

**PURGATORY:** An intermediate state through which souls are to pass in order to be purified from sin before they are admitted into the heavenly paradise. The belief in purgatory, fundamental with the Roman Catholic Church, is based by the Church authorities chiefly upon II Macc. xii. 44-45: "If he [Judas] had not hoped that they that were slain should have risen again it had been superfluous and vain to pray for the dead. . . . Whereupon he made an atonement that they might be delivered from sin"; for this indicates that souls after death pass through an intermediate state in which they may by some intercession be saved from doom. The same view, that an atonement should be made for the dead, is expressed in Sifre, Deut. 210. The idea of an intermediate state of the soul, release from which may be obtained by intercession of the saints, is clearly dwelt upon in the Testament of Abraham, Recension A, xiv., where the description is given of a soul which, because its good and its evil deeds are equal, has to undergo the process of purification while remaining in a middle state, and on whose behalf Abraham intercedes, the angels joining him in his prayer, whereupon the soul is admitted into paradise.

The view of purgatory is still more clearly expressed in rabbinical passages, as in the teaching of the Shammaites: "In the last judgment day there shall be three classes of souls: the

**Rabbinic Views.** righteous shall at once be written down for the life everlasting; the wicked, for Gehenna; but those whose virtues and sins counterbalance one another shall go down to Gehenna and float up and down until they rise purified; for of them it is said: 'I will bring the third part into the fire and refine them as silver is refined, and try them as gold is tried' [Zech. xiii. 9]; also, 'He [the Lord] bringeth down to Sheol and bringeth up again' (I Sam. ii. 6). The Hillelites seem to have had no purgatory; for they said: "He who is 'plenteous in mercy' [Ex. xxxiv. 6] inclines the balance toward mercy, and consequently the intermediates do not descend into Gehenna" (Tosef., Sanh. xiii. 3; R. H. 16b; Bacher, "Ag. Tan." i. 18). Still they also speak of an intermediate state.

Regarding the time which purgatory lasts, the accepted opinion of R. Akiba is twelve months; according to R. Johanan b. Nuri, it is only forty-nine days. Both opinions are based upon Isa. lxvi. 23-24: "From one new moon to another and from one Sabbath to another shall all flesh come to worship before Me, and they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched"; the former interpreting the words "from one new moon to another" to signify all the months of a year; the latter interpreting the words "from one Sabbath to another," in accordance with Lev. xxiii. 15-16, to signify seven weeks. During the twelve months, declares the baraita (Tosef., Sanh. xiii. 4-5; R. H. 16b), the souls of the wicked are judged, and after these twelve months are over they are consumed and transformed into ashes under the feet of the righteous (according to Mal. iii. 21 [A. V. iv. 3]), where-

as the great seducers and blasphemers are to undergo eternal tortures in Gehenna without cessation (according to Isa. lxvi. 24).

The righteous, however, and, according to some, also the sinners among the people of Israel for whom Abraham intercedes because they bear the Abrahamic sign of the covenant are not harmed by the fire of Gehenna even when they are required to pass through the intermediate state of purgatory ('Er. 19b; Hag. 27a).

The idea of the purging fire through which the soul has to pass is found in the Zend-Avesta ("Bundahis," xxx. 20): "All men will pass into the melted metal and become pure; to the right-

**History of Purgatory.**eous it will seem as though he walks through warm milk" (comp. Enoch, lii. 6-7, lxvii. 6-7). The Church Fathers developed the idea of the "ignis purgatorius" into a dogma according to which all souls, including those of the righteous who remain unscathed, have to pass the purgatory (Origen on Ps. xxxvii., Homily 3; Lactantius, "Divine Institutiones," vii. 21, 4-7; Jerome on Ps. cxviii., Sermon 20; Commodianus, "Instructiones," ii. 2, 9); hence prayers and offerings for the souls in purgatory were instituted (Tertullian, "De Corona Militis," 3-4; "De Monogamia," 10; "Exhortatio Castitatis," 11; Augustine, "Enchiridion ad Lauram," 67-69, 109; Gregory I., "Dialogi," iv. 57). Hence also arose in the Church the mass for the dead corresponding in the Synagogue to the Kaddish (see KADDISH).

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Boeklen, *Die Verwandtschaft der Jüdisch-Christlichen mit der Persischen Eschatologie*, 1902, pp. 118-125; Atzberger, *Die Christliche Eschatologie*, 1890, pp. 99 et seq., 162, 275; Herzog-Hauck, *Real-Encyc. s.v. Fegefeuer*; McClintock and Strong, *Cyc. s.v.*

K.

**PURIFICATION.** See טָהָרָה.

**PURIM:** Jewish feast celebrated annually on the 14th, and in Shushan, Persia, also on the 15th, of Adar, in commemoration of the deliverance of the Persian Jews from the plot of Haman to exterminate them, as recorded in the Book of Esther. According to that book the feast was instituted as a national one by Mordecai and Esther. For a critical view of Purim see ESTHER. In the present article are treated only the various features of the feast as developed after its institution.

Aside from the much-mooted question whether Purim is of Jewish or of heathen origin, it is certain that, as it appears in the Book of Esther, the festival is altogether devoid of religious spirit—an anomaly in Jewish religious history. This is due to the worldly character of the Book of Esther. The only religious allusions therein are the mention of fasting in iv. 16 and ix. 31, and perhaps the expression of confidence in the deliverance of Israel in iv. 14. This secular character has on the whole been most prominent in this festival at all times. Like Hanukkah, it has never been universally considered a religious holy day, in spite of the fact that it is designated by the term "yom-tob" (Esth. ix. 19, 22). Accordingly business transactions and even manual labor are allowed on Purim, although in certain places restrictions have been

imposed on work (Shulhan 'Aruk, Orah Hayyim, 696).

Nevertheless Purim has been held in high esteem at all times and in all countries, some even maintaining that when all the prophetic and hagiographical works shall be forgotten the Book of Esther will still be remembered, and, accordingly, the Feast of Purim will continue to be observed (Yer. Meg. i. 5a; Maimonides, "Yad," Megillah, iii. 18; comp. Schudt, "Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten," ii. 311). It is also claimed that Purim is as great as the day on which the Torah was given on Sinai ("Mordekai" on B. M. ix., end; comp. Lampronti, "Pahad Yizhak," s.v. "Purim"). In Italy the Jews, it seems, have even used the word "Purim" as a family name, which also proves the high esteem that the festival enjoys among them (Vogelstein and Rieger, "Gesch. der Juden in Rom," ii. 420; but comp. Steinschneider in "Monatsschrift," 1903, p. 175).

The Book of Esther does not prescribe any religious service for Purim; it enjoins only the annual celebration of the feast among the Jews on the 14th and 15th of Adar, commanding that they should "make them days of feasting and joy, and of sending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor." It seems, therefore, that the observance of Purim was at first merely of a convivial and social nature. Gradually it assumed religious features.

The first religious ceremony ordained for the celebration of Purim is the reading of the Book of

Esther in the synagogue, a regulation **Reading** of ascribed in the Talmud (Meg. 2a) to the "Men of the Great Synod," of the **Megillah**, which Mordekai is reported to have been a member. Originally this enactment was for the 14th of Adar only; later, however, R. Joshua b. Levi (3d cent.) prescribed that the Me-

gillah should be read on the eve of Purim also. Further, he obliged women to attend the reading of the Megillah, inasmuch as it was a woman, Queen Esther, through whom the miraculous deliverance of the Jews was accomplished (Meg. 4a; see, however, Yer. Meg. ii. 5, where this law is reported in the name of Bar Kappara; comp. "R. E. J." xxxii. 42).

In the Mishnah there is a difference of opinion as to how much of the Megillah one must read in order to discharge one's duty. According to R. Judah, the portion from ii. 5 to the end suffices; others

considered the portion from iii. 1, or even from vi. 1, to the end sufficient; while R. Meir demanded the reading of the entire scroll, and his view was accepted in the Talmud (Meg. 19a). In some congregations it was customary to read the first portion of the Megillah, i.-vi., at the "outgoing of the first Sabbath" in Adar and the rest on the outgoing of the second Sabbath of that month. In other places the whole Megillah was read on the outgoing of the second Sabbath (Soferim xiv. 18). In some places it was read on the 15th of Adar also (*ib.* xxi. 8), for example, at Tyre (comp. Zunz, "Ritus," p. 56).

According to the Mishnah, the "villagers" were permitted for the sake of convenience to read the Megillah on the Monday or Thursday of the Purim week, on which days they came to the towns for divine service.

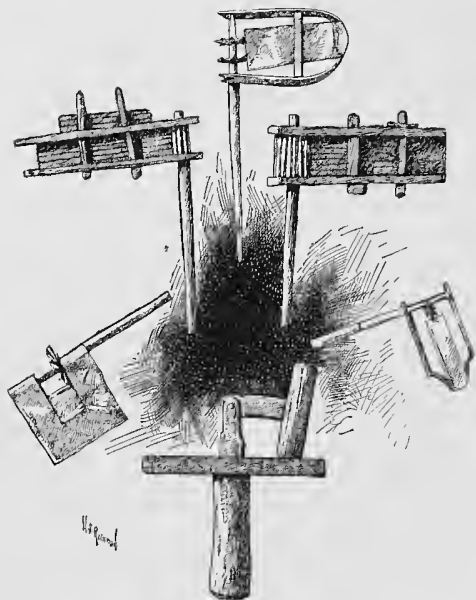
In the Mishnah the recitation of a benediction either before or after the reading of the Megillah is not yet a universally recognized obligation. The Talmud, however, prescribed three benedictions before and one after the reading (comp. Meg. 21b; Yer. Meg. iv. 1; Massket Soferim xiv. 5, 6, where the formulas for the closing benediction differ; comp. also Shulhan 'Aruk, Orah Hayyim, 692, 1). The Talmud added other provisions also in connec-



Purim Players.

(From Leusden, "Philologus Hebræo-Mixtus," 1657.)

tion with the reading of the Megillah. For example, the reader was to pronounce the names of the ten sons of Haman (Esth. ix. 7-10) in one breath, to indicate their simultaneous death (Meg. 16b; Orach Hayyim, 690, 15). The congregation was to recite aloud with the reader the verses ii. 5, viii. 15-16,



"Haman Klopfers" Used on Purim Feast by Jewish Children of Russia.  
(From "Globus.")

and x. 3, which relate the origin of Mordecai and his triumph (Abudarham, ed. Amsterdam, 1726, p. 76; Orach Hayyim, *l.c.*). This rule is of geonic origin (see Brück, "Pharisäische Volkssitten," p. 158). Saadia Gaon demanded that only the first two verses of the four mentioned above be read aloud; and this was the custom in Spain (Abudarham, *l.c.*).

The Megillah is read with a traditional chant differing from that used in the reading of the pericopes of the Pentateuch. In some places, however, it is not chanted, but is read like a letter.

**The Megillah—** because of the name "iggeret" (epistle) which is applied (Esth. ix. 26, 29) to the Book of Esther (comp. Judah Ayyash, "Bet Yehudah," No. 23, Leghorn, 1747). For the same reason it has been also customary since the time of the Geonim to unroll the whole Megillah before reading it, in order to give it the appearance of an epistle (Orach Hayyim, 690, 17; comp. Brück, *l.c.* p. 159).

Finally, it is to be mentioned that the Megillah may be read in any language intelligible to the audience. In Hebrew and also in Greek it may be read even when not understood (Meg. 18a; Orach Hayyim, 690, 8-12; see, however, Soferim xxi. 8, where it is said that all Israel is in duty bound to read the Megillah in Hebrew). In Saragossa the Megillah was read in Spanish, a practise against which Isaac ben Sheshet (Responsa, Nos. 388-391) and Nissim Gerondi protested (see Grätz, "Gesch." viii. 35;

Abrahams, "Jewish Life in the Middle Ages," pp. 345 *et seq.*; Steinschneider, in "Monatsschrift," 1903, p. 178). Talking during the public recitation was prohibited (Orach Hayyim, 692, 2). According to the Mishnah (Meg. 30b), in addition to the Megillah Ex. xvii. 8-16, the story of the attack on the Jews by Amalek, the progenitor of Haman, is to be read.

Purim gave rise to many religious compositions, some of which were incorporated into the liturgy. For the large number of hymns intended for the public service as well as other writings (dramas, plays, etc.) intended for general edification, both in Hebrew and in other languages, see the exhaustive study by M. Steinschneider, "Purim und Parodie," in "Monatsschrift," xlii.-xlviii., Index, especially xlii. 279 *et seq.*, 372 *et seq.*; for Karaite rites see *ib.* pp. 373 *et seq.*

As pointed out above, the Book of Esther prescribed "the sending of portions one to another, and gifts to the poor." This became in the course of time one of the most prominent features of the celebration of Purim. Jews sent gifts of food, especially dainties, to one another; and the

**Social Customs.** poor were made recipients of charity. In the synagogue, too, regular collections were made on the festival, and

the money so procured was distributed among the needy. No distinction was to be made among the poor; any one who was willing to accept, even a non-Jew, was to be allowed to participate (Orach Hayyim, 694). It was obligatory upon the poorest Jew, even on one who was himself dependent on charity, to give to other poor—at least to two (*ib.*). In some congregations it is customary to place a box ("kuppah") in the vestibule of the synagogue into which every one may put the half of the unit coin ("maḥazit ha-shekel") of the country, corresponding to the half-shekel which had been given to the Temple in Adar (*ib.*). The general provision is for every one to give three halves; but some give according to the number of persons in the family (comp. Jehiel Epstein, "Kizzur Shene Luhot ha-Berit," p. 105b, Amsterdam, 1701). The amount of money thus distributed on Purim by wealthy members of the community often reached very large sums (see Steinschneider, *l.c.* xlii. 180 *et seq.*). Dedications of works appear among the various forms of Purim presents (*ib.* and xlvii. 174 *et seq.*, Nos. 5, 7, 19).

The national rather than the religious character of the festival made it appear appropriate to cele-



Purim Players at Prague, Early Eighteenth Century.  
(From a contemporary drawing.)

brate the occasion by feasting. Hence it was the rule to have at least one festive meal, called "se'udat

Purim," toward the evening of the

**Feasting.** 14th (Meg. 7b; Orah Hayyim, 695, 1).

In this connection it may be mentioned that for the celebration of Purim there developed among the Jews a special kind of baking. Cakes were shaped into certain forms and were given names having some symbolic bearing on the historical events of Purim. Thus the Jews of Germany eat "Hamantaschen" and "Hamanohren" (in Italy, "orrecchi d'Aman"), "Kreppchen," "Kindchen," etc. (comp. Steinschneider, *l.c.* xlvii. 177, 360 *et seq.*). The jovial character of the feast was forcibly illustrated in the saying of the Talmud (Meg. 7b) that one should drink on Purim until he can no longer distinguish "Cursed be Haman" from "Blessed be Mordecai," a saying which was codified in the Shulhan 'Arukh (*ib.*), but which was later ingeniously

186), even transgressions of a Biblical law, such as the appearance of men in women's attire and vice versa, which is strictly prohibited in Deut. xxii. 5. This went so far that if through exuberance of spirits a man inflicted damage on the property of another on Purim he was not compelled to repair it (Orah Hayyim, *l.c.*, and the references there given).

One of the strangest species of merrymaking was the custom of masquerading, which was first introduced among the Italian Jews about the close of the fifteenth century under the influence of the Roman carnival. From Italy this custom spread over all countries where Jews lived, except

**Masquer-** perhaps the Orient (Steinschneider, *l.c.*  
**ading.** p. 181; xlvii. 469, No. 9). The first among Jewish authors to mention this custom is Judah Minz (d. 1508 at Venice) in his Responsa, No. 17, quoted by Isserles on Orah Hayyim,



OBSERVANCE OF PURIM IN A GERMAN SYNAGOGUE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

(From Bodenschatz, "Kirchliche Verfassung," 1748.)

explained as referring to the letters occurring in the sentences **אורור הכן** and **ברוך מררכי**, in each of which the numerical value of the letters amounts to 502 (comp. Abudarham, *l.c.*; Lewin, "Gesch. der Juden in Lissa," p. 212, Pinne, 1904). While the Jews have always been noted for abstemiousness in the use of intoxicants, drunkenness was licensed, so to speak, on Purim, to comply with the command which seemed to lie in the Biblical term "mishteh" (drink) applied to Purim (Abudarham, *l.c.*). It is, therefore, not surprising that all kinds of merrymaking, often verging on frivolity, have been indulged in on Purim, so that among the masses it has become almost a general rule that "on Purim everything is allowed" (comp. Steinschneider, *l.c.* p.

696, 8. He expresses the opinion that, since the purpose of the masquerade is only merrymaking, it should not be considered a transgression of the Biblical law regarding dress. Although some rigorous authorities issued prohibitions against this custom (comp. Isaiah Horowitz, "Shene Luhot ha-Berit," 261b, Amsterdam, 1653), the people did not heed them, and the more lenient view prevailed (comp. Isserles, *l.c.*, and Lampronti, *l.c.*). The custom still obtains among the Orthodox Jews of the eastern parts of Europe. Boys and girls walk from house to house in grotesque masks and indulge in all kinds of jollity. As a rule, they sing some comic doggerel, *e.g.*, "heut' is Purim, morgen is aus, gebt mir a Kreuzer, und werft mich hinaus"; and they

are often given a few coins (comp. Steinschneider, *l.c.* xlii. 176, 182).

Purim songs have even been introduced into the synagogue. For the children's sake certain verses

from the Book of Esther have been sung in chorus on Purim (Abrahams, *l.c.* p. 33). Indeed, Purim was an occasion on which much joyous license was permitted even within the walls of the synagogue itself. As such may be reckoned the boisterous hissing, stamping, and rattling, during the public service, at the mention of Haman or his sons, as well as the whistling at the mention of Mordecai by the reader of the Megillah. This practise traces its origin to French and German rabbis of the thirteenth century, who, in accordance with a passage in the Midrash, where the verse "Thou shalt blot out the remembrance of Amalek" (Deut. xxv. 19) is explained to mean "even from wood and stones," introduced the custom of writing the name of Haman, the offspring of Amalek, on two smooth stones and of knocking or rubbing them constantly until the name was blotted out. Ultimately, however, the stones fell into disuse, the knocking alone remaining (Abudarham, *l.c.*; Brück, *l.c.*; see, however, Löw, "Lebensalter," p. 297, also p. 291, No. 10).

**Boisterous-**  
**ness in** Some wrote the name of Haman on the  
**the Syna-** soles of their shoes, and at the mention  
**gogue.** of the name stamped with their feet as a sign of contempt; others used for the same purpose a rattle—called "gregar" (= Polish, "grzegorz"), and producing much noise—a custom which is still observed by the Russo-Polish Jews. Some of the rabbis protested against these uproarious excesses, considering them a sinful disturbance of public worship (comp., for example, Isaiah Horowitz, *l.c.* pp. 260a, 261a, below), but often in vain (see Brück, *l.c.*, and Zunz, "Ritus," p. 69).

Outside the synagogue the pranks indulged in on Purim by both children and adults have been carried even to a greater extreme. Some of them date from the Talmudic period (see, e.g., the tale in Meg. 7b; Sanh. 64b and Rashi *ad loc.*; comp. also "Aruk," s.v. שׁוּר, and Abudarham, *l.c.*). As early as the fifth century (see Schudt, *l.c.* ii. 309), and especially in the geonic period (9th and 10th cent.), it was a custom to burn Haman in effigy on Purim. This is described in the "Aruk" (*l.c.*) as follows: "Four or five days before Purim the young men make an effigy of Haman and hang it on the roof. On Purim itself they make a bonfire into which they cast the effigy while they stand around joking and singing, at the same time holding

**Burning**  
**of Haman's** a ring above the fire and waving it  
**Effigy.** from side to side through the fire" (see Ginzberg in "J. Q. R." xvi. 650; Abudarham, *l.c.*; Brück, *l.c.*).

In Italy the Jewish children used to range themselves in rows, and pelt one another with nuts; while the adults rode through the streets with fir-branches in their hands, shouted, or blew trumpets round a doll representing Haman and which was finally burned with due solemnity at the stake (Abrahams, *l.c.* p. 260; and especially Gûdemann, "Gesch." p. 211, Vienna, 1884). In Frankfort-on-the-Main it was customary to make

a house of wax wherein the figures of Haman and his executioner, also of wax, were placed side by side. The whole was then put on the almemar, where stood also the wax figures of Zeresh, the wife of Haman, and two guards—one to her right and the other to her left—all attired in a flimsy manner, and with pipes in their mouths. As soon as the reader began to read the Megillah the house with all its occupants was set on fire to the enjoyment of the spectators (comp. Schudt, *l.c.* ii. 309; S. Cassel, "Juden," in Ersch and Gruber, "Encyc." section ii., part 27, pp. 78 *et seq.*).

It must be mentioned here that these customs often aroused the wrath of Christians, who interpreted them as a disguised attempt to ridicule Jesus and the cross and issued prohibitions against them; e.g., under the reign of Honorius (395–423) and of Theodosius II. (408–450; comp. Schudt, *l.c.* ii. 309, 317, and Cassel, *l.c.*). Moreover, the Rabbis themselves, to avoid danger, tried to abolish the obnoxious customs, often even calling the magistracy to their aid, as in London in 1783 (see MAHAMAD).

Finally, it must be stated that the Fast of Esther, celebrated before Purim, on the 13th of Adar, is not an original part of the latter, nor was it later instituted "in commemoration of the fasting of Esther, Mordecai, and the people" (Hastings,

**Fasting**  
**Before and** "Dict. Bible," i. 854, col. 2), since this  
**After Pu-** fasting fell, according to rabbinical  
**rim.** tradition, in the month of Nisan and lasted three days. The first who mentions it is R. Aḥa of Shabḥa (8th cent.) in "She'eltot," iv.; and the reason there given for its institution is based on an arbitrary interpretation of Esth. ix. 18 and Meg. 2a, "The 13th was the time of gathering," which gathering is explained to have had also the purpose of public prayer and fasting (comp. Asheri on Meg. i., beginning; Abudarham, *l.c.* p. 94; Brück, *l.c.* pp. 56 *et seq.*; and Berliner, in "Kaufmann Gedenkbuch," p. 270, Breslau, 1900). Some, however, used to fast three days in commemoration of the fasting of Esther; but as fasting was prohibited during the month of Nisan (see Soferim xxi. 2) the first and second Mondays and the Thursday following Purim were chosen (*ib.* xvii. 4, xxi. 1; Oraḥ Ḥayyim, 686, 3). The fast on the 13th is still commonly observed; but when that date falls on a Sabbath the fast is put back to Thursday, Friday being needed to prepare for the Sabbath and the following Purim festival (Abudarham, *l.c.* p. 94b; Oraḥ Ḥayyim, 686).

In leap-years Purim is celebrated in the second Adar, but by the Karaites in the first; the respective days of the first Adar being then called "Purim Kaṭan" (Little Purim), for which there have been set forth certain observances similar to those for Purim proper, with the exception of reading the Megillah, sending gifts to the poor, and fasting on the 13th of the month. The distinctions between the first and the second Purim in leap-years are mentioned in the Mishnah (Meg. i. 46b; comp. Oraḥ Ḥayyim, 697).

**Purim Ka-**  
**ṭan.**

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Cheyne and Black, *Encyc. Bibl.* s.v. *Esther* and *Purim*; Grätz, *Gesch.* iii. 171, viii. 35; Epstein, in *Kaufmann Gedenkbuch*, pp. 313 et seq.; Güdemann, *Gesch.*, 1884, p. 211; Hastings, *Dict. Bible*, s.v. *Esther* and *Purim*; J. Q. R., xvi. 650 et seq.; Leopold Löw, *Die Lebensalter in der Jüdischen Literatur*, pp. 291, 295 et seq., Szegedin, 1875; Perles, in *Grätz Jubelschrift*, p. 35, Breslau, 1887; Schudt, *Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten*, part ii., pp. 307-317, Frankfort-on-the-Main, 1714; Vogelstein and Rieger, *Gesch. der Juden in Rom*, i. 337 et seq.; Steinschneider, *Purim* und *Parodie*, in *Monatsschrift*, xlvii-xlviii.; Zunz, *Ritus*, p. 56; and the articles *ESTHER*; *FASTING* AND *FAST-DAYS*; *MAHAMAD*.  
K.

H. M.

**PURIM PLAYS:** Jewish folk-comedies, written for performance in Jewish family circles or before a Jewish public during the month of Adar especially on Purim. While in general a dramatic performance was considered frivolous, an exception was made with regard to Purim. Even in the Talmud mention is made of certain spectacular entertainments and buffooneries, which must have been very common on Purim (see Sanh. 64b; Meg. 7b).

In geonic times the dramatization of the story of Esther was a well-established custom among the Jews of the Orient. The central figure of these

plays was a dummy representing Haman,

**In Geonic Times.** man, which was burned while the spectators were jesting and singing.

Similar amusements are reported of the Jews of other countries during the Middle Ages, and they may be seen in some countries even today (see *PURIM*; comp. Güdemann, "Gesch." iii. 211 et seq.; Löw, "Lebensalter," p. 296). The real Purim play, however, the Judæo-German "Purimspiele," did not make its appearance until the first decade of the eighteenth century. There were, it is true, some dramatic productions on the subject of the Book of Esther and the Feast of Purim long before that time, as the drama "Esther," by Solomon Usque and Lazaro Gratiano (1567)—the first Spanish drama written by a Jew (comp. Kayserling, "Sephardim," p. 141; Berliner, "Yesod 'Olam," p. xiii.; Löw, *l.c.* p. 298)—and the "Comedia Famosa de Aman y Mordechai" (Leyden, 1699), by an anonymous author, probably the noted Spanish poet Antonio Enriquez Gomez (comp. Kayserling, *l.c.* pp. 228, 350; Steinschneider, in "Monatsschrift," xlvii. 170); but these dramas were probably intended for the general stage, since there is no record that they were ever performed by the Jews.

According to information drawn from a satirical poem written in Judæo-German in 1598, it appears that a Purim play entitled "Spil von Tab Jäklein mit Sein Weib," etc., was acted "every Purim" at Tannhausen in the sixteenth century. No trace of this play exists, and possibly it was never printed (see Steinschneider, *l.c.*). Therefore as the first Purim plays intended for and actually performed on the stage during the days of Purim must be considered the two Judæo-German dramas, if they really deserve this name, described by Schudt in his "Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten" (ii. 314-317). One of these bears the title "Ahaswerosh-Spiel," and was published anonymously at Frankfort-on-the-Main in 1708 (later reprinted in

**The Frankfort Plays.** Schudt, *l.c.* ii. 202-226). A specimen in English translation will be found in Abrahams' "Jewish Life in the Middle Ages" (p. 265). This comedy does not reveal any literary value; its language is very often frivo-

lous and was justly criticized by Schudt (*l.c.* ii. 316), and later by S. L. Rapoport in his Hebrew Purim drama "She'erit Yehudah" (Vienna, 1827). Indeed, the Jewish authorities at Frankfort-on-the-Main, where it was performed several times, have forbidden its performance and confiscated and burned all obtainable copies (Schudt, *l.c.*; Berliner, *l.c.* p. xv.).

The other play, written by Baermann of Limburg, bears the title "Mekirat Yosef," its theme being the story of Joseph and his brethren. It was published at Frankfort by Löb Ginzburg before 1711 (not, as Steinschneider, following Wolf, says, *l.c.* xlvii. 88, in 1712). Schudt (*l.c.* ii. 314) reports that all the copies of this first edition were burned in the great conflagration of the Frankfort ghetto in 1711, and that another edition was prepared there in 1713. The matter is of some importance, as all the bibliographers differ on that point (comp. Berliner, *l.c.*). The play was published in a third edition by Schudt (*l.c.* iii. 226-327), with a German translation. It must have been performed at Frankfort and Metz several years before 1711 (Schudt, *l.c.* ii. 314). The actors in both places were Jewish students of Prague and Hamburg, with the above-mentioned Baermann of Limburg as their theatrical manager. The play excited great interest, and two soldiers were required to keep back the crowd; but when Christians also began to flock to the play, the performance was prohibited (Schudt, *l.c.*).

It should be said that this comedy, although on the whole of no literary or artistic value, is far superior to the "Ahaswerosh-Spiel," both in moral tone and in diction. The only frivolous character in this play is the clown named Pickelhäring (comp. Schudt, *l.c.* iii. 305), who is not a Jewish invention, but is taken from the German drama (Abrahams, *l.c.* p. 264). This comedy became very popular among the Jews, and was performed in Minsk as late as 1858 (Steinschneider, *l.c.* xlvii. 88); probably it is still acted in eastern Europe.

In this connection should be mentioned a Purim play which was performed at Frankfort, alternately with the "Mekirat Yosef," during the whole month of Adar, and whose subject was the story of David and Goliath. This comedy is probably

**The David and Goliath Play.** identical with the one quoted by Steinschneider (*l.c.* xlvii. 87) under the title "Aktion von König David und Goliath" (u.d., n.p.). If this is so, its

first publication should be placed between 1714 and 1719, as it had not yet been printed when Schudt, who published his "Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten" in 1714, reported its performance (ii. 314). Another play which calls for special mention is one in Judæo-German, which was performed in 1720 at Prague, where it was published anonymously (in the same year) under the title "Akta Esther mit 'Ahaschwerosh" (later edition, Amsterdam, 1774). This comedy differs very favorably from the plays described above, in both its dramatic composition and ethical tendency (comp. Berliner, *l.c.*). On the title-page of the play it is asserted that "it was acted at Prague in a regular theater, with trumpets and other musical instruments" (comp. Roest, "Cat. Rosenthal. Bibl." i. 67 [Hebr. part, ii., No. 171]). The actors were all pupils of R. David ORPEN-