven hundred years ago the London Jewry was pillaged and plundered, and the Jews were expelled from the city. Under the protection of Cromwell and the Puritans they became again prominent in English affairs. They attained great wealth in the East India and West India trades, that of Jamaica was almost monopolized by them. After long conflict Jewish disabilities were removed, and the services of a Disraeli, a Montefiore, a Rothschild were made possible for British people, the latter being elected to represent the city of London in the great council of the na-