

I.

THE HANUCA LAMP—A MULTIPLE CRUISIE, EIGHT LIGHTS—USED
BY THE JEWS AT THE FEAST OF THE DEDICATION. BY SIR
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About a year ago an old brass lamp was sent to me of a pattern which I had never before seen. It is really a cruise with eight lights in a row, and a single under vessel to catch the droppings of oil from all the eight. In other words, eight upper vessels of the ordinary cruise are joined together in a row, and the under vessel for this whole row takes the form of an elongated right-angled shallow trough. The row of cruises and the trough are attached to a sconce, to be hung against a wall, but the lamp can stand on a table or shelf.

The row of eight vessels for the oil and wicks is usually a single casting in brass, but in some specimens it is made out of a thin sheet of brass, and there may be a hinged lid covering all the eight oil cups or vessels.

This remark shows that, though a year ago I had only seen one specimen of this lamp, I must at this date have seen several, and such is the case. Other three specimens have come into my own possession, and three more have been sent to me for examination.

I soon heard that they were-frequently to be seen in old curiosity shops on the Continent, where they were sold as lamps used by the Jews

at the "Feast of the Dedication." And Rabbi Fürst tells me that, though they are sold in these shops as old, they are still in actual and extensive use, especially in Germany and Russia. He does not think that they are anywhere in use in Scotland, nor indeed in Great Britain, unless, perhaps, to a small extent in London.

The lamp (fig. 1) is known as the Hanuca lamp. The exact meaning

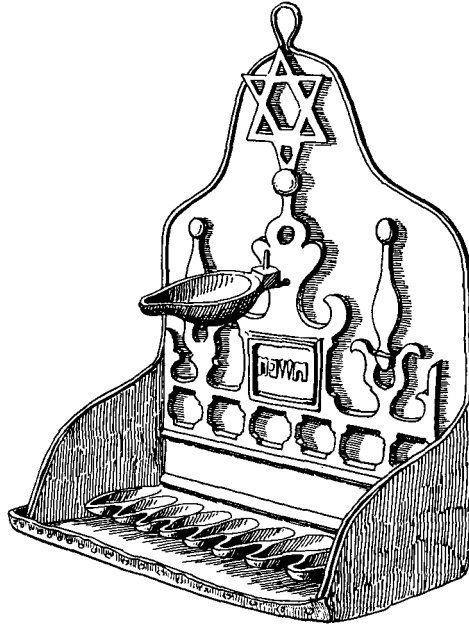


Fig. 1. Hanuca lamp of brass. (4.)

of the word Hanuca is *Dedication*, but the whole Feast of Hanuca is regarded as significant of *light or effulgence*. On many of the lamps the name is inscribed in Hebrew letters, and on others these words are inscribed:—"For the Commandment is a Lamp and the Law is Light," from Proverbs vi. 23.

The Hanuca lamp is specially used at the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple, and it is in every house, as well as in the synagogue. On

the first day of the Feast a single lamp is lighted ; on the second, two ; on the third, three, and so on till on the eighth day of the Feast all the eight lamps are lighted.

On two of the lamps which I show, it will be seen that there is a ninth lamp—a separate and movable single lamp, suspended on a pin projecting from the sconce. This is called *The Shames*, which means assistant or servant. It is familiarly known among English-speaking Jews as *The Beadle*. From it the other lamps are lighted. When it has done its part it may at once be extinguished, but one, or all, of the eight lamps, after being once lighted, must be kept burning for half an hour.

Those of the lamps which I show without *The Beadle* will be found on examination to be provided with a pin on which it was hung, so that this ninth lamp existed in all the specimens when they were complete.

The specimens of the Hanuca lamps which I exhibit are not objects of high art. Their decoration is somewhat strong and effusive, and does not show much taste. It has no special character, and belongs to no period or country. There is no symbolism about it. Indeed, symbolism appears only to a small extent in the Jewish Ritual. The Heart and the Horn of Plenty on three of the lamps which I show have no hidden meaning. The Crown which appears on one of the specimens is believed to be there only as showing that the lamp was used in the service of the King of Kings. Again, the Interlaced Triangle forming what is known as *The Shield of David*, is a common decoration with the Jews, and has no special significance in connection with Hanuca lamps. The cheapness both of the material used in the construction of the particular specimens which I exhibit, and also of their ornamentation, indicate that they have belonged to poor rather than to rich Jews. But sometimes the Hanuca lamp was made of silver, and was handsomely and tastefully decorated. Several specimens of the kind were shown at the Anglo-Jewish Historical Exhibition in London in the year 1887, and some of these were believed to be as old as the 16th or 17th century, and one as old as the 12th or 13th century.

It is not necessary, as I have indicated in saying that the Hanuca Cruise lamp is possibly not found anywhere in use in Great Britain, that the eight-light lamp of the Feast of the Dedication should always have this form. Indeed, no particular form is prescribed. It may be a candlestick with pillar and branches, or it may be eight separate candlesticks, and these may be either costly or quite cheap. In point of fact, Rabbi Fürst tells me, they are often of quite rude and cheap construction.

The Feast of the Dedication of the Temple, as now observed by the Jews, is a festival instituted to commemorate the purging of the Temple and the rebuilding of the altar after Judas Maccabeus had driven out the Syrians in the year of the world 3622, that is, 2039 years ago, or B.C. 164. Its institution is recorded in 1 Mac. iv. 52-59. It commenced on the 25th of Kisleu, that is, early in December, the anniversary of the pollution of the Temple by Antiochus Epiphanes, B.C. 167. Like the great Mosaic Feasts, and like Solomon's Feast of the Dedication of the Temple which he built, it lasts eight days, but it never did require attendance at Jerusalem. It was, and is, an occasion of great festivity, and work is not forbidden during its continuance. Josephus says that the festival was called "Lights."

When the Jews entered the Temple, after expelling the Syrians, they found only one bottle or cruse of oil there, bearing the seal of the High Priest and which had not been polluted, but this was miraculously made sufficient, accordingly, to feed the lamps of the sanctuary for eight days. Hence, according to Maimonides, the custom of the Jews to light each house with one candle or light on the first day of the feast, with two on the second, three on the third, and so on. Some Jews, who can afford the expense, light candles in this manner and number for each person in the house. It is not certain, however, that the custom here referred to has existed ever since the institution of the festival. It may have commenced at a later date. Indeed, it has been suggested that it may have had its origin in the name given to the Feast by Josephus—namely, "Lights."

The dedication of the First Temple took place at the Feast of Tabernacles (1 Kings viii. 2, and 2 Chron. v. 3).