

THE FUGITIVE. By Ezra S. Brudno. (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company. \$1.50.)

FICTION, this story is called; but there is very little but fact in the book. Details, perhaps, links; possibly the connecting thread of love that is never quite satisfactorily depicted on the woman's side, and lacks a bit of convincingness as to its reality; these things may be the fiction, but the rest is "pure, crude fact," well displayed to attentive eyes.

(Continued on page 76)

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Recent Fiction

(The Fugitive — continued)

The very evident truthfulness of the "Memoirs" is the powerful thing that rivets the attention. For the book is by one unknown to the novel-reader, and is accepted on the strength of the fact of its publication by such a firm.

It is a plea for justice, for toleration, for liberty to live free from bonds not laid on other men, for a right to pass through the world in the pursuit of health, competence, even wealth and happiness, without subjection to insults of all degrees and infractions of every "inalienable" right, such as only the Jew can voice. Because the Jews did not recognize Jesus as the Christ, the Messiah, because, as a piece of Roman policy, He was sacrificed to the demands of the mob, their race has suffered "two thousand years of wrong," and indeed have "borne the cross," as our author says. And their own pride and self-justification, mingled with their specially besetting sins, have contributed to their misery, have been powerful stimulants to the evil acts of their oppressors. All this is plainly acknowledged in the course of the book. The worst thing we can point to in the typical Jewish character is shown here most graphically, from first to last, the disloyalty of the race as a whole, of each individual as regards the welfare of his comrades. There are shining examples of honor, loyalty, benevolence, gratitude, hospitality, self-sacrifice, but they shine the brighter that they are few. It needs the soil of the United States and many generations of those born here of Jewish lineage to bring —

"the higher train
Of nobler thoughts and actions."

The picture of the hardships of children, especially of orphans, in schools and higher institutions of learning, is discouraging, particularly when we know that such conditions exist in Russia to-day. In the strictly Jewish schools the field of knowledge is arid. Poor little boys are trained in knotty points of law, are made students not only of the Talmud, but of the burdensome and stupendously involved commentaries that overshadow that volume of wonderful wisdom.

Ah, the cruelty of man to brother man! The horrors told here are but ghosts of the horrors Russians have inflicted on their Jewish compatriots. Sometimes we turn in despairing disgust from the constant almost unextirpable lying plausibilities that are offered us by Jews of the peasant class, with whom we so often come in business contact here, men and women that seem to have convinced themselves almost with their first step on free soil that they are peers of the best; but this book will help us to have patience, to recollect that weakness knows no other weapon than deception, and that only courage dares be true, and after all these centuries of suffering it is not only no wonder that there is so much resort to untruthful statements, but that there is so much truth! The great marvel is that the Jew is to-day still a Jew, no matter in what land he was born. There is a splendid nucleus of intellect and character that has sent forth geniuses in the past, and will contribute more and more to the sum of force and beauty in the days to come. And we self-styled Christians, that too often give no heed to the Master's teachings, need such tales as this to help us to sympathy and its basis, understanding, in our intercourse with our brother, the Jew.

The scene is laid for the most part in Lithuanian Russia, and the pictures of life there are vivid. Not less so are the scenes in New York.

An unnoted error escaped the proofreader, where the word Koran has usurped the place of Talmud.