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The Scroll of the Law.

To the Jews were committed the oracles of God. (Rom. iii., 2.). The religious literature of the Hebrews has survived, while that of the other nations has been consigned to oblivion. The secret of the wonderful preservation of the identity of the Hebrew race belongs to God alone. However, the secret of the preservation of their book is an open one. The greatest attention and reverence are paid to the five books of Moses—the Pentateuch, commonly called by the Jews 'The Scroll of the Law.' Great care and precaution are exercised in its execution. The scribe (sofer in Hebrew) must be a strict and pious Jew, his moral integrity must be above suspicion, his religious reputation must be unspotted, and he must also be an expert penman. The Law must be written on parchment to secure durability. The character of the scribe is an assurance that the work will be conscientiously and most carefully carried out.

The writing of the scroll is regulated by oral law. This renders the task extremely difficult. First, the scroll must be written on a symmetrical plan. Each column must begin with the same letter, vav. All the scrolls in the world are constructed alike, and the accompanying is a correct representation. Secondly, the scribe before writing the word 'Jehovah,' or 'Elohim,' must always immerse himself in cold water. Consider for a moment what this must mean in the depth of a Russian winter. He must also constantly discriminate between the use of Elohim, as Jehovah, and, as it often means, an idol or a distinguished personage. Pens made from the quill of a goose must always be used in writing the scroll, since no iron was used in constructing the altar. The word Jehovah must always be written with a new pen, which must be burned. Some of these observances

A Crown of Rejoicing.

J— was one of my Y. W. C. A. members, the only one of them I had taught in earlier years. She had attended my village class when she was a child and I was a young girl. I felt specially interested in her on that account, and took the earliest opportunity of paying her a visit in her own home. I was anxious to know her spiritual history during the twenty years which had elapsed since the village class was broken up.

How well I remember the narrow, muddy, stony lane, with the bushes and briars nearly meeting across it up which I used to ride in former days from the main road to her house at the edge of the bog. I had to drive up it now in an 'inside' pony trap, and I and the young lady I had taken for a 'balance' were as often in each other's arms as sitting properly upon our seats, as we jolted and bumped over the ruts; and the sprays of briars and wild roses swayed about in the wind and slapped us soundly in the face as we passed! At last we arrived without any dislocations at the farm, and received a hearty welcome from J—

I left my 'balance' outside to mind the pony,

seem to us to be puerile, but they serve to account in a great measure for the jealous care with which the sacred writings have been



(ACTUAL SIZE)
Scroll of the Law in Original—The Pentateuch, preserved. A great many of them were destroyed during the late Kishineff massacre.—The 'Christian Work and Evangelist.'

and soon J— and I were alone in the parlor, deep in talk about old times and new. Presently our conversation became more personal, and I asked her a very straight question about her soul.

'Yes,' she said, 'I am converted, thank God. You see you used to talk to us, and I knew about religion and all that; but I wasn't really converted until I was a big girl, after I grew delicate.'

Then she told me all about it. She was ill for a long time after she grew up, and scarcely expected to recover. She was confined to bed and was very weak. Sometimes she wondered where she would go to if she died. Nobody spoke to her about her soul. The neighbors and her relatives thought a great deal about her sick body, and were very kind, but none of them seemed to care about her spiritual welfare.

One day her mother came home from church, pausing to inquire for her and tell her the news, laid down her 'Church Service' on a table near the bed, and forgot it was there. When she had gone away J— reached out for the Prayer Book, and, opening it at hazard, began to read. She told me what portion of

Scripture, appointed her a lesson, she happened upon, but I very stupidly have forgotten which it was. One verse arrested her attention; it spoke to her heart, and yet she could not understand it.

When her mother came back she asked her what it meant. But her mother could not explain it, and told her she must wait until some time when the clergyman came, and then she could ask him about it, and find out the meaning. But J— felt that she never could summon up courage to speak to him. He had a cold, shy manner, and people thought him unapproachable. She could not forget the verse, and was constantly puzzling over it. Then it occurred to her to pray that someone might explain it to her, and she kept on thinking and praying.

After a little while she became somewhat stronger, and her mother took her to the seaside. The next Sunday she announced her intention of going to church. Her mother remonstrated; she was too weak. But J— had become so anxious she was determined not to lose any chance of hearing what she wanted to know, and going to church there involved no long drive, only a short walk. So to morning service she went, and earnestly she prayed that something might be said in the sermon to help her.

When evening came she said she must go to the evening service. Her mother was really vexed; but nothing would stop her. The same clergyman preached. When he stood up to preach he spoke words to this effect:

I have never been in this town or in this church before, and I expect never to be here again. Oh, that God would grant my prayer that even one soul might be blessed through my preaching to-day! I had prepared my sermon for this evening's service, but since I entered the church it has been strongly impressed upon my mind that I ought to preach again upon the same text as I took this morning, and I feel that this is the leading of the Holy Spirit, and that God intends someone in this church to-night to be blessed through this text. He then gave out the text for the second time, and preached an entirely new sermon upon it. The word was brought home to J—'s heart with power, and she entered into the rest of faith, and received the gift of eternal life.

After service she told her mother she must go to the vestry and tell the minister that her's was the one soul blessed through his preaching, and that she was converted. But her mother thought she was losing her senses, and, utterly refusing to allow her to do anything so singular and forward, hauled her off to their lodging, and put her to bed.

'And he never knew!' J— wailed to me, the old grievance opening anew; 'he never knew, and maybe he thought God didn't find out his name or anything about him. You see he was a stranger in those parts.'

Of course she could have discovered his name and address if she had known how to go about it, but country girls aren't smart about such things. They are used to knowing everything about everybody, and their detective faculties are undeveloped.