



By "THE SAGE."

"By the Ramparts of Jezreel" is the title of a new book by Arnold Davenport, published in Longman's Colonial Library, and forwarded for review by Messrs. Upton & Co. The author who goes to the Bible for his characters is an ambitious one, he is bound to make either an assured success of his work, or a deplorable failure, there is no middle course. The writer took up "By the Ramparts of Jezreel" with the wish that the author had looked elsewhere for his subject, but he laid it down thankful that he had not, for Mr. Davenport's work is undoubtedly a marked success. He has evidently studied his Bible well, and has dealt with the history from the glorious up-raising of the prophet Elijah, to the long-prophesied disreputable downfall of Jezebel at the Ramparts of Jezreel, in what cannot but be regarded as a masterly manner. His style is charming, and his depictions of the various characters are powerful and faithful conceptions, not the distorted imbeciles that glare out of the pages of writers who, equally ambitious but less able, go to the same exalted source for the subject matter of their romances. Elisha and Jehu are of course the joint heroes, Idalia is a delightful heroine, and Jezebel, the dread Lady of Enchantments, is painted in such vivid blood-red

colours that she acts the arch villain admirably, putting the others completely in the background. The scene wherein the beautiful Idalia, Jehu's newly betrothed, enters during the exercise of her mistress' marvellous powers of fascination on her lover, will serve as an example of the writer's style. "'Lovest thou power, Jehu, son of Nimshi?' she said with vibrant voice. 'I tell thee, if thou givest thy hand to save Israel and to further my will, there are no heights to which the captain of mercenaries may not climb. . . . I tell thee that it is the wings of love that shall raise thee and bid thee soar to all flights of glory and rapture. In truth, Jehu, I offer thee a kingdom. . . if thou wilt but lay thy sword at my feet; and yet more besides all this, for, behold, son of Nimshi, I offer thee myself.' The perfumed hair bent lower, and the scented cloud fell more thickly on him, as he lay there dazed and enchanted out of all power to resist by the misty sapphire eyes that gleamed amid it, and seemed to drag his soul out of him. Now his head was pillowed on her soft breast and her supple limbs were clinging to his as her lingering kisses burnt on his unresponsive lips, when suddenly she sprang up and faced round with a