

## HISTORICAL SKETCH OF THE JEWS SINCE THEIR RETURN FROM BABYLON.

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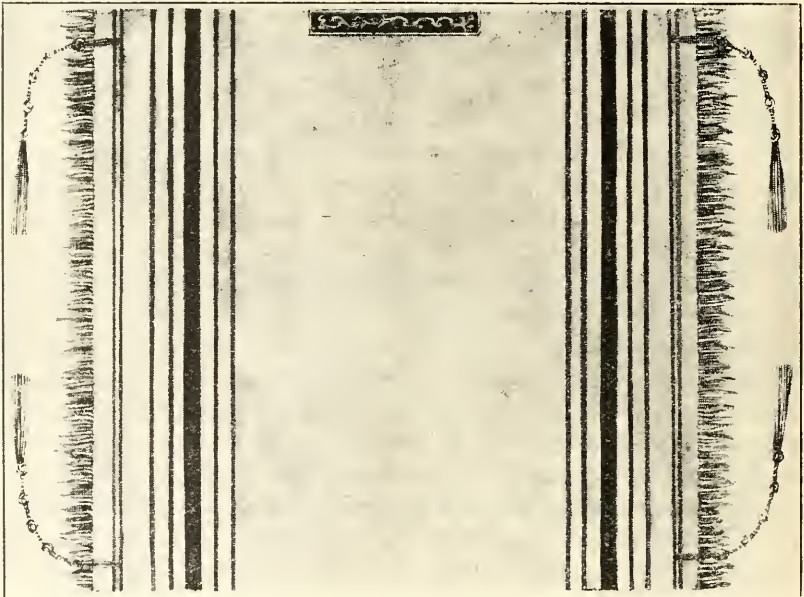
WITH THE RETURN from Babylon, the history of Israel becomes the history of the Jews. "The name Jew," as Josephus observes, "was born on the day when they came out from Babylon," and their history thenceforth is the history not of Israel but of Judaism.

After the overthrow of the Babylonian Empire by the Persians, Cyrus permitted the Jews (536 B. C.) to return to their own land and to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple. About 42,000 exiles returned under the guidance of Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest. A second colony followed under Ezra (458 B. C), who with Nehemiah restored the law and transformed the theocracy into a nomocracy, which finally degenerated into that scribism which reached its climax in the Talmud and similar works. In the twelfth year of his administration, Nehemiah returned to the Persian court (433 B. C.). During his absence of many years affairs fell into disorder; but on his return, after a long residence in Persia, Nehemiah reformed all these disorders and even expelled a grandson of the high priest Eliashib on account of his unlawful marriage with the daughter of Sanballat (Neh. xiii, 28). This expelled priest, undoubtedly one and the same person with Manasseh, withdrew to Samaria and built a rival temple on the mountain of Gerizim.

Palestine was ruled as Syrian satrapy by the then high priest, but afterwards became subject to the Macedonian rule. On the death of Alexander, Judea came into the possession of Laomedon. After the defeat of Laomedon (B. C. 320) Ptolemy, king of Egypt, attempted to seize the whole of Syria. He advanced against Jerusalem on the Sabbath, and carried a great many Jews away as captives, whom he settled in Egypt, Cyrene, and Libya. Under the

Ptolemies the Jews enjoyed great liberties and prosperity. In the time of Antioch the Great (223-187) Palestine was again the seat of war between Syria and Egypt, till at last, under Seleucus IV. (187-175), it came under Syrian sway.

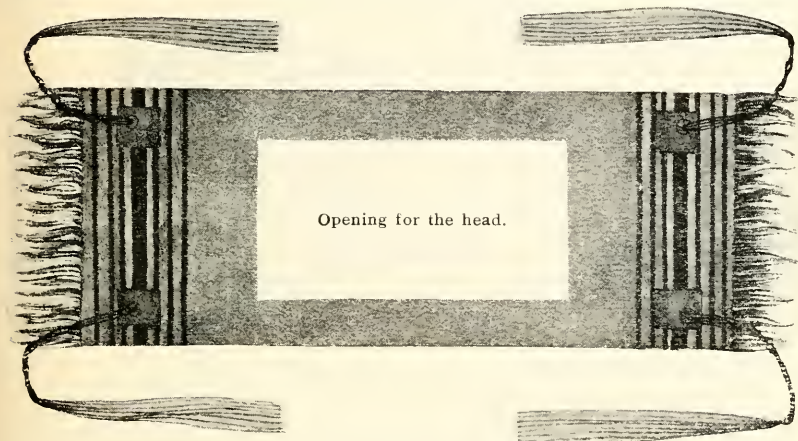
The plan of Alexander to imbue the nations of the East with Greek culture was continued under his successors, and by degrees Grecian influence was felt in Palestine. Thus Antigonus of Socho, one of the earlier scribes, the first who has a Grecian name, is said to have been a student of Greek literature. In opposition to these Hellenists, whose Judaism was of a very lax nature, there devel-



THE GREAT TALITH.  
The mantle worn by Jews at prayer.

oped in a quiet manner, the party of the pious or Hasidim, which rigidly adhered to the laws of the fathers and afterwards openly declared itself in the struggle of the Maccabees. Under Seleucus, IV., as has been said, the Jews had come under the Syrian sway. The people were governed by the high priest, and thus their condition was tolerable. When, however, the effort was made to hasten the process of Hellenising the people and destroy altogether the Jewish nationality, new troubles began, which resulted in the rise of the Maccabees. Seleucus was succeeded by Antiochus IV. Epiphanes (175-164 B. C.). When he ascended the throne there

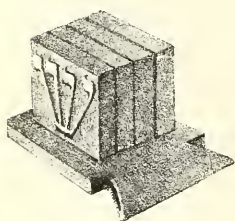
were at Jerusalem two parties,—a national one, adhering to the laws of the fathers, and the Greek, which endeavored to introduce Greek manners, vices, and idolatry. At the head of the national party stood the high priest Onias III., afterwards supplanted by his brother Jason, who offered four hundred and forty talents (or about five hundred and thirteen thousand four hundred and eighty dollars) annually as tribute to Antiochus, besides a hundred and fifty more for permission to build a gymnasium. Jason was dislodged by Menelaus, who offered a higher tribute to Antiochus (172 B. C.). While the latter was absent on his second expedition against Egypt (170 B. C.) Jason took possession of Jerusalem for a time. Antiochus, who looked upon this act as rebellion, after his return from Egypt took fearful vengeance on the Jews and the temple (1 Macc.



THE SMALL TALITH.  
Worn continually by the orthodox Jew.

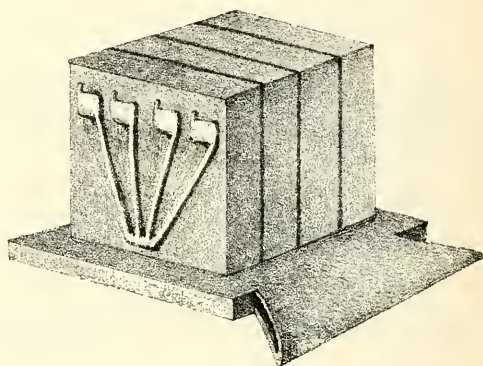
1, 16–28; 2 Macc. 15, 11–23; comp. Dan. 11, 28). In the year 168 a royal edict was issued, according to which the exercise of the Jewish religion and circumcision was interdicted, and a statue of Jupiter Olympus was erected in the temple (1 Macc. 1, 43 et seq.; 2 Macc. 6, 1 et seq.; Dan. 11, 30). At last the patience of the people was exhausted, and the Maccabean struggle arose, which ended in the independence of Judea. The Maccabean successors of Judas, the son of Mattathias, united in their own persons the offices of king and high priest (1 Macc. 14, 28 et seq.); but though they proved valiant defenders of the country against foreign enemies, they could not prevent Palestine from being torn by internal factions. At that time the two religious factions known as Pharisees and Sadducees opposed each other. Hitherto the Maccabees had

sided with the Pharisees, the successors of the Hasidim. But the third successor of Judas Maccabæus, named John Hyrcanus (135-106), being offended by the Pharisees, went over to the Sadducees, thus making the Pharisees his opponents. His eldest son's reign (Aristobulus) was short; but when his second son (Alexander Janæus) ascended the throne, in 104 B. C., he was so annoyed by the popular party of the Pharisees that, before his death, he felt obliged to advise his wife, Alexandra, to join the Pharisees and abandon the Sadducees entirely. Through this policy peace was restored, and Hyrcanus II. was made high priest while Alexandra occupied the throne. After the latter's death (70 B. C.) a deadly strife began between the two sons, Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, for the sovereignty. In the course of this struggle both parties ap-



SMALL PHYLACTERY FOR THE HEAD.

Used by ordinary Jews.



LARGE PHYLACTERY FOR THE HEAD.

Used by the Pharisaic Jews.

The phylactery was a memorial amulet consisting of a strip or strips of parchment inscribed with certain texts from the Old Testament and enclosed within a small leather case, which was either fastened on the forehead or on the left arm (see the upper part of the cut which follows).

pealed to Pompey, who at once invaded Palestine, and after having taken Jerusalem and its temple, appointed Hyrcanus high priest, limiting his dominion, however, to Judea alone, and taking his brother, Aristobulus, with his two sons, as captives to Rome. Alexander, one of the sons of Aristobulus, managed to escape (57 B. C.) and tried to raise the standard of revolt against Hyrcanus, but with no success. He was put down by Gabinius, the Roman proconsul, who divided Judea into five districts. Hyrcanus was recognised as high priest by Cæsar, who also permitted the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem; and Antipater, for services rendered to Cæsar, was appointed procurator over Judea (47 B. C.), who again made his son, Phasaël, governor of Jerusalem, while he placed his son Herod over Galilee. The latter soon succeeded, by

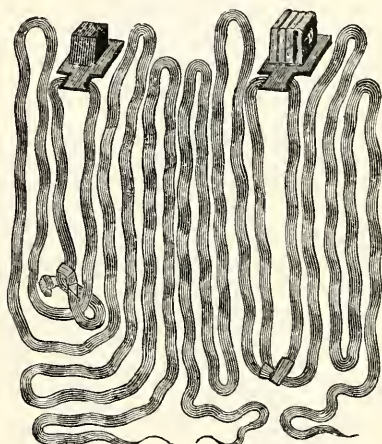
the help of the Romans, in becoming king of the Jews (39 B. C.). Under him Aristobulus, the last of the Maccabeans, acted as high priest, but he was put to death (35 B. C.).

Herod was followed by his son, Archelaus, who, after a few years' reign, was deposed by the Emperor Augustus (A. D. 6), and Judea became part of a Roman province with Syria, but with its own procurator residing at Cæsarea. When Quirinius took the census he succeeded in quelling a general revolt; but the fiercer spirits found a leader in Judas, the Galilean, who, fighting for the theocratic principle (according to the notions of the Pharisees) against the Roman yoke, kindled a fire in the people which, though often quenched, was not extinguished.

The high priests followed in quick succession with the exception of Caiaphas, who retained his office during the long reign of Pontius Pilate (28-36). The principle of interfering as little as possible with the religious liberty of the Jews was rudely assailed by the Emperor Caligula, who gave orders to have his image set up in the temple of Jerusalem. It was entirely through the courage and tact of the Syrian governor, Petronius, that the execution of these orders was temporarily postponed until the emperor was induced by Herod

Agrippa I. to withdraw them. Caligula soon afterwards died, and under the rule of Agrippa (41-44), to whom the government of the entire kingdom of his grandfather, Herod, was committed by Claudius, the Jews enjoyed much prosperity. In every respect the king was all they could wish. At the time of his death his son, Agrippa, being too young, Judea was again ruled by Roman governors, viz., Cuspius Fadus (44-46, under whom Theudas [Acts 5, 36] played his part); Tiberius Alexander (46-48, nephew of Philo of Alexandria); Ventidius Cumanus (48-52), and Felix (52-60), magnificent in his profligacy and despotic as a ruler (Acts, xxiii, 24). He was followed by Porcius Festus (60-62), a well-meaning man. With his successor, Albinus (62-64), everything became venal; and, bad as his government was, yet it was by far preferred to that of Gessius Florus

PHYLACTERIES.



For the arm.

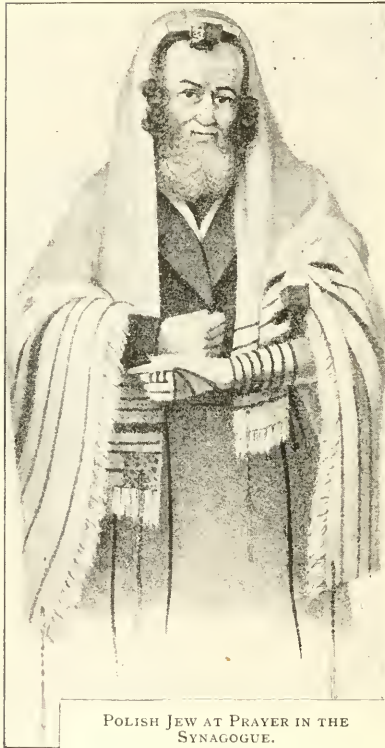
For the head.

Showing straps with which they are fastened.

(64-66), the last but also worst procurator, who made an ostentatious display of his oppressions. Disturbances in the streets of Jerusalem and Cæsarea were now of frequent occurrence, and massacre followed upon massacre. All attempts at peace-making on the part of Agrippa I. and of the peace party were in vain. The patience of the people had been taxed too much, and Judea was at open war with the Emperor Nero, who sent his first general of the

empire, Vespasian, to subjugate Palestine. Under Titus, Vespasian's general, fortress after fortress surrendered until at last Jerusalem was taken and the temple burned to the ground, August 10, 70 A. D.

Judea was now a waste, Jerusalem a heap of ruins, and there was no Jeremiah to sing the funeral dirge of the city of David and Solomon. Directly after the triumph of Titus the Sanhedrin met at Jamnia or Jabneh, and in the hands of this council the work of transforming and adapting Judaism to the altered political circumstances, proved a task of little difficulty. Jamnia had only to be substituted for Jerusalem, a few ordinances to be discontinued or slightly altered, and certain prayers or good works to be substituted for the sacrifices, and the change was effected without leaving any trace



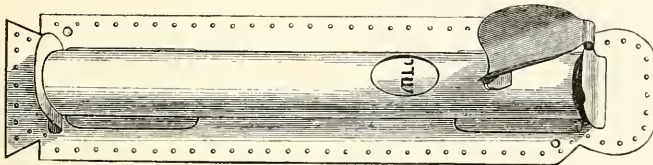
POLISH JEW AT PRAYER IN THE SYNAGOGUE.

Showing the manner in which the talith and the phylacteries for head and arm are worn.

of violent revolution. The spiritual head of the Jamnian commonwealth was Gamaliel II.<sup>1</sup> National fanaticism, indeed, was not yet extinguished; but it burnt itself completely out in the vigorous insurrection led by Bar-Cocheba, the pseudo-messiah, in which nearly six million Jews lost their lives, together with the

<sup>1</sup> See McClintock and Strong's *Cyclopaedia*. We are largely indebted to this work for the details of the present article. All readers desirous of pursuing the subject further should use it for constant reference.

famous Rabbi Akiba, one of the pseudo-messiah's most ardent adherents (135 A. D.). Titus, to annihilate forever all hopes of the restoration of the Jewish kingdom, accomplished his plan by establishing a new city on the site of Jerusalem, which he called *Ælia Capitolina*. An edict prohibited any Jew from entering the new city on pain of death. More effectually to keep them away, the image of a swine was placed over the gate leading to Bethlehem. The seat of the spiritual head, or patriarch, also called *nasi*, was now transferred from Jamnia to Tiberias, where Judah the Holy completed in A. D. 190 the collection of all the oral or traditional laws, called the *Mishna*. When in the fifth century (429) Palestine ceased to be the centre of Judaism, Babylonia took her place. From the period of the exile a numerous and coherent body of Jews had continued to subsist there. The Parthians and Sassanides granted them self-government. At their head was a native



MEZUZA, OR SIGN UPON THE DOOR-POST.

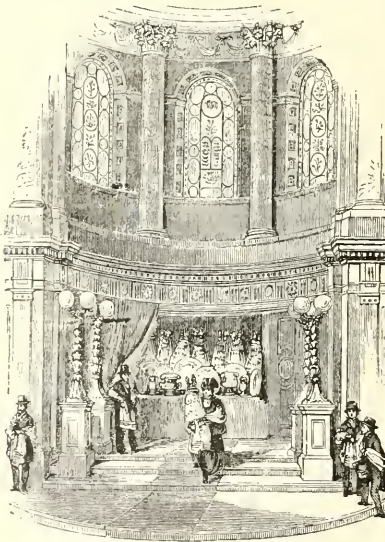
A cylinder containing a piece of parchment inscribed on one side with certain words from Deuteronomy, and on the other with the name of the "Almighty" so placed as to be visible through an opening covered by glass. The cylinder is affixed to the right-hand door-post in Jewish houses; the mezuza is believed to have the virtue of an amulet and is saluted by pious Jews both on entering and leaving the house.

prince, the *Resh Galutha*, i. e., prince of the captivity, who, when the Palestinian patriarchate came to an end, was left without a rival. The schools there at Pumbeditha, Sora, and Nahardea prospered greatly, developed rabbinism, vied with those of Palestine, and continued to exist after the cessation of the latter, when the patriarchate became extinct; thus they had the last word in the settlement of doctrine, which was embodied in the celebrated Babylonian Talmud, compiled about the year 500. When the schools at Pumbeditha and Sora were closed Jewish learning was transferred to Spain.

Returning to the Jews in the Roman Empire, we find that after the reign of Vespasian and Hadrian the condition of the Jews was not only tolerable, but in many respects prosperous. But the complete reverse took place after the conversion of Constantine. The Jews, who formerly had taken a great share in the persecution of the Christians by pagan Rome, now became a condemned and

persecuted sect. With the triumph of Christianity over paganism began the period of cruel oppression of the Jews in the Roman Empire. A gleam of hope shone upon them in the days of Julian the Apostate, but they were more illy-treated under his Christian successors. Till the reign of Theodosius, in the fourth century, however, their position in the empire was tolerable. Different, however, it was in the fifth century. The Roman Empire had, from the year 395, been divided into the Eastern or Greek Empire, of which Constantinople was the capital, and the Western Empire, of which Rome and Italy still formed the centre. In both these divisions the position and treatment of the Jews became

worse and worse. In the west, even under Honorius, its first emperor, oppressive laws began to be enacted against the Jews. In the east, i. e., in the eastern part of the Roman Empire, soon after called the Empire of Greece, or Byzantium, the position of the Jews became particularly unfavorable. The government of the Emperor Justin, and the code of Justinian, soon permanently fixed the social relations of the Jews in the Byzantine Empire. Justin (A. D. 523) excluded all non-Christians from holding any office or dignity in the state. In the reign of Justinian the enactments



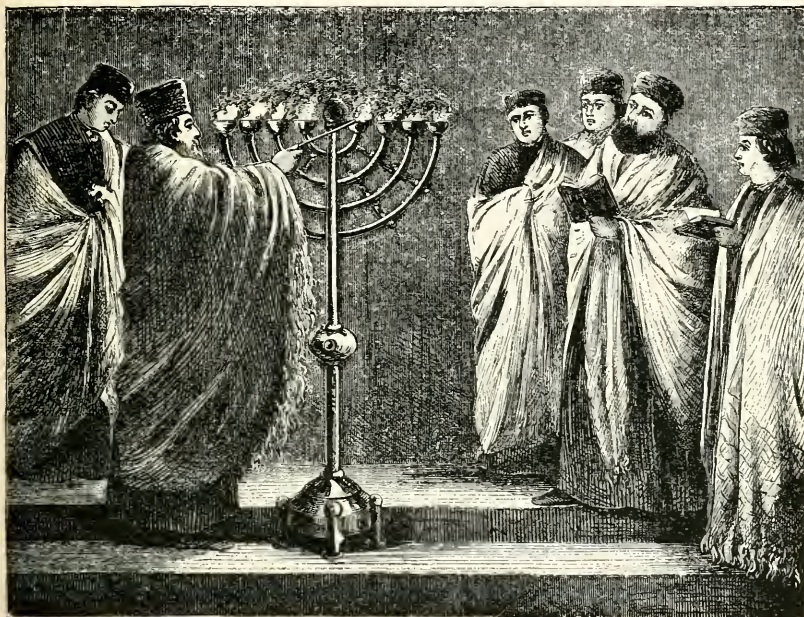
MODERN JEWISH SYNAGOGUE.

against the Jews were made more onerous. No wonder that during his reign many rebellions broke out among the Jews. From the reign of Justinian the position of the Jews in the Greek Empire became such as to prevent their possessing any vestige of political importance. True, they carried on theological studies in the country of their fathers, especially at Tiberias. But even here the last surviving gleam of their ancient glory was soon extinguished. The dignity of the patriarch had ceased to exist with the year 429, and the link connecting the different synagogues of the Eastern Empire was broken. Many Jews quitted Palestine and the Byzantine Empire to seek refuge in Persia and Babylonia, where they were more favored. When, in 1455, Constantinople was taken by the Turks,



some of the Jewish exiles from Spain and Portugal took refuge in the ancient capital of the Eastern Empire, where the number of their descendants is now considerable.

In the peninsula of Arabia the Jews had dwelt from time immemorial. Before the time of Mohammed the Jews were very prosperous there, and even a Jewish kingdom under Jewish kings is said to have existed there. When the prophet of Mecca made his appearance he found the Jews in general favorably disposed toward him. Several of the Jewish tribes became even his open parti-



THE FEAST OF DEDICATION AS CELEBRATED IN AN ENGLISH SYNAGOGUE.

sans. But when his principles and plans became more thoroughly known and the Jews rejected him, Mohammed at once commenced a war of extermination against them. His first attack was against the clan of the Beni-Kinouka, who dwelt in Media, and was overcome by the warrior-prophet. The same fate awaited the other tribes, one after the other. From the moment that the Jews declared themselves against Mohammed they became the special object of his hatred, and since that time a feeling of enmity has ever existed between the Musselman and the Jew. Crescent and cross shared equally in their contempt and hatred of the Jews, and, as

in Christian Europe, so in Mohammedan Asia and Africa the Jew was compelled to bear a distinctive mark in his garments—*here* the yellow hat, *there* the black turban.

Beyond the boundaries of either the old Roman or the Byzantine Empire Jews have, in early times, been met with, both in the most remote parts of the interior of Asia and upon the coast of Malabar. In the latter place they probably arrived in the fifth century in consequence of a persecution raised in Persia. In the sev-



THE HIGH PRIEST, IN LINEN VESTMENTS.  
Sprinkling the blood in the holy of holies.

enth century a Jewish colony was met with in China. When the Jews emigrated there is difficult to ascertain.

But to return to the West. It has already been stated that with the conversion of the Roman Empire to Christianity evil days came upon the Jews. In the Western Empire this unfavorable change commenced in the days of Honorius, and would have continued so; but the storm that burst over Rome toward the end of the fifth century changed in a degree the condition of the Jews. The northern nations, as long as they professed Arianism in preference to the Catholic faith, showed themselves merciful to their Jewish subjects.

This was especially the case with the Goths. When the dominion of the Ostrogoths, under their king Theodoric, succeeded that of Odoacer and the Heruli in Italy and the west, the Jews had every reason to be satisfied with their new sovereign. The consequence was that the Goths in the west, like the Persians in the east, found faithful allies in the Jews of that period. When Justinian, by his general, Narses, conquered Italy from the Ostrogoths (A. D. 555), the Jews, especially those at Naples, assisted him, only to be heavily punished afterwards.

The Visigoths also, in their defence of Arles, in Provence, against the Franks, under Clovis, were assisted by the Jews. In Spain the kings of the Visigoths treated them with favor till about the year 600, their king, Reccared, having embraced the Catholic

faith, inaugurated that peculiar system of conduct toward the Jews which finally resulted in their total expulsion from the peninsula.

The Franks were at first less merciful to the Jews than the Goths. The Merovingian line treated them with peculiar rigor. Thus in 540 King Childebert forbade the Jews to appear in the streets of Paris during the Easter week. Clotaire I. deprived them of the power of holding office. King Dagobert (629) compelled them either to receive baptism or to leave the country.

Under the Carolingians in France the Jews of the eighth and ninth centuries enjoyed so great a degree of prosperity, that the



THE FAST OF JERUSALEM IN JERUSALEM.

Romish bishops took alarm. Under Pépin le Bref, son of Charles Martel, they enjoyed many privileges, and so likewise under his son Charlemagne and under his successor and son, Louis le Débonnaire. The latter even freed them from the grinding taxes imposed upon them, and confirmed them in their immunities in 830. And all exertions of the priesthood, especially of Ogobard, bishop of Lyons, to injure the Jews, were futile.

The position of the Jews underwent an entire change at the downfall of the Carolingian dynasty, which began to decay after the death of Louis le Débonnaire. The invasion of the Normans

was partly the cause and partly the signal for a complete change of kings in Europe. An age of barbarism spread over the whole face of Christianity, the feudal system developed itself in every way injurious to the Jews. But one of the greatest evils which they were compelled to endure was the prevalence of the crusading spirit. During the first crusade (1096-1099) Treves, Speyer, Worms, Mayence, Cologne, and Ratisbon were the seat of oppression, murders, and bodily tortures, inflicted upon the Jews. During the second



JEW OF BAGDAD.

crusade (1147-1149), Rudolph, a fanatical monk, travelling through central Europe, stirred up the populace to take vengeance on all unbelievers. The cry, "Hep! Hep!" was sufficient to bring terror to the heart of every Jew. But King Conrad III. and such men as Bernard of Clairvaux protected them, and thus the sufferings of the Jews were less, compared with the intemperate zeal of Rudolph. During the Middle Ages the Jews were not only persecuted, but, where they were tolerated, they became also the Pariahs of the west. But to resume the thread of events.

In France, formerly so signally patronised by the Carlovingians, the Jews experienced a different treatment after the extinction of that dynasty. Toward the end of the eleventh century

they were banished and afterward recalled by Philip I. In 1182 they were at first banished by Philip Augustus, but readmitted upon certain conditions, one of which was the obligation to wear a little wheel upon their dress as a mark. Louis VII. (A. D. 1223) treated them as his serfs, and with one stroke of his pen remitted to his Christian subjects all their debts to Jews. Louis IX. (St. Louis), being anxious to convert them, commanded that the Talmud be destroyed by fire, and twenty-four cartfuls of the Talmud

were publicly burned in Paris (1244). Philip the Fair, after robbing them repeatedly, expelled the Jews from France in 1306. Under Louis X. they were treated unfavorably, while Philip V., the Long, favored and protected them. In 1341 the usual accusations of treason, poisoning of the wells, etc., were brought against them, and many were burned, massacred, banished, or condemned to heavy fines. Under John I. they enjoyed a little rest, and so also under Charles V. But in 1370 they were again banished, but soon recalled under Charles VI. In spite of the many vicissitudes, Jewish learning flourished in France, especially in the south. Men like David Kimchi and Rashi have become household names in Jewish as well as in Christian theology.

In England the Jews date their first residence from the time of the Heptarchy. In the twelfth century, under Henry II. and his son, the cruel treatment and plundering of the Jews reached its height. On the coronation day of King Richard I. (1189), when they came to pay their homage, the population plundered and murdered them a whole day and night in London. This bad example of London was followed at Stamford, Norwich, and more especially at York. Under King John (1199) all kinds of liberties and priv-

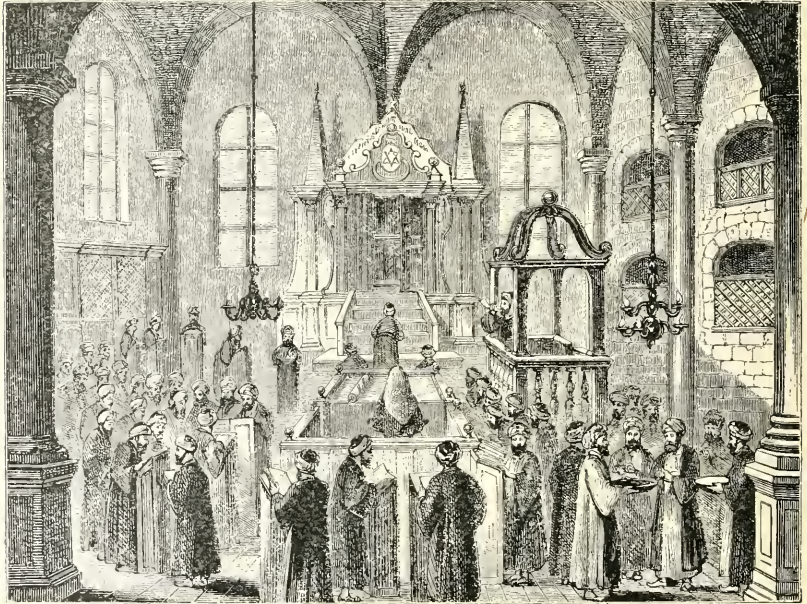
ileges were granted to the Jews, but he soon showed he cared more for their money than for their persons. Henry III. (1217-1272) followed the same policy, and when the Jews petitioned the king to allow them to leave the country their request was not granted. Under Edward I. they were banished in 1290, and only in 1635 Cromwell permitted them again to settle in England.

In Germany, Jews were found as early as the fourth century, especially at Cologne, where they soon became numerous and prosperous. But the commencement of the Middle Ages in Germany, as elsewhere, put an end to their favorable position. It is true that



JERUSALEM JEWS.

the Emperor of Germany regarded the Jews as his *Kammerknechte*, or "servants of the imperial chamber," and as such they enjoyed the emperor's protection, but the scores of violent deeds, which are recorded, show that even the protection of the emperor could not prevent the popular rage from breaking out and marking its course by bloodshed and desolation. The least cause was sufficient to massacre the Jews. When in 1348 an epidemic malady, known as the *black death*, visited half of Europe, the Jews were blamed for it because they were said to have poisoned the wells and rivers. A general massacre took place, in spite of the remon-



NEW YEAR'S DAY IN TIBERIAS AND SAFET.

stances of princes, magistrates, bishops, and the Pope himself. In the south of Germany and in Switzerland the persecution raged with most violence. From Switzerland to Silesia the land was drenched with innocent blood, and in some places their residence was forbidden.

In the Netherlands the history of the Jews during the Middle Ages was much like that of Germany and the north of France. In Flanders they were already living at the time of the Crusaders. In the twelfth century they were driven out, but were found there again in the fourteenth. In 1370 they were accused of having

pierced the holy wafer, an accusation which brought many to the stake. In Utrecht the Jews resided till the year 1444. In Holland, Zealand, and Friesland many Jews had sought refuge after their banishment from France by Philip the Fair.

Before the end of the tenth century Jews were already found at Prague. Boleslaus I. favored them and permitted them to build a synagogue. In Poland they existed very early. Under Boleslaus V., Duke of Poland (1264), they enjoyed many privileges. His great-grandson, King Casimir, showed them still greater favor, out



THE BLOWING OF THE TRUMPET ON NEW YEAR'S DAY.

of love, it is said, for Esther, a beautiful Jewess. Synagogues, academies, and rabbinical schools have always abounded in Poland.

In Italy, where Jews have resided from early times in their ghettos, the popes generally appeared kindly toward them. Gregory I., the Great, in the seventh century, proved himself the friend of the Jews, but Gregory VII., in the tenth century, was their enemy. In other great towns in Italy the position of the Jews varied. At Leghorn and Venice they met with favor, and so also in a less degree at Florence, but in Genoa they were looked upon with enmity. In the Kingdom of Naples, where they settled about the year 1200, persecutions took place from time to time.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]