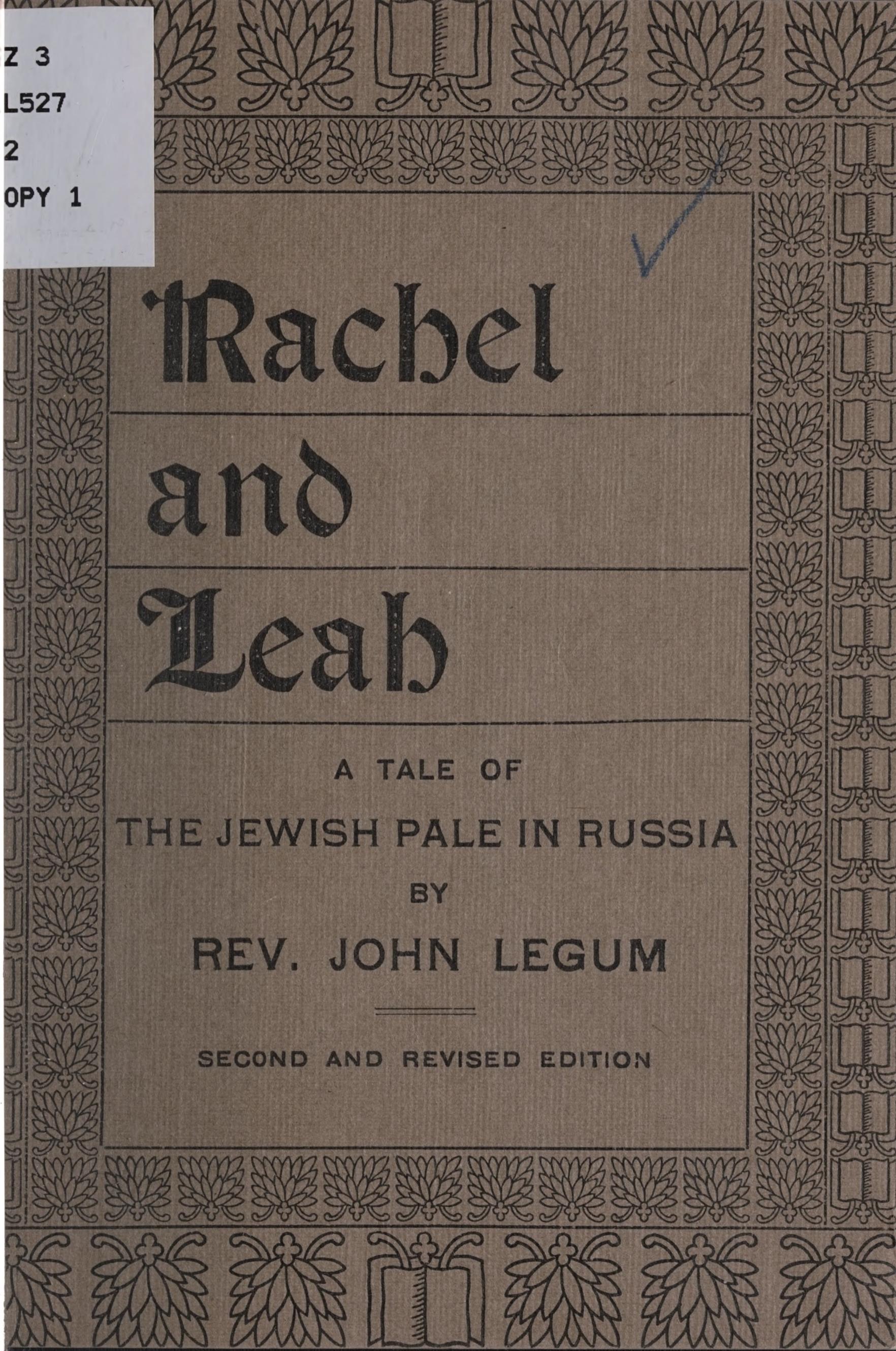


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**Rachel
and
Leah**

A TALE OF
THE JEWISH PALE IN RUSSIA
BY
REV. JOHN LEGUM

SECOND AND REVISED EDITION

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Superintendent of the Lutheran Jewish Mission
Pittsburgh, Pa.

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RACHEL AND LEAH.

CHAPTER I

An Anxious Mother

The Jewish inhabitants of the Russian village, T——, were very pious, great lovers of sacred literature, and generous. Though the community numbered no more than five hundred families, it supported one chief and two assistant rabbis, a chanter, two experts in slaying animals, and preparing after the precepts of the elders the meat to be eaten by the community, and a scribe, who wrote the parchment scrolls containing Moses and the Prophets, and made phylacteries.

This small community had also two colleges for the study of rabbinism with about two hundred students who, mostly coming from poor families, were supported by the children of Abraham residing at T. The appreciation of sacred studies was so great among them that even the poorest used to reckon himself happy if he had the opportunity to board a student free of charge, even if only one day in the week.

Here lived Rabbi Sheah Yirmiah's (Master Joshua, son of Jeremiah), and was a prominent member of the

community. He had two daughters; the name of the eldest was Rachel, who was so beautiful that even the Jacobs of today would have been willing to serve for her sake fourteen years, if there would not have been a superfluity of such kind of Rachels nowadays. The name of the younger daughter was Leah, who, like Leah of old, was not so beautiful as her sister. She was rather homely looking, and halted considerably, one of her feet being lame. Sheah Yirmiath's business, or rather main business—for he had his hand in everything that was going on in T., if it brought some profit—was the selling of liquors. He had a large store-house for wholesale and a saloon for retail.

He was regarded as a very respectable man because of his wealth and piety.

Joshua was not a selfish man, on the contrary, he was benevolent to the poor and the greatest supporter of the synagogue.

Hayah Sheah Yirmiah's (Eva, wife of Joshua, son of Jeremiah) was a very pious woman, worthy of her husband; and both of them endeavored to bring up their children, the already named two daughters and an only son, the youngest child, in the path of righteousness.

Her most cherished wish was to see some day her daughters, then only twelve and ten years, married to pious and learned husbands, and her only son, then only seven, to a beautiful wife, the daughter of a righteous, if possible of a famous rabbi. As Rachel was the oldest, it would be expected that the mother should be especially anxious about her,—and indeed she was.

Together with the growth of Rachel increased the anxiety of the mother to see her married. The pious Eva used to give alms and go to the weddings of the poor, bear, or help bear the wedding expenses, with the hope, the Lord would have mercy upon her, and her daughter

Rachel, and soon send a good and learned young man for a bridegroom.

When Rachel was about to reach her fifteenth year the anxious mother would use every chance to urge Joshua that he should seek among the students of T. a husband for their daughter.

Of course Joshua himself being a son of Israel had been taught that the greatest blessing is, "to see children and children's children grow up unto the knowledge of the law, unto marriage, and unto good deeds," and believed in it; but in spite of all the pains he took to apply it to himself, he failed.

He could not find among the students of T. a really suitable person for Rachel. The one, as he thought, was not learned enough; another not pious enough. Sometimes he used to think he had found one, and would joyfully tell it to his wife, but would discover afterwards that there was something wrong about the young man's family; for instance, that his father was ignorant of the holy doctrines, or that his uncle was a blacksmith.

"I do not want to be related to an ignorant man," Joshua used to say, "for such a man does not know how to live, and is apt to transgress unconsciously some of the doctrines, for which sin he will have to suffer in Ge-Hinnom (hell), and I do not want to have relatives in that infamous place."

As concerning blacksmithing, or similar coarse trades, Joshua used to argue, that kind of work ought to be done by Gentiles, who have no laws to study nor to keep; a good Jew could not have the time nor the strength to do heavy work.

Thus it happened that Rachel passed her fourteenth, yes fifteenth year, and no bridegroom was found for her. But when she was about to reach her sixteenth birthday her mother could no longer bear the thought that her

daughter was not even engaged yet. She, therefore wrote a letter to her father, telling him he should come and have a talk with her husband concerning Rachel's future.

The letter was written with such positiveness that the old man responded at once and came.

When he was alone with Joshua he tactfully began: "Our Rachel is quite a bagrus (a girl of mature age), is she not?—Joshua, what is the reason that you have not given her in marriage yet?"

"What is the haste?" replied J.; "she is only sixteen years old. If I had a son of eighteen, I would have to be careful because of the first command of the Bible, 'Be fruitful, and multiply and replenish the earth,' which refers, as do most of the laws, to men. I assure you, father-in-law, Rachel will not oversit children (pass the age of child bearing without being married)."

"Joshua," exclaimed angrily the provoked man, "you must not talk so laxly about this matter! I know very well there are no Jewish nunneries in the world; but, a man of your piety and worldly means ought to do what is right toward his own child, especially toward such a dear child as our Rachel;—may she live!" And not letting J. come to word he continued: "I say it is cruel of a parent who has a mature daughter, if he does not do all in his might to take a husband for her;—no, no, Joshua,—a Jew must not be so cruel."

He had scarcely finished, when Eva appeared at the door of the room bitterly weeping, and advancing to the place where Joshua and her father were sitting said:

"I cannot eat nor drink because of my continual thinking of our hurban (destruction of Jerusalem and the temple) in our house."

"Our wise men are right in saying: 'A mature daughter, unmarried, is just as lamentable as the destroyed temple.'"

Having been reminded of the destruction of Jerusalem Joshua's heart melted, and he said with trembling voice:
"All right, all right;—if the Lord be willing, I shall see Rabbi Shmarl (pet name for Shamariah) today."

CHAPTER II

The Match Maker—Scene I

Who was Rabbi Shmarl?—A match maker among the middle and learned classes of the Jewish communities of T. and vicinity.

Rabbi Shmarl had a great advantage over his fellow match makers, by his skillfulness as a performer of the rite bidden by God to Abraham.

The performance of this holy rite is connected with some danger on the part of the eight days old infant, an expert in it is therefore a sought for personage by the parents whom the Lord has favored by giving them a son.

Thus Rabbi Shmarl used to be called far and near to covenant celebrations. But while turning the young one, who before he is brought into the covenant of Abraham, is regarded as a Gentile, into a Jew, he never forgot to make some provision for completing him in the future as a man, a husband of a wife.

He used to keep a book account of the children upon whom he ever performed that rite, registering their names and the dates of their respective covenant celebrations. He also used to note down some of the circumstances of the parents; for instance, whether they were poor or rich,—whether the father was a learned man or the mother a pious woman. Sometimes he would take notes of the other children of the family. He used to write down, for instance, the names of the unmarried sons and daughters and their respective ages.

In this cunning way Rabbi Shmarl's business as a match maker was greatly facilitated. He could tell by turning to his books who of the young people were marriageable and who of them were too young to marry.

If he had made a match and the couple were happy he regarded himself as a father to them, and they thought of him the same; he then would be at their home the most welcome friend, and would be honored by them with the office of bringing their new born sons into the covenant of Abraham. But if the match were an unlucky one, he then used to get all the curses mentioned by Moses for the wicked ones.

Happily cases of the latter kind did not happen with Rabbi Shmarl very often. He was altogether too careful in his dealing with the respective parties, regarding his occupation as one worthy of honesty and reliability.

On the afternoon of that same day when Joshua had been so severely admonished by his wife and father-in-law that he promised to do something in regard to Rachel's matrimony, Joshua met Rabbi Shmarl in the synagogue at vesper prayers. Rabbi Yirmiah did not hesitate to talk with the match maker on that subject in the synagogue, thinking matrimony a holy institution, and one worthy to be spoken about at any holy place. Neither did Rabbi Shmarl hesitate to enter into a conversation touching a subject which belonged to his business; for he had read just a few minutes before in the Thalmnd that the Almighty Creator has been engaged since he finished the creation of the world in "pairing pairs" (matching).

After considerable talking on both sides Rabbi Shmarl said:

"Rabbi Joshua, I cannot tell you anything about it just now; I will have to examine the notes in my register, it may take until tomorrow or longer."

But in truth he was not as cool in the matter as he appeared to be. He had no match for months, and really good matches for two,—three years, so that he was poverty stricken. He hurried off his prayers and went home; and

giving no attention to the urgings of his wife to have supper first he sat down at his books.

After he had studied a while some of his notes in the male volume, at once his face lightened and he uttered an exclamation of joy;—he had found the right young man for Joshua's girl; and after a few minutes at the supper-table he hurried away to the rich liquor dealer.

Rachel's mother, Eva, was very glad to see Rabbi Shmarl, the wonder man, without whom, as she thought the world could not exist.

"Rabbi Joshua," said Rabbi Shmarl, joyously, "I have found a young man for your daughter, a real toy; he is now about seventeen years old, has a sharp head on him and is a diligent student, and in addition to it, is the son of a very pious melammed (teacher of Judaism)."

"Rabbi Shmarl," said Rabbi Yirmiah, "take off your fur coat and have a glass of tea."

"Of course," replied the learned match maker, "you know very well what our wise men say:

"'Whatever your host tells you to do,—do ye.' Do you know the rhyme to it?"

Rabbi Shmarl, seeing Joshua perplexed for an answer he himself repeated the doctrine of the wise men of Israel together with the rhyme added by witty Jews:

"Whatever your hosts tells to do,—do ye, except,—go ye (out of the house)."

Both laughed heartily, and Rabbi Shmarl began to do obedience to his host.

While taking off his fur coat he remarked:

"Do you see, Rabbi Yirmiah, this coat? It is quite old,—shabby, but it is very dear to me. It saw better times, and reminds me of the time when I myself was a bridegroom. My father-in-law gave it to me as a present when I was visiting him before I was married to his daughter. I tell you Rabbi Joshua, it pays to have a good

son-in-law. My father-in-law, his memory be blessed, made no mistake in taking me for his daughter. Though I was a poor boy and am a still poorer man, I profit him now, after he is gone to the eternal world, more than his own two sons do. What are they and what do they profit him? The one is a tailor and the other a shoemaker. They are scarcely able to read a page of the holy Thalmud. My dead father-in-law can be thankful to the Lord that his sons, on whose education he spent a treasury of money, are able to make prayers in public on the annual memorial day of his death. But I am sure he rejoices in the grave over me. I act on that day as a "son of the doctrine." I fast the whole day, chant three times the prescribed prayers before the ark of the covenant, and study for his soul's sake the whole day long the holy Thalmud.

"Now, do you not think, Rabbi Joshua, that it is a great advantage to have a good and learned son-in-law?"

"Of course, it is an advantage, of course," replied J., and I am determined to take for my Rachel the best husband I can get."

Rabbi Schmarl then carefully lifted his cap a little and shook it, and out of it fell a thin under-cap upon his head; and after he assured himself by touching his head with the unoccupied hand that it was covered, he took off the upper-cap and gave it to Joshua.

The fur coat looked shabby enough, but the under cap looked worse yet. You could not tell because of the grease that besmeared it of what kind of cloth it was made.

He then took the corner locks from behind the ears, and correcting the long, stiff hair, said:

"Rabbi Joshua, do you see my cap? It is not new, neither very clean, and stil I am wearing it; all wonder why; even my wife scolds me for doing it; but they all do not know anything about it. I believe I shall entrust

you with the secret. You are a good friend of mine,—sure you are. This cap is a relic of Rabbi Mordecai, the giant in the knowledge of our holy doctrine. I was his pupil, you must understand. His widow fortunately gave it to me shortly after he died. You see, you do not deal with a common man, if you deal with me. You can depend on all I say concerning our important subject of tonight.”

“Of course, Rabbi Shmarl,” said Rabbi Joshua, “I know I can trust you. I have known you for a long time and knew your father-in-law. I know you had the best rabbis. I wish my son might become as learned a man as you; I would wish him only to have a little more mazel (luck) than you have.”

After the three most interested in the match, namely Joshua, Rabbi Shmarl, and Eva, sat down, the matchmaker continued to inspire them with confidence in himself and his proposal by talking of holy subjects and holy men, whom he personally knew. He finished the preliminaries by showing that all really great rabbis came from poor families, wherefore, he concluded, Rabbi Joshua might look rather for a poor but learned young man than for a rich one as a husband for his daughter.

Meanwhile the samovar (self-boiler, tea machine) was ready and placed upon the table.

Rabbi Shmarl drank tea and talked; he drank a good many glasses of tea, and ate a good many pieces of sugar with it, even too many for the tea he drank, but in fact he was unconscious of his doings, so absorbed was he in the subject under discussion.

Though he could not tell very much about the young man himself, since he had not seen him from the eighth day of his birth, still he could tell about the young man's family.

“He had a grandfather,” extolled Rabbi Shmarl, “who was a sharp-headed rabbi, and his great-grand-father was not only a great rabbi, but knew even the hidden doctrines (mystery), so that he could perform miracles; and his grand aunt Esther used to occupy her time by spinning thread for the fringe garments bidden by Moses, visiting the sick, and collecting money for the support of the poor students of the sacred literature.”

Joshua also drank tea, but slowly: he was eagerly listening to what Rabbi Shmarl had to say about the people out of whose loins Rachel’s Messiah should come.

Eva, Rachel’s mother, who was accustomed to eat last and drink after everybody had drunk and the tea had become cold,—who actually lived for her husband and children, did not drink.

She seemed to have been satisfied with the glorious expectation that was awaiting her daughter, soon to be united in marriage with such a dear young man and an offspring of such dear people.

She had been all this time so attentive to what Rabbi Shmarl was telling that after he finished she looked as if she were awakened out of a deep trance. At last she broke her silence by excusing herself for asking a foolish question.

“I thought, Rabbi Shmarl,” said Eva, “you would tell us without my asking you something I wanted to know, but you did not; I dare, therefore, ask you whether the young man you propose is good looking.

Joshua was ashamed like a boy who was spanked of his wife’s inquiry; and Rabbi Shmarl seemed first to be perplexed for an answer, as he did not know himself how the young man looked, but finally ventured to say: “Yes, yes, Eva; he looks as a ben thorah (son of the doctrine).”

Joshua then exploded: “Have you ever heard such a foolish question! What is the difference, good looking

or not, if he only is a good student, pious, and a righteous man's son. You women have long hair, but short minds.

"Not so, Joshua, my life," replied Eva: "why do the men want beautiful wives? why should it be different with the women?"

"I will tell you," answered Joshua; "the wives must be beautiful, in order that the husbands might be prevented from thinking about other women; but why should women care about a man, whether he is beautiful or not—a man whose only business ought to be to care and work for heaven? Reading the Bible you notice that it points out our arch mothers as Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel for their beauty, but it does not tell whether our arch fathers were beautiful."

"This is true," said Eva, "and we all know the truth of the proverb, 'a boy needs be only a little better looking than a devil;' still I cannot see anything wrong in my asking whether the young man were good looking; if we can gain both, this world and heaven, why not endeavor to have them?"

"All right!" exclaimed Joshua, the son of Jeremiah,—"if you wish to have a beautiful son-in-law, I will say nothing against it; but the first thing I care for is knowledge. Rabbi Shmarl, the first question I, as a Jew, ask is this, has the young man a thorough knowledge of our holy thorah (doctrine), so that he would be able to become some day a blessing and honor to himself and us?"

And turning to Eva he continued: "Eva, my wife, would tell you one thing, you may think or wish whatever you like, but do not trouble the girl with such nonsense."

While the three were talking the girl whose fate they were making was in an adjoining room. When she heard a stranger's voice she quietly, in order not to be noticed opened just a little the door and peeped into the room; and lo, who was there! Rabbi Shmarl, the match maker.

Rachel understood well enough what business he came for, and, young and innocent as she was, nearly lost control over her feelings. Joy and fear rapidly changed in her heart until finally fear went and joy remained, that joy which every Jewish girl feels when she observes indications that she is soon to be a kallah (a crowned-one, bride).

But now Rachel became desirous to know whom Rabbi Shmarl was proposing as her future bridegroom. She could not guess; for her acquaintance with the other sex was very limited. She knew well enough she would have to marry a student, but who will it be, what is his name, how does he look?

Rachel then tried to gain some intelligence of the conversation between Rabbi Shmarl and her parents, but did not succeed. She caught disconnected words, as beautiful, long hair, but could not make out who the proposed young man was.

The small assembly around the tea table was so absorbed in the matrimonial subject that none of them noticed the passing of the time. But when the tea machine got cold and refused its service, and the smell of the tallow indicated there were some large candles consumed, and the clock struck a goodly number—none knew how many, all suddenly turned their eyes to the old but true time keeper, and lo, it was midnight!

“Is it possible,” exclaimed Joshua, “that it is so late!”

“Yes, yes,” said Rabbi Shmarl, “you know what our wise men say: ‘Pairing is just as difficult a task as the division of the Red Sea (before the children of Israel).’”

Rabbi Shmarl rose to go, but unwillingly; he felt tired and chilly, and altogether was not ready to leave the warm room and walk out into the wintery cold.

The sympathetic Joshua knew how Rabbi Shmarl felt, and said: “Sit down for a few minutes longer and have

some more warm tea before you undertake to walk through the deep snow."

"Of course," replied Rabbi Shmarl, "I will have to obey; for our wise men say: 'whatever our host tells you to do,—do ye, except,—go ye;'" and sat down.

The samovar was heated again and put upon the table, new candles were lighted, and everybody drank tea. Even Eva took time, and permitted herself the comfort of refreshing herself with a glass.

While drinking their conversation became more animated than before, and both, father and mother delighted in talking over again the possibilities the proposed match might afford them.

Until now Rabbi Shmarl had not told where the young man was living, and who his parents were; for he was afraid Joshua might be tempted to send there one of his relatives, who used to do some matching, in order that he should have a share in the pay; but now he gave way to his feelings. Seeing the kindness of Rabbi Joshua his heart opened and he told all he knew about the people referred to in the previous conversation.

Joshua was surprised to hear that the young man was only fifteen miles away, and that his father was the righteous Rabbi Isaac, whom, knowing he was poor, he was accustomed to send presents before the arrival of long holidays.

When the clock struck two Rabbi Shmarl suddenly rose, saying to Joshua and his wife that he was now to leave. He set aright his relic cap, in order to be able to put over it the upper cap, and after he had put on his large fur coat said, "Good night."

Rabbi Shmarl departed accompanied by Joshua to the front door. Here the latter urged the former soon to look after the matter, if possible next day. But the match

maker complained that he had not done any business for a long time, and thus was not able to pay expenses.

Rabbi Joshua then bade him come back to the rooms, went to his desk, pulled out one of the drawers, took out one ten rouble bill, and giving it to Rabbi Shmarl, said:

“I hope you will go tomorrow to S. and, if possible, finish the negotiation;—do not delay.”

Rabbi Shmarl promised to do so, and went home feeling richer than when he left it.

When he reached his rooms he found his children asleep, but his wife lay in bed awake praying and wishing, as she told him afterwards, that the Lord would provide for their children; for there was no bread in the house, not to speak of other provisions.

We can imagine how happy she must have been when her husband told her that he had ten roubles in his pocket, and hope in his heart for more.

All felt happy that night;—but who was the happiest?—Eva, Rachel’s anxious mother.

CHAPTER III

The Match Maker—Scene II

Next day early in the morning Rabbi Shmarl made arrangements to go to S—.

While he was talking to the carriage man on the market place many passers-by, especially the curious Jewesses, stopped, desirous to overhear where the match maker was going.

The people at S. seemed to take a yet greater interest in the match maker's doings. In nearly every home he passed, if it had grown up sons or daughters, were remarks made by parents or children.

A girl with a merry disposition would turn from the window, where she was watching Rabbi Shmarl, and half in jest and half in earnest sing:

“I weep sitting on a stone,
All girls marry,
But I stay alone.”

Then the mother would comfort her daughter:

“I do not worry at all, my daughter; there are no Jewish nunneries.”

In another house the mother would remark first:

“I cannot understand why Rabbi Shmarl never comes to our house.”

“I do not worry, mamma dear,” the daughter would say. “Father read to me the other day out of the Thalmud that thirty days before a child is created it is announced in heaven who will be the future man's or woman's mate; thus, I think, nobody can take away from me whom the Lord has destined for me.”

The grain dealer, David Yossel's, entered his house and addressing his wife and son said:

“It seems that nothing is to come out of our expectations; Rabbi Shmarl passed by me just now and did not mention our matter at all.”

“Maybe,” replied the mother jealously, “our son is not as good a scholar as that party might wish. But what do they expect for a dowry of only five hundred roubles? Do they expect to get for such a small sum a Messiah?”

Son:

“There is time enough for me to marry; I would like to sit single for a few years more, in order to study the holy law unhindered, say—for two or three years.”

Father:

“You could study as well after marriage as other people’s sons do.”

Son:

“You know well enough what one of our wise men said:

“‘Is it possible for a man to study while carrying on his head a millstone?’”

Father:

“Son, we are only flesh and blood. One of our more practical wise men has well said:

“How is it possible for a man to study the holy doctrines while he is sitting in sin?”

Son:

“Father, it does not pay us to repeat that controversy between the wise men; let us rather turn to its decision:

“‘If a man is able to say: I love the study of the holy doctrine just as Ben-Azay did, he may remain single.’”

Father:

“Yes,—yes,—but who can claim it?”

Thus Rabbi Shmarl, through his appearance, turned the attention of the inhabitants of S. to the subject of marriage. But all hopes and talks ceased when the match maker stopped at Rabbi Isaac, the teacher’s house. Every-

thing was then clear to everybody. For all knew that Rabbi Isaac had a marriageable son, who was famous for his learning; and it was well understood that he was not destined for any girl of the poor village of S.—

The house Rabbi Shmarl entered consisted of two apartments, of one large room, which served as school room, parlor, and bed chamber; and of a fire place shed which served as kitchen and entrance hall.

In the lodging apartment, near one of the two windows it had, stood a large oblong table surrounded by rough wooden benches, on which sat boys of nearly all ages from five to thirteen, fourteen years.

At one end of the table the teacher used to sit and teach his pupils the whole day long and a part of the night.

In one corner of the room stood a bed for the teacher's wife; for the teacher himself and his three children temporary bedsteads were constructed every night of chairs, benches and boards.

At the time when Rabbi Shmarl entered the inner room the pupils were busy with their studies.

The one, a boy nine years old, tried to commit to memory the different benedictions a Jew has to speak before partaking of the different kinds of food.

Another pupil of about the same age was reading the laws on "Amen." "Amen must be responded," read he aloud, "just when the chanter finished his prayer, neither before nor after; and it must be said with a full mouth and a loud voice."

While reading these laws the boy became mischievous and cried indeed "with a full mouth and a loud voice: "Amen!—Amen!—Amen!"

One of the pupils, a boy of eight years, read the song of Moses at the Red Sea in a very high soprano, and

translated the original Hebrew into the Jewish in the same tone.

The oldest boy in school was leaning or rather lying over a large tome of the Thalmud; he was meditating on some difficult problem, and gave utterance to his thoughts by chanting.

The smallest boy, about five years old, could not study without the help of the teacher, and thus had nothing particular to do. He stood by the teacher's wife, who was working hard at her dough for a whole week's bread, and told her of his mamma and the baby. He added to all the noise already made by the other pupils by imitating the baby in her crying spells, and the mother in her soothing the crying infant.

There was such a noise in the school that nobody heard Rabbi Shmarl enter. The mischievous boy, who took such a great delight in crying "Amen," had no need of looking in the book while repeating it—he could cry it without a book;—and thus while "his mouth was full and his voice loud" with the "Amen" his bright eyes were traveling from one corner of the room to the other. He was the first who saw Rabbi Shmarl coming in. When he saw a stranger he stopped crying, which caused the others to look up,—and the whole mill stopped suddenly.

The rabbi, who was just then deeply interested in instructing the sharpest boy at his school in Thalmud, was aroused by the sudden change from noise to quietness, and turned toward the entrance, and the rabbi's wife, who was bending over her deep trough with her back toward the door, was also caused to turn.

She first bade Rabbi Shmarl welcome, saying to him in Hebrew:

"Blessed is he that cometh (in the name of the Lord)."

Then the teacher rose, and clasping his hand in the guest's said:

"Peace be with you, Rabbi Shmarl!—I did not hear you enter; the boys make so much noise; may they be well and strong!"

"Others," complained Hannah, Rabbi Isaac's wife, "like to hear the boys chant the holy law; but if they had to hear it the whole God-given day long, they would not like it as well;—I have a continual headache of it."

"I must tell you the truth," said Rabbi Shmarl, "I like to hear them myself; you know what King David said:

"'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength.'—Rabbi Isaac, I have come to you upon some business, and would like your wife to hear it also."

The teacher understood the hint and sent his pupil away for a part of the day.

While they were making ready to go the teacher's wife finished her work at the dough, and sat down to listen to Rabbi Shmarl.

Rabbi Shmarl then took off his fur coat and hanged it upon a nail, took off his upper cap and remained standing with his thin relic cap, and after he had brought to order his stiff forelocks sat down.

He felt at that time as if he were Abraham's servant whom his master sent to seek a wife for Isaac. He felt himself so much in that position that he even began his conversation after the manner of Eliezer talking to Rebekah's parents.

Rabbi Shmarl told them how the Lord was blessing Joshua Yirmiah's, and that he decided to take a "good son-in-law, and how they, Rabbi Shmarl and Joshua, met in the synagogue and talked about Rachel's future, and how the Lord showed him, Rabbi Shmarl, clearly that Phinehas, Rabbi Isaac's son, whom he had brought into the covenant of Abraham about seventeen years ago

was the man destined for Rachel, Sheah Yirmiah's daughter.

Both parents, Rabbi Isaac and Hannah, were proud of their son, and always had hoped he might become the son-in-law of a wealthy man, but they never had thought of such a fortune. Joshua was rich, yes, very rich, and Rabbi Isaac very poor. Father and mother of the young man felt like shouting praises to God for His goodness to them. They knew well, if they would be related to Joshua Yirmiah's they would not want.

"How much dowry will he give?" asked the father.

"Is she beautiful?" asked the mother.

"How many years does Joshua expect to keep the young couple in his house?" asked Rabbi Isaac.

"Has she costly apparel?—is she learned?—can she write?—can she read the Hebrew prayers?" asked Hannah.

"You know," replied the match maker, "Joshua is rich, and has only three children, of whom Rachel is the oldest; you can be sure your son will be his, if he marry her; and as long as your son will occupy himself with the study of the holy doctrine, he and his wife will have a home with her parents. As to Rachel's beauty, I cannot tell you anything of mine own observation, as I do not look at strange women of mature age for the purpose of knowing whether they were beautiful; but my wife tells me there is scarcely a girl in town as beautiful as she. Our arch-mother Rachel could not have been more beautiful."

Meanwhile the teacher's son returned home from the synagogue, where he had been nearly the whole forenoon studying the Thalmud.

After a slight breakfast he had gone to the synagogue and had engaged in the nerve straining study of the laws concerning "The bill of divorcement brought from beyond the sea."

Besides, as he was regarded to be a sharp headed Thalmudist the less learned students used to consult him in their studies; and it happened on that morning that he had to solve some complicated problems not belonging to the subject with which he was occupied.

Phinehas looked tired and abstracted when he entered the room, and only awoke when he became conscious of the unusual situation at home. He felt quite surprised not to hear the noise of the babes and the sucklings, and to find them all gone.

When he saw the stranger, who looked and acted as a "ben thorah" (son of the doctrine, learned man), he stretched forward his hand, and putting it into the stranger's said: "Peace be with you!"

"With you be peace!" answered Rabbi Shmarl.

"Do you know this Jew, son?" asked Rabbi Isaac smilingly.

"I do not," answered Phinehas hesitatingly after a glance at the stranger.

"This is Rabbi Shmarl, of whom I told you many times.—He is the good Jew who brought you into the covenant of our father Abraham."

Rabbi Shmarl then addressing the young man began

"My boherl (elect one, youth), I heard you were a diligent student;—what are you studying now?"

"I have been studying for the last two years 'The Order of Women,' and am just now in 'The Tract of Divorcement.'"

"Now, my son," continued Rabbi Shmarl, "as you seem to be a scholar, I would ask you something:

"You probably know that very pious Jews try to fulfill all Mosaic laws, even those of divorcement. I remember Rabbi Salmele (pet name for Solomon), his memory be blessed, gave his wife a divorce, and married her again, in order not to leave any sacred law unful-

filled. Now, supposing you wished to fulfill that law, and still you were unwilling to leave the wife of your youth,—what kind of a bill would you give her? An ordinary bill of divorcement would not be here in place, because, after receiving it from you, she might leave you altogether and marry somebody else. How then would you write the letter of divorcement, in order to secure her for yourself?”

“I would give her a ‘conditional bill,’” answered the young scholar, and illustrating what he said continued:

“I would write an ordinary bill, but would remark on it that it should receive its value as a divorce just at such or such a time on such or such a date; and I would invite witnesses to be with me at that time; and just after the bill had obtained its value as a divorce I would marry her again.”

“But what would you do,” objected the learned match maker, “if your wife said, after the bill had become due, she would not be married to you again?”

The elastic mind of the student ceased to act, as it seemed, for only one minute; then it burst forth like a rich water spring from an unknown depth. His eyes sparkled from the light of his bright intellect, and he began to move his hands through the air in all directions. For a while he was utterly unable to find words for expressing himself—so great was his joy over his discovery—; but after he had paused for a moment, and then stammered some unintelligible words, said:

“I would remark on the parchment, on which the bill was written, that it should receive its value just a few minutes before I marry her again.”

“You see, Rabbi Shmarl,” added Phinehas with a joy, as if he had invented perpetual motion, “in this way she could not marry any other man, because the bill can be

called a bill of divorcement only after she is remarried to me."

Rabbi Shmarl was pleased with the sharpness of the young man, and said:

"My young friend, I do not think you could call such a kind of writing a bill of divorcement; for your remark that it should become a divorcement before you marry her again seems to contain a contradiction. Look here, young man," he continued, "if the bill should receive its value only before you marry her again, in this case, you would have to marry her, in order that the bill should have the power to divorce;—but after you are married to her you cannot call it a bill of divorcement. Thus if you would think about it a little longer than you have done, you would soon find out that a conditional bill of divorcement as you have described it, can never receive its value as a legal instrument of divorcement. Still it does not matter. I wanted only to know, if diligent study would make you a great rabbi;—and I am satisfied." Patting the young man on cheek and chin Rabbi Shmarl added, "You are a good and worthy boher (elect one, youth), and deserve a beautiful bride."

The innocent Phinehas blushed, and not knowing what to say turned to his mother asking her to give him something to eat as he must hurry back to the synagog.

"My son," continued Rabbi Shmarl, to examine the student, "are you through in your studies with the laws of marriage?"

After Phinehas had told him that he had studied the laws when only eleven years old, Rabbi Shmarl continued

"Can you tell me how, or, by what means a man can lawfully tie a wife to himself?"

This was too simple a question for meriting the consideration of a true scholar, and Phinehas felt hurt.

"Rabbi Shmarl," said he, "it seems you please to je

at my cost;—even my little brother, eight years old, could answer this.”

“Answer him, answer him, my son,” intervened Rabbi Isaac. “You must know, my son, Rabbi Shmarl is our friend; I am sure he did not ask it without some purpose.”

For some minutes the pride of the young student resented, but when he became conscious that it was his father who bade him answer, he replied at once partly in the language of the Thalmud, and partly in the modern Jewish:

“A woman is consecrated to a man by three things: By money, or a thing worth money,—by a bill of agreement, which the bridegroom hands to the bride on the marriage day,—and by living together.”

“Well,” asked Rabbi Shmarl, “what could you do,—how could you, being poor, not having money, neither something worth money, consecrate a girl as your wife?”

Phinehas understood now at what the match maker was aiming. His face brightened and his eyes sparkled and he at once became witty.

“My father-in-law,” replied the poor, but very intelligent young man, “must be a rich man, and willing to give me some money before I marry.”

“All right!” exclaimed Rabbi Shmarl, “you shall soon have a rich father-in-law.”

“Phinehas, my life,” called his mother, “go and wash your hands; I will give you something to eat; you must feel weak.” Taking a half loaf of wheat bread she turned to Rabbi Shmarl with the remark:

“You see, Rabbi Shmarl, we all eat rye bread the whole week, except on the holy Sabbath, for which, of course, wheat bread must be provided; but I bake each week an extra loaf of wheat bread for our delicate son. His diligent study makes him so thin; he has no flesh upon him;—what you see here are only bones and skin.

I am very often compelled to think that he is more angry than man. Besides, I cannot imagine he could at all swallow the coarse rye bread, since he has such a narrow throat."

She then took a coarse but clean table cloth and spread it over one end of the school table, and setting the eatables upon it continued to talk to Rabbi Shmarl:

"You may believe me it is quite beyond our means to bake each week an extra loaf of wheat bread, but I hope the Lord will repay us for it. Mine uncle, who is a very learned man, once told me that the use of rye bread hurts one's memory, but that of wheat bread increases its strength. I thus think I do a God pleasing work by feeding my darling boy with bread of fine wheat flour; he will be the better able to remember our holy doctrines."

"And the rich father-in-law will pay for the wheat bread," remarked the clever match maker.

After Phinehas had washed his hands, he took a towel, and wiping them said with a full mouth and loud voice:

"Blessed art Thou, Jehovah our God, King of the universe, that Thou hast consecrated us with Thy commandments, and hast bidden us to wash the hands."

All in the room responded aloud, "Amen!" except Phinehas' mother, who said it in a low tone.

Hannah knew the law very well that it is forbidden for a woman, especially a married one, to let men hear her voice by the way of singing. Though Hannah had known this law since she could remember anything, she used to forget its observance very often.

While praying in the synagogue she would very often from out the woman apartment let the men know that her heart was so full that her mouth was running over, which occurrence would cause great disturbance in the

man apartment, where the pious, scared by hearing a woman's voice in the holy synagogue, would knock on their wooden stands with their prayer books, in order to admonish the light minded woman to keep silent.

Today Hannah was very careful about the laws of the elders.

The exemplary conduct of her son inspired her with holy zeal for all that the wise men in Israel teach.

Phinehas then thoughtfully went to the table, sat down, took the knife, thought for a minute, and placed it back upon the table. He sat there motionless; he was embarrassed not knowing what to do. First, he did not dare cut the bread with that knife for fear it might have been used for cutting meat, for which reason the bread cut with it could not be eaten with butter. Second, he could not ask the mother what kind of a knife it was, because the wise men forbid a Jew to talk after he had washed his hands and recited the prescribed ritual, but had not broken bread yet.

Finally, he broke a piece of the bread with his hands, and holding it up spoke "with a full mouth and a loud voice:"

"Blessed art Thou, Jehovah, our God, King of the universe, that Thou bringest forth bread from the ground."

All in the room responded: "Amen!"

After he had eaten slowly and thoughtfully the first piece of his wheat bread, he asked the mother, whether the knife on the table was the right one.

"Yes, my son," answered the pleased mother, and turning to Rabbi Shmarl said:

"You can see how much our son's mind is occupied with holy learning; he does not even know the knife he uses nearly every day. May I live to see children and children's children of him."

While Phinehas was eating the men were talking of the occurrences of the day; and the mother was looking at her son, partly to watch him that he might eat enough and partly because of the pleasure she always had to look at his face. Hannah thought her son's face was shining as bright as the sun, the cause of which being, as she used to explain it to herself, his great knowledge of the holy law, which is "a lamp to the feet and a light on the path."

After he finished eating he took the knife and hid it under the table cloth. For the wise men teach that the Jewish table represents the ancient altar; and since it was forbidden to use any iron tools at the building of an altar, the pious of today hide their knives and forks, if made of iron, before they give thanks.

Phinehas then prayed—this time quite lengthy,—and those in the room frequently responded "Amen."

After prayers he hurriedly rose, and on his way to the door said:

"Be well, Rabbi Shmarl!" "Be well, my son!" answered the match maker; and the student went back to the books he liked so well.

He had scarcely left the house when Rabbi Shmarl began:

The Lord has blessed you, Rabbi Isaac, with a good son. I am thankful to Him that He reckoned you worthy of bringing such a precious soul into the covenant of our father Abraham."

"I pray only," said Rabbi Isaac, "that the Lord may make a great and learned man of him."

"I am sure," exclaimed Hannah, "he will be a great tsadik (righteous); for I come from a good family; some of my relatives are giants in the knowledge of the holy doctrine.

"The wise men say that children take after their mother's brothers.

“Now, Rabbi Shmarl,” began Rabbi Isaac tapping with hand on his forehead, as if he wanted to recall to his mind something he thought necessary to say, “before we dare take any steps in the direction you advise us, we must know how much dowery in cash does Joshua expect to give the young people. You see, Rabbi Shmarl, you cannot tell nowadays how much a man possesses, or, whether he has anything at all. I would like, therefore, to ascertain the sum Joshua is willing to deposit with an honest person soon after the engagement, which sum should be given to my son on his wedding day, before the marriage ceremonies begin.”

Rabbi Shmarl knowing the teacher so poor never thought he would be so exact in money matters, and thus did not think of asking Joshua about it, and consequently could not give Rabbi Isaac a satisfactory answer.

When the match maker confessed his ignorance both parties agreed they would settle the question by correspondence.

There was no need of much writing to bring the negotiation to a close. All went smoothly.

Joshua Yirmiah's promised to give his future son-in-law five thousand roubles, which sum he was willing to deposit with the rabbi of S., a personal friend of Rabbi Isaac; and Rabbi Isaac was more than satisfied with the sum as well as with the arrangement.

The engagement was to be celebrated two weeks later, on the third day of the Dedication feast.

CHAPTER IV

The Engagement

When the appointed time for the engagement celebration drew nigh Joshua sent Rabbi Isaac one hundred roubles to enable him to bear the needed expenses,—hire teams, and to buy for Phinehas and the other members of the teacher's family clothes suitable for the occasion.

On the first day of the Dedication feast,—two days before the appointed time, Rabbi Joshua exchanged letters with Rabbi Isaac as to the exact time they should meet at the inn which stood half way between T. and S.

The third day of the Dedication feast (about Christmas time) in the year 1877 was very cold; travelers saw frequently frozen birds lying on the surface of the deep snow; but it seemed not to be too cold for those who were invited to Rachel's engagement. On the afternoon of the same day there were a dozen teams standing in front of Joshua's house; and while men and women with heavy fur coats were filling the large sleighs lookers-on were filling the street. The neighbors stood shivering with cold on the steps in the front of their houses waiting for the departure of Rabbi Joshua and his guests.

When the manager gave the signal to start, and the horses began to move and their bells to sound, all who knew the rich Jew, young and old, man and woman, neighbor and he who lived at the other end of the village hallooed: "With mazel!—With mazel! ("With luck!—With luck!")

In Eva's sleigh sat the soon to be bride and the nearest relatives. Rachel was richly dressed and looked beautiful. While driving Eva was unceasingly praying to t

Almighty that he would prevent any evil eye from bringing misfortune upon her enviable darling.

Some jovial Jews were invited to go with them, though not particularly related nor acquainted, only for the sake of their merry dispositions. They, not inclined to sit among the grave men and listen to their grave conversation, chose to sit with the drivers.

After a two hours' drive, which for the engagement guests passed very swiftly, they reached the place D., about one mile distant from the inn appointed for the celebration of the engagement. Rabbi Joshua bade the procession to stop and listen, whether ringing of horse bells from the other side of the inn was heard. The sleighs stopped; the merry makers for the first time on this journey bridled their tongues; deep silence reigned for a few minutes, but no bell ringing was heard.

They moved on again, driving slowly; and after they had driven about a half mile farther they stopped and listened, but no bells were heard yet.

After they had moved on again for some minutes they stopped and listened, to hear whether teams were coming from the S. side. As there was no indication of this kind he asked the party to wait patiently until there were signs that the S. party was drawing nearer. "For," said Joshua, "it would be a good omen, an omen of equal favor with God, if both parties would meet on the road in front of the inn, and enter it together."

They had not waited longer than ten minutes when they heard the bells coming from the direction of S. They then began to drive slowly, but as the bells gradually rang clearer through the quiet air they drove faster, until both parties met at the front of the inn.

There was a cheering and hallooing on both sides. The S. party also had a rabbi; and the merry makers of both parties sang with enthusiasm:

“The rabbi shall live!—The rabbi shall live!—The rabbi!—The rabbi!—The rabbi!”

Eva dared look at her future son-in-law only from distance.

“He is not beautiful,” said she to her sister, “but full of grace; you can see the holy law shining through his face.”

While strangers and friends were shaking hands, they spoke “peace” to each other.

“Peace be with you Rabbi Joshua!—Peace be with you Rabbi Shmarl!—Peace be with you Rabbi Jew!” in case the stranger’s name was not known.

The examiner hastily took Phinehas to an upper room and led him into a disputation on some problem of the holy law. They had been conversing with each other scarcely a quarter of an hour when the examiner rose, and patting the young man on cheek and chin said: “I hope you will be a teacher in Israel.”

The match maker watched at the foot of the stairs their coming down, and was the first one who was informed by the rabbi himself that the examination was satisfactory, and for pure joy sang:

“The rabbi shall live!—The rabbi shall live!—The rabbi!—The rabbi!—The rabbi!”

The merry makers understood the signal and accompanied the happy match maker in his singing, and the others soon fell in with them.

When it was known in the apartment of the woman that Phinehas passed the examination by the famous head of the high grade college, all relatives and friends kissed Rachel and patted her, telling her how proud and happy she ought to be for being so highly blessed.

The girl was indeed for a while intoxicated by the words, but soon felt a desire to see him whom the Lo

destined to be her companion through life;—but the time for such an examination had not arrived yet.

While the guests were talking and the managers preparing for the feast, the chanter prepared the engagement papers. It was written in it, among other things, that Joshua promised to give to his future son-in-law a dowry of five thousand roubles in cash on the marriage day; that he also agreed to board and clothe the couple and their offspring as long they pleased to live in his family; and that the wedding was to take place on the preparation day of the coming Passover feast at T. at the cost of Joshua, son of Jeremiah.

After the engagement writ was read and signed by two male witnesses Rabbi Shmarl took a kerchief, gave one of the corners to Rabbi Isaac, and the three others to the two witnesses and Rabbi Joshua—a symbol of their agreeing concerning the matter at hand. The holders then, in order to express that they were not mere lookers on, but that they were willing, if need be, to act, shook the kerchief in concert and gave it back to its owner, Rabbi Shmarl.

“Mazel tobh! (Good luck!)—Mazel tobh!” cried the match maker.

All knew now that the engagement was sealed and responded:

“Mazel tobh!—Mazel tobh!” The bride’s mother and the bride were brought into the man’s apartment, where the bridegroom was sitting among the grave and learned.

“Mazel tobh! my dear son,” said Eva; “may the Lord bless you! May you see children and children’s children brought up unto the knowledge of the holy law, unto marriage, and unto good deeds!”

The innocent young man blushed and could not utter one word.

"Say, mazel tobh, my son, say," said Rabbi Isaac to his son, "this is your kallah's mother;"—and Phinehas obeyed.

"Rachel, my daughter," said Eva, "this is your hatha (bridegroom); say to him, mazel tobh; say, my darling

But Rachel hid herself behind her mother and said nothing; instead, large tears rolled over her blooming cheeks.

This happens so often among young people that the parents on both sides took no special notice of it, and thought the bashfulness will soon lose itself after the young people have become more acquainted with each other.

Meanwhile the table for the engagement supper was spread. The rabbis were seated at the uppermost place. The oldest among them was asked to break bread, but he conscientiously inquired if there were not present a descendant of Aaron, a priest; and three sons of the house of Aaron announced themselves. The oldest of them washed his hands, followed by all around the table, and gave thanks. After he had taken a piece of the decorated loaf of bread baked purposely for that feast he passed it to the oldest rabbi, who, in turn, after tasting of it passed it to the next oldest rabbi, and so on. After the rabbis came the laymen.

While sitting at the table the rabbis occupied the time, if not in eating, in godly conversation. They talked of the holy doctrines and holy men; and those who could not partake in the conversation respectfully and admiringly listened, and felt elevated.

After supper,—after the chanter with the accompaniment of some of his choir had chanted the benediction prescribed by the wise men for after meals, the people began to be merry. They drank wine and some brandy, but made more noise than the small quantity of liquor

drunk would cause them to make. You could frequently hear some one, holding a glass with liquor in his hand, hallooing:

“For your life, Rabbi Shmarl!—For your life, Rabbis So and So!”

Then he would ask a blessing, but after tasting of the liquor would exclaim:

“This brandy is too strong, only a Russian could drink it,”—and would pass it to somebody who could drink it.

Rabbi Shmarl, who was accustomed to this kind of holidays, stood on a chair and gave a talk. He praised the bridegroom for his scholarship and piety, and the bride for her virtue and beauty. He then invoked heavenly blessings on the parents of bride and bridegroom, and closed with a blessing for the drink he intended to take. Holding a glass filled with liquor in his hand he spoke “with a full mouth and a loud voice:”

“Blessed art Thou, Jehovah, our God, King of the universe, by whose command all things came into existence.”

All responded, “Amen.”

Now appeared the weak spot in Rabbi Shmarl’s character as a match maker—he could not drink strong drink. But according to the law he must drink now after he had asked a blessing, in order that it should not have been asked in vain. Thus he touched the beverage with his lips, and then passed it on to the others, who in this respect could be better match makers than he.

Then each of the rabbis gave short addresses on the laws of marriage and agreement, which only the learned could understand, but the ignorant admire because of its incomprehensibility to them.

At last the animated guests urged the bridegroom to make a speech. He having been so highly honored and

blessed on that day felt competent for any intellectual task. He announced to the assembled guests that he would be glad to receive questions, as many as possible on which he would give one answer sufficient for all of them.

The dishes and the spreads were taken from the table and Phinehas mounted it; and all present, the rabbis included, stood around him and asked him questions concerning the holy doctrine.

The feeble looking young man soon astonished them all by the vigor of his intellect.

After a few moments of thought he gave a short discourse, and then showed with surprising sharpness that all questions asked could be answered by the fundamental principle underlying the doctrines he had established by his discourse.

The men listened to him with admiration; and the women came out of their apartment and listened from afar, with the exception of Rachel, who had not spoken or left her seat the whole evening.

The women could not understand what he said, but they understood from the argumentative tone in which he spoke, and the expressions of admiration in the behavior of the attentive male listeners, that he was brilliant. There was not one mother who did not pray in her heart that her boy might be like him.

After Phinehas had finished his task so successfully the whole audience sang the one hundred eleventh Psalm.

Out of pure joy over the young man's success, and animated by the singing of the Psalm, they began to dance,—the men by themselves, and the women by themselves.

Later in the night the men became so excited that some of them jumped without ceasing the Cossack dance. Some made learned speeches, and showed an intellectual

sharpness which like they never could do when in a normal condition.

The manager in charge, one of Joshua's old truck drivers, was so deranged in his mind that he dared denounce the chanter's ability.

"A person," he said, "has only to see that the Cossack dancers should jump high enough, and those who asked a blessing on a drink should drink enough,—that the blessing should not have been asked in vain. The Jews of today act like Gentiles; they do not care about the holy doctrine. My father, his memory be blessed, who was, as everybody knows, a very learned man, said that it is not allowed for any man to ask a blessing upon some kind of drink, unless he is willing to drink a quarter (of a certain ancient measure). Thus, chanter, I will overtake the holy office, and you be manager in my stead. Look only after Rabbi Shmarl. If he indeed desires to be a match maker, he must learn to drink more. I never in my life saw a match maker drink as little as he does. No,—no,—it cannot go so further."

The chanter, who in the general excitement had lost his consciousness of his elevated position, was pleased with that novel proposition. He took the manager's white apron, and after he had put it on walked gaily through the rooms announcing himself, "the most powerful autocratic manager."

The ex-manager gathered around him old and young, even some of the rabbis, and chanted rituals.

The women intoxicated by the smell of the liquor and the noise of the men showed great animation. They blessed and kissed one another; old enemies were reconciled and new matches made.

It was already after midnight when Joshua had a talk with Rabbi Isaac, in which he told him he would soon send a team to S. to take the bridegroom to T.,

that the young people might become acquainted with each other; to which proposal Rabbi Isaac gave his consent. He also proposed to the bridegroom's father to regard the engagement feast as done, to which the old teacher agreed also.

The question was now, who would commit the cruelty of announcing the sad message of going home?

At last Rabbi Shmarl undertook the task. He cried aloud:

"Jews, go home!—Jews, go home!—

When the truck driver heard the announcement he took occasion to show that he knew something of the functions of a chanter, and cried with all the strength of his powerful voice:

"In the coming year in Jerusalem! In the coming year in Jerusalem!"

All understood now that this was the finale of the festival, and responded "with full mouths and loud voices:"

"In the coming year in Jerusalem! In the coming year in Jerusalem."

After a half hour of making ready,—after a good deal of hand shaking and kissing, the inn was vacated of the people and their noise, and the sleighs were filled again and through the dry cold air was heard the eternal chant

"The rabbi shall live!—The rabbi shall live!—The rabbi!—The rabbi!—The rabbi!"

While driving homeward Eva asked Rachel how she liked the bridegroom, but received no answer. The poor anxious mother, who could not think—because she would not—that misfortune could befall one of her children thought Rachel was ashamed to tell in the presence of others that she loved him.

They reached T—; the guests dispersed to their respective homes; and Joshua, Eva, Rachel, and their son entered their house. Joshua eager to know how his

daughter felt concerning her future husband called the mother aside and asked her to try to find out what their daughter thought of the bridegroom.

When Eva and Rachel found themselves alone in the dressing room the mother threw her arms around her daughter's neck, and kissing her asked:

"My daughter, how do you like your bridegroom?" And as if an inward voice had told her she would receive an unfavorable answer of the newly engaged girl, suggested a favorable one by adding:

"He is so good, so pious. The Lord will surely bless you both as he did Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Leah."

Suddenly Rachel's eyes were filled with tears, and without uttering a word she tore herself out of the arms of the mother.

Neither of the parents could understand the reason of the strange conduct of their daughter; but they learned it later,—when it was too late.

CHAPTER V

How "Tares" Grow

In the city of K., in Russian Poland, lived a Jew Alexander Salensky by name. He was a photographer by profession, but used to repair watches also, and do some middle man's work for the nobles.

Through his contact with the Poles he had adopted some of their customs. He used to wear short coats, not as short as the Gentiles used to wear them, forbidden, but shorter than the rest of the Jews were accustomed to wear. He also used to clip his beard, and wear everyday—not only on Sabbath days as the other Jews—a clean starched collar, for which reason his fellow Jews used to call him, "Sander the Dutch-man."

He spoke the Polish language correctly; and his pronunciation of that beautiful tongue was so natural that the Poles would never have known him as a Jew if the Jewish features of his face would not have given a clear testimony to it.

Though the Djidka (Jew in Polish) Alexander made his living from the Poles, and was well liked by them, still he would not have liked to see his children have much to do dealing with the Gentiles. He thought his patrons vain and vicious, and was afraid through their influence his children might grow up like them. Sander therefore, carefully sent his sons to Jewish schools, where the law was taught in all earnestness, and the young were trained in the ways and traditions of the forefathers.

But in spite of all precautions Salensky took to bring up his children as loyal Jews, one of them, Hayim, took rather after the father, and grew more and more inclined to the ways of the Gentiles. He thought it was much

easier to live after the religion of the nobles than after the teachings of the Jews.

"The Jews," thought young Salensky, "must pray long, know much, and work hard for heaven; and at last, the harder they work the less they are satisfied with themselves. On the other hand, the nobles do not pray long, do not know nor do much, and still are satisfied with their soul's condition."

"Especially the intercourse between the sexes," thought Hayim, "was very much pleasanter among the Poles than among the Jews. To look at a girl is not a sin with the Poles as with the Jews—to dance with a lady is praiseworthy with the Gentiles.

So arguing and meditating he came to the conclusion that the Gentile life was pleasanter than that of the Jews, and, if possible, he himself was going to live it. In consequence of his resolution Hayim neglected his Jewish studies, came irregularly to school, and, judging by what the other pupils told the rabbi with great horror, he began to study the Polish alphabeth.

The teacher was exceedingly alarmed by this intelligence.

He went to Salensky and told him and his wife Sarah, who was still an old fashioned woman, what great danger was threatening them. From that day the parents watched Hayim, and he was compelled to go to school regularly.

Some time after the described occurrence Hayim's desire to be a Pole began to burn in his heart stronger than ever before, and he concluded to follow his inclination to learn the Polish language. But the question was how, where, and when?

The youth solved this problem very quickly in the following way.

He borrowed a book from a Polish neighbor's young son, and took it secretly to school; and while sitting at

the large folio volume of the Thalmud he held the small Polish A. B. C. book between the large sheets of the Jewish sacred law book,—and studied Polish.

He was able to do so for some days, until the rabbi noticed a change in Hayim's studies. For he was a very able student; he learned very easily, and used to know his lessons better than the other pupils, even when he had not studied them as diligently as they; but in these days he knew them not as well as the others.

Besides, the rabbi saw him often sitting at the Thalmud absent minded, for which reason he began to watch his young pupil. It did not take long for the teacher to discover the reason of that change. He saw with his own eyes that Hayim was holding an abomination (secular books in a Gentile language) between the holy sheets of the Thalmud, and instead of meditating upon the law day and night was memorizing barbarous words of the barbarous people's barbarous language.

“Throw it into the fire! Throw it into the fire! Throw the abomination into the fire!” cried the rabbi.

But the young man felt he could not afford to lose the book, and was not willing to follow the rabbi's bidding. The teacher himself was afraid even to touch the abomination, lest he should defile himself. Now, what could be done? The book must be burned. Command another scholar to do it? This would be a sin; you thus seduce a Jew to defile himself.

After considerable meditation and excitement the wise rabbi discovered a way to get rid of the book. He told the smallest pupil at school who had no judgment, therefore was not responsible for what he did, that he should throw the book into the fire. The little boy thought it quite singular and hesitated first, but encouraged by the rabbi and the scholars, did as it was told him.

When Hayim Salensky's parents heard of it they felt as if the greatest calamity had happened to them. The father was downcast and spoke not a word to his disobedient son and the mother wept.

Hayim, knowing that his father was not different from himself, was well able to bear his father's behavior toward him, but he could not endure the mother's tears. He, therefore, confessed to her that he was wrong, and promised to be a good Jew in the future.

At the vesper prayers of that for him and his parents memorable day he showed much regret, and instead of hurrying off his prayers as he used to do at other times, he was this time very reverent, and tried to put his whole soul into the prayer.

When he came to the prayer of confession he sorrowfully recited:

"Forgive us, our Father, for we have sinned; excuse us for we have dealt wickedly!" and smote his breast heavily, signifying his willingness to suffer pain for the wickedness he had committed by studying the Polish A. B. C.

But this remorse was not lasting. The spirit of the Poles, which the Jews believed to be an evil one, revived again in Hayim's young and susceptible heart with more vigor than before and, as we shall see, took whole possession of it.

One night passing by the mansion of a rich Polish noble young Salensky heard someone playing a piano, which kind of music Hayim seldom had the opportunity to hear. He stopped with the intention to listen only a few minutes; but the music became sweeter to him with each succeeding moment, and it attracted him so that he could not depart from the window under which he stood as soon as he had intended.

After he had been listening awhile he became desirous

to look into the room whence the music came, but could not—the window was too high above him.

He stayed himself on his tiptoes, stretched his body as much as he could, but in vain. He could see of the splendor within only so much that his eagerness for seeing more increased.

Discouragedly he looked around on the ground thinking he might find something that would help him reach the window. There he caught sight of a stone, which he thought could be used for this purpose. He rolled it near the window, and standing on it he could see well.

How astonished was Hayim to discover a world which was very different from that in which he was living.

It was not an ordinary room into which he looked, but a large hall with an artistically decorated ceiling and a highly polished floor. The furniture within was rich and the light brilliant.

This rich furniture and brilliant light were fittingly enjoyed by a large number of richly dressed ladies and gentlemen, who were sitting and chatting one with another.

But most of all interested Hayim the musical instrument and the man who knew how to use it.

At one of the walls under beautiful paintings stood a mirror-like polished black piano garnished with silver and at it a musician of pure Polish type, with his light blond hair reaching down to the shoulders, was sitting and producing the fascinating music.

All at once some of the gentlemen dressed in faultless black and white rose and bowed to some of the ladies who as response rose and gave them their hands; and in a minute's time Hayim saw a half dozen pairs walking with, from, and to each other, and while in each other's embrace turning with much grace and dexterity. Hayim

was astonished, and motionless as a statue gazed at the dancers.

With the time the music grew louder and faster, the gentlemen more cheerful, and the ladies more daring; and at last all gentlemen and ladies present were engaged in dancing.

It was a strange, yes, terrible sight to Hayim, who was accustomed to a life moderated by the strict laws of the Jewish religion. Yet he was so fascinated by it that he first thought not to return to his earthly home again. He would rather try to enter that heavenly land, where the air is filled with sweet music, and angels in the shape of beautiful females are continually laughing; where every gentleman is permitted, after a short worship before such a heavenly creature, to fly with her to and fro from one end to the other of that land.

But Hayim soon found out what he must do.

While he was questioning himself a nobleman looking out of the open window saw a Jewish boy standing and gazing, and said harshly:

“Djidka (Jew), what do you do here?”

Hayim then awoke from his dream, and ran home.

He was, nevertheless, grieved; he felt he had been abused. He had been called by a Gentile, “Jew,” which name, coming from an enemy of Israel, never has a good meaning; and he was driven away, as if he were a nobody, not fit for noble society.

Partly this grievous abuse, and partly his desire once to be admitted to such a brilliant society as he saw in the noble’s mansion, moved Hayim to his new but stronger than ever determination to learn the Polish to such a perfection that no Pole would dare call him Jew any more.

Next morning in his prayers, when he reached the prayer of confession Hayim hurried it off thoughtlessly.

He smote his breast, true, but he scarcely felt it. He did it out of mere habit, unconsciously.

After breakfast he bought a Polish primer and took it to school.

A pupil, who through the window saw Hayim coming, noticed that he carried something hidden under his coat. He awaited Hayim's entrance, and suddenly lifted the coat from over the hidden thing, and, lo!—was a new book, the binding of which was like the one he had before. He understood what it meant and cried:

“Rabbi, an abomination! Rabbi, an abomination! Hayim tried to hide it, but it was too late.

“Throw it into the fire! Throw it into the fire!” cried the rabbi.—“Hayimka (diminutive for Hayim), throw it into the fire!—Throw this Polish abomination into the fire, I tell you!”—But Hayim would not do it. Then the rabbi commanded him to give the book to the little Hirshele, who was experienced in this kind of work, but Hayim was unwilling to consent. The teacher saw no other way than to take it from the boy by force, even at the risk of defiling himself by handling the abomination. But Hayim was stronger than the rabbi and could not be forced. It was only when all pupils came to the rabbi for help that the book was taken, though badly damaged.

After the rabbi ascertained that there was no mistake about it, that it was indeed a Gentile book, he did not let go this precious pearl out of his hand any more. Holding fast the abomination with one hand and trying to put on his overcoat with the other he hurried to Alexander Salensky.

After he had shown them the book the characters of which looked to Hayim's pious mother like mysterious signs written by the devil, he told them he would not have Hayim in his school any longer as he was a bad example for the other pupils.

The poor parents knew not what to do nor what to say, and sadly concluded to be contented with the rabbi's resolution for dismissing their child from school. They took very wisely into consideration that even their own sons at school might be spoiled by their prodigal.

When Hayim came home from school he found the mother weeping, and the father cursing.

"I prophecy," said old Salensky with his whole might, "this boy will be a Goy (Gentile)."

But Hayim argued he could not see any sin in studying Polish, since his own father talked it well, and other pious Jews, even rabbis, knew it. The parents knew not what to say to him, but felt miserable seeing their son rapidly turning to the ways of the Gentiles.

For several days Hayim went about without any occupation, dreaming only of the fairy land he had seen on that memorable night, and meditating on ways and means to get there.

One day Hayim came home and told his parents that he had registered at the Government school, with the view to study the Russian and the Polish languages. The mother's heart nearly broke at the thought that her son was going now to associate with the sons of the Gentiles.

The father for a while said nothing; he had given up the boy long ago. At last he broke out like a volcano: "Wife, this is your son; your brother, his dear uncle, is not better. He also left the study of our sacred books, and went to wicked America, and, as people tell, joined the Free-masons. This is surely worse than to be a common Gentile. The wise men are right in saying that the children take after the mother's brothers."

But Sarah argued, though the one brother might be bad, that she had two others who were righteous, and were meditating upon the law day and night.

“Besides,” observed Sarah, “I scrupulously fulfill all the laws the Lord gave to women.—I do not believe the Lord will punish me so hard as to permit my child to be an outcast;” and wept bitterly.

The tears of the mother melted the heart of the son who weeping said: “Dear mamma, you will see, I shall be a good Jew, even associating with Gentiles; and the Lord will bless me the more for it.”

“Do you believe, mother,” continued Hayim, “that the men who keep separate from the Gentiles are accounted great in the sight of God?—Not at all.—Such men never knew to do otherwise than their parents taught them to do, and thus never came to the temptation to be different. I believe that only those are really accounted great before God who have studied science, and the languages of the Gentiles, and know their ways and customs, and still remain loyal Jews.”

The mother was through her son’s sharp argument which sounded to her like a paragraph of the Thalmud gradually pacified. The father, who for the first time heard Hayim so boldly and cleverly talk, became at once a little proud of his boy, and persuaded himself to leave the whole matter with him.

“Son,” said Alexander decisively and yet mildly, “You are nearing your thirteenth year of age. You soon will be bar mitsvoh (son of the law, a responsible person). If you insist upon studying at a Gentile school, you yourself will have to be punished, if you go astray from our holy faith.

Next day early in the morning Hayim put on his phylacteries with great care and thoughtfulness, and prayed long. Before he began to recite the prayer of confession he stopped, and in a minute’s time the following thoughts ran through his mind:

“Is it a sin to study the languages of the Gentiles, and to associate with them? No;—it cannot be. If not, I am now to confess sins,—which ones?—I do not know of any sins I have committed.—In the confession written by Israel’s wise men we say: “Father forgive us, for we have sinned!”—Who is meant by, “We”—?—The whole Israelitish congregation. The rabbis teach that the Israelites are responsible for each other. Thus I have to confess sins, whether I, personally, have any or not;—I am responsible for the sins of my nation.” Then Hayim recited: “Forgive us our Father, for—.” Here Hayim paused again, in order to recall to his memory the national sins of the Jews, of which he had heard and read so much. He wished to keep them in mind while speaking the solemn words: “We have sinned.” Clinching his right fist, lifting it to his breast, but holding it a distance from it, in order to be ready for smiting the breast after the terrible word, “sinned,” has left his mouth, he thought: “Yes for the sake of my sinful forefathers have I to suffer today.—They were driven out from their land, and we are at present living in exile, dispersed among the nations of the world; and instead of being nobles ourselves we must serve Gentile nobles. If I had been in Jerusalem, nobody would have driven me away from the window of a noble’s house naming me, “Jew.”—Why!—In Jerusalem,—I would have been a noble myself, and would have heard sweet music every day, and would have enjoyed the company of beautiful ladies whenever I wished. What do I think about?—About women!—Oh, God, in Thy presence —, while I was praying to Thee I had such impure thoughts!—I need not refer the confession to national sins anymore; I myself have committed one just now.”—“We have sinned,” finished Hayim deeply moved by his confession, and let fall his fist upon his breast so hard that the sound called the attention of the mother.

She felt happy over it, and praised God in her heart for revealing to her that her son, her cleverest son, was trying to be a loyal Jew.

When he left the house on that morning to go to the Folks school his mother accompanied him to the street in front of their cottage. There she stood with tears in her eyes and prayers in her heart, looking after her child until he was out of sight.

Hayim was in the first two of his school years an exemplary young man. He studied diligently at school and showed himself a pious Jew at home. But later through the influence of his Gentile friends, his will power broke; he walked, like his companions, the broad road which proved very destructive to his Judaism.

He preferred Polish society to Jewish, took part in the festivities of the Gentiles, danced with Gentile ladies, ate Gentile meat and drank Gentile wine;—in short he became what he always wished to be,—a Pole.

His poor mother worried, admonished, and prayed that he would leave his wicked ways, but all was in vain. Hayim was beyond help.

In order to avoid the tearful admonitions of his mother, he hired out as a secretary to a government officer, and moved from his parents to a Polish family. This was altogether too hard for the mother to bear. She fell gradually into melancholy, and finally died of a broken heart.

After her death he went to the synagogue at least twice a day—according to the law—eleven months long to pray for the salvation of her soul. He did this not because of his piety, but purely out of love for her. When the year of mourning was over he became more alienated from the synagogue than before so that his father called him a prodigal, his brothers would not mention his name, and all other Jews regarded him as an apostate.

The Jews were not able to turn Hayim Salensky by showing their contempt for him; on the contrary, he went on from bad to worse.

Through his ability to talk the Russian better than thousands of other Jews he received from the Russian government the office of an excise agent, whose duty it was to collect duties on liquors from the chosen people and send them to the Gentile government, which to do was regarded very sinful.

The modern Jews thought of Hayim just as their forefathers did think of Zacchaeus in the time of Christ, namely, that he was a great sinner.

There were, however, differences between the Roman tax-gatherer and the Russian excise agent.

First, Hayim was not little of stature as Zacchaeus; on the contrary, he was tall, symmetrically built, and strong. When he was wearing the Czar's uniform he looked majestic. Neither was he as greedy for money as Zacchaeus seems to have been. Remorse of conscience would never have brought forth from Hayim the words of Zacchaeus despairingly uttered to the Saviour: "If I have taken anything of any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold." For Hayim was very far from accusing anybody falsely, in order to enrich himself; on the contrary, he used to be kind to the liquor dealers, and help in many ways the poor among them.

Notwithstanding Salensky's good qualities the Jews did not hate him less than they did the Roman chief among the publicans. For they understood well that the government gave him that position, calculating that he knowing his people would be able to make them pay all their liquor duties, to which order of things they were not accustomed. They knew well enough, if the government had set into this office an honest and clever Gentile

who could not be bribed nor deceived, that they would have to pay the same amount they paid Salensky. Still they could not bear the thought of a Jew making himself a scourge in the hands of the Gentiles to lash his own brothers. In their eyes he was as bad as a Christianized Jew; and he, influenced by their spirit, thought himself a stranger to the congregation of Israel, and acted very much like it.

He used to go to the synagogue only twice or thrice a year; and even then he used to come later than the others, and leave before the rest.

He was never invited to take part in any of the public synagogal exercises, as for instance, to read the ritual before the ark of the covenant, or to come up to the altar table and give public praise to God for the law He gave and listen to the reading of a portion of it.

It would have been a disgrace to have him stand before the holy scroll.

No Jew with sense could imagine Hayim Salensky with the "swinish chin" (shaved) standing before the written law of Moses, and praising God for the commandments which he was all the time transgressing.

Indeed, the Jewish community would have been better satisfied if he never came to the synagogue. "What does he want in our synagogue?" could you hear very often a Jew ask; "he is worse than a Goy (Gentile), and I would not be astonished at all, if I would hear some day that Hayim Salensky did shmad himself (did annihilate himself by Christian baptism)."

Though the pious Jews had hatred in their hearts against Salensky, they used to flatter him and show him great respect when he was present; for they frequently needed his help. Whenever he came to a place where Jews were living he had to write for them the Russian addresses on their letters. Many a letter used to be de-

layed until Salensky came and wrote the address in the Russian language as the post-department required.

When Jews had dealings with the government, court, or police Salensky had to write papers, and often speak for them. For they as faithful followers of the Pharisees thought it wicked to study the Russian language; but Hayim was an apostate; he had studied it, and knew it well;—and the by all means practical Jews held it for no sin to make use of the sin he committed.

CHAPTER VI

An Unexpected Attachment

Now, our friend, Joshua Yirmiah, was as already mentioned, a liquor dealer and belonged to the district over which the excise agent, Hayim Salensky, had the inspection. When the latter came to T. as his custom was every two weeks he used to stay at Joshua's house.

Joshua used to flatter him by bestowing upon him many honors. He made him acquainted with his friends and relatives, and knowing that all Gentiles love beautiful women introduced him to his daughter Rachel.

If somebody had spoken to Joshua of a possibility of marrying his daughter to Salensky, he would have cursed at such a fool. Or if Hayim himself had dared ask Joshua to give him the beautiful Rachel for a wife, the latter, though only a down trodden Jew, would have driven the government officer out of doors. Joshua would have given up his lucrative business, if he had surmised that there was any danger for his daughter.

Not at all. Such thoughts were very far from Joshua while making Salensky acquainted with his daughter.— Joshua had only one reason for doing it, and this was, that the excise agent might overlook some carelessness on his part in regard to the excise laws.

But unfortunately, Rachel understood no diplomacy. After she became acquainted with the agent she admired him.

First of all, Salensky was a beautiful and vigorous looking man. He looked so much different from the students she was accustomed to see, who through hard study and lack of comfort used to look sickly.

Rachel imagined Salensky resembled the Autocrat of Russia. Though she had never seen the czar, not even

his picture, as her father, belonging to the first class pious Jews, would not allow any facsimiles of persons in his house; still Salensky's courageous appearance and soldiery bearing made her think so.

Second, his knowledge of two languages, and his experience of the world elevated him in her eyes above all the students of rabbinism.

The last, but surely not the least reason of her admiration for Hayim Salensky was the uniform he used to wear while traveling as an officer of the Czar.

What girl can stand the temptation attached to a uniform,—she may be English, German, or Jewish—!

The faultless black coat with the red collar and polished brass buttons used to intoxicate the young head of the inexperienced Rachel so that she used to be bewildered in her mind for hours every time after Salensky's leaving their house.

While we cannot describe otherwise than admiration what Rachel felt for the excise agent, we have to call what he felt for her love.

He had much experience with the fair sex of the Gentile world; he had many friends among them, but never loved one, and thought never to be able to love a Gentile woman.

Hayim Salensky, grown up to manhood, used often to wonder how it was possible that the angels of his youth—referring to the beautiful Polish ladies he saw dancing at the ball in the for him so eventful night—had so changed, and had become human when he was privileged to approach them. He used to think the Gentile women good enough for him to pass away the time in their society, but not to love.

Sometimes Hayim would recall to his memory the glorious past of his race, and think of the brilliant expectations yet before them.

“How is it possible,” would he then say to himself, “how could I marry a Gentile and see my children become Gentiles!—The Mèssiah might soon come, and all Jews go back to their own land, and become the most blessed nation in the world; but my children and children’s children would have to pass through all the tribulations foretold by Israel’s wise for the Gentiles before they can be saved.

“I am wicked,” Hayim used to say to himself, “but I shall marry a Jewess, and begin a new life as a Jew.”

Among all the Jewish girls Hayim Salensky knew Rachel was the most precious to him, probably on account of her exceptional beauty. He could not think himself and Rachel once united as husband and wife, because he knew her parents to be so very pious, and that she herself never knew to be different. He also knew the general opinion of the Jews about him, and that Rachel must be influenced by it. But, after all, he was happy to know that she had in her heart some room, small or large, for him.

Rachel, on the other hand, when she understood, through his behavior that he loved her, felt flattered and was pleased with it. She then began to feel toward him something more than admiration, and finally unconsciously arrived at the boundaries between admiration and love. One of the reasons why she could not overstep the boundaries into the for young people so very natural land of love might have been the strict watchfulness the pious Jews keep over their young people. Rachel could see Salensky only a few minutes at a time, and that only in the presence of a third person, whom the pious choose to show his importance by naming him in the Hebrew tongue—“shomer,” which means nothing less than “a watcher.”

They used to have like other lovers their rendezvous,

but in a place where they could not converse with each other very well.—It must have been a strange place;—must it not?—Indeed it was. Namely, when Rachel understood that Salensky was to pass through a certain door she used to post herself on the threshold, and he passing would say in the Russian:

“Dushinka moya (my dear soul).”

My kind listener will remember in the night when Rabbi Shmarl conferred with Joshua and Eva about the match that Rachel tried to overhear their talk, but did not succeed. She knew what the match maker's visit meant, but could not make out who the young man was he was proposing. She heard the words “good looking” repeatedly spoken by her father and mother, but did not know in which connection these attractive words were used. After thinking one way and another she came to the for her so pleasant thought that the young man proposed by Rabbi Shmarl was beautiful looking.

After Rachel's active mind ceased to be employed with the finding out in which reference the words “good looking” were used her imagination began to work vividly at giving the beautiful young man shape and form.

“How does the beautiful young man look?” she would ask herself often; and since her acquaintance with men was very limited, and no man stood her as near as Salensky, whom she admired, she finally gave herself the answer: “He looks like Salensky.”

Asleep or awake,—in dreams, meditations, or reveries, she used to see before her her future bridegroom formed after the model of Salensky. And as the days and nights were passing her interest in Salensky grew, until she became with her whole soul attached to him. She would show it—though in a mute way because of the watchfulness of her mother over her children—in her conduct in his presence, so that he had not to be too im-

aginative, in order to draw the conclusion that she loved him.

Thus encouraged the former impossibility of Rachel's becoming his wife changed with him to a possibility, and the shrewd excise agent began to think of ways and means to get her, if necessary, even against the will of her parents.

Rachel had no such advanced thoughts; she loved him, but to marry him was with her an impossibility yet. He was to her what a picture of a friend is to a friend. The latter becomes attached to it, he would not miss it for any price, but, after all, it is not the picture that he loves.

Rachel became attached to the worldly Salensky on account of his having something in common with her ideal bridegroom, but she knew that she must not think of him more than one does of his friend's photograph.

We can now imagine how disappointed poor Rachel must have felt on the engagement eve, when she was led into the men's department to see her bridegroom, and lo, there stood before her a human figure against which she always had a strong aversion, especially since she knew Salensky.—Phinehas was a delicate looking young man, pale of face, and nothing of the present world in his manners. He looked yet more sanctimonious than the students she used to see in her native village, to whom to prefer the bright excise agent she never hesitated a moment.

The poor girl saw her sacred ideal suddenly broken to pieces, and her presence of mind ought to be admired that she showed not her disappointment more openly than she really did. While in the inn among the merry engagement celebrators Rachel did not feel the whole weight of her disappointment, but when at home, especially when

she was left alone, she could not help but weep over her destroyed illusions.

After they had returned from the engagement celebration the others of Joshua's family tired from the manifold operations of that day slept soundly, but Rachel kept awake the whole night. She lay in bed sighing, and wetting her pillow with tears so that in the morning she had to change the pillow case, in order that her mother might not find it out.

Still she could not keep her grief in secret very long. Father and mother noticing that she was gradually wasting away became conscious of the fact that Rachel had trouble. They could not understand the real reason of it, as it is an unheard of thing in Israel that a girl should question the propriety of marrying a young man of Phinehas' piety and learning. On the contrary, the thought occurred to both parents that their daughter's grief came from her desire to see her betrothed.

"If this should be the cause of her grief," said one day Joshua to Eva, "we will soon cure it."

He called one of his laboring men and sent him with a message to Rabbi Isaac requesting him to send his son to T. for a visit.

Had Rabbi Isaac sent his son at once the anxious Joshua would soon have found out whether his remedy was the right one to cure Rachel's malady, and probably would have discovered what her grief really meant, but destiny would not have it so. The messenger came back without the bridegroom. He brought a letter from Rabbi Isaac, in which he told that his son was not yet prepared to visit, but would be ready and glad to see his bride and her parents in about four weeks.

Rachel, as described, was in a bad condition; so was Hayim Salensky. When he heard of her engagement he was near to **despair**;—his dearest and most cherished hope

was gone. In anger he swore to take vengeance on Joshua Yirmiah.

"I will teach him a lesson," thought the excise agent "he shall pay in the future every cent duty he has to pay according to the excise law; he shall experience no kindness from Salensky anymore."

"And that innocent Rachel showed herself in her true light,—that she is not as innocent as some might think her to be. The women," came he in despair to the conclusion, "are altogether untrustworthy in the matter of love; they love only when it seems profitable for themselves."

After his anger was calmed the happy thought came to him to go to T. and find out for himself whether all hope of making Rachel his wife was really lost as it seemed to be.

He did not wait for the regular two week's appointment, but hurried to T. at once; and how surprised was he to find that Rachel not only had not changed her lovable behavior toward him, on the contrary, she showed now greater attachment to him than before.

Of course, neither could he ask her nor she tell him how she felt since they could not see each other without a watcher (the presence of a third person), but the experienced Salensky could read her mind. When he saw her in a corner of the large sitting room and frequently looking up from her work to him, there was something in her look that caused him to compare her with a tender vine bending toward the nearest strong post for support.

"What does it mean?" asked Salensky of himself; and suspicion came into his mind that the engagement might have been against her will, and she might feel miserable, and thus was in great need of his counsel.

But how find it out?

He knew that Rachel would place herself at the door

which he had to pass. Thus he wrote on a small piece of paper the following few words:

Write me.—Address:—And he handed it to her.

Next day he received from her the following lines:

“Excuse; I could not write a long letter unobserved.—You are mine all. If possible, help, but soon; for he whom I dislike is soon coming.—Rachel.”

After reading these lines he rose and without hesitating a moment went back to T.

Joshua wondered very much to see the excise agent so soon again at his place, but had no reason for suspecting that it had some connection with his family affairs.

Passing through the door Salensky handed Rachel, unnoticed by any member of the household, this time quite a long letter. He told her in it she need not fear, she should trust in him, for he loved her with his whole soul:—and that she should be present next day at eleven o'clock in the night at her father's wagon house.

Driving from T. Salensky was much disturbed in his mind. He felt like an inventor in the first stages of the development of his ideas. First, he doubted the success of his plan, and second, he was not clear himself in regard to some details of it.

After he had driven about a half hour he came to a crossing of three roads, one of which led to S. where he knew his Rachel's betrothed lived, and instinctively reined his horse that direction. When he reached the village he concluded to stay there until next day, when he would go back to T. for the rendezvous with Rachel. He took lodging at an inn near Rabbi Isaac's house, that no circumstance useful to him for the advancement of his undertaking should escape his knowledge.

As already related Rachel had not felt well since she

came home from the engagement; but today, after receiving the last communication from Salensky, though she succeeded in hiding her agitations from the members of the household, was nevertheless exceedingly nervous so that she was not able to sleep that night. In the morning, the parents were alarmed over her paleness. They tried to find out what ailed her, but, as many times before, she did not say a word.

The father thought to call in a physician, but the mother prevented him, telling him to wait a few hours longer; she might recover during that time.

"We must be very cautious," said Eva, "about letting other people know of our trouble; it might bring upon us greater trouble yet. Rabbi Isaac would think Rachel sickly and consequently annul the engagement."

But Rachel did not recover; on the contrary, the nearer the time drew for her meeting Salensky the more alarming became her condition, and Joshua was compelled to go to the doctor. For the reason given before by Eva Joshua did not invite him to see the patient, but told him the symptoms of her ailment, and his own opinions how it might have originated.

The doctor agreed with Joshua that her malady was due to a mental struggle, and counseled him to send for the bridegroom.

Joshua followed his advice and at once sent his coachman to S. with a letter, in which he asked Rabbi Isaac by all means to send Phinehas with the man carrying the missive.—"Rachel seems to have a longing to see him," set Joshua forth, "and there is reason to believe that she will fall ill, if he fails to come."

"Yankel (pet name for Jacob)," said Joshua anxiously to the driver before he started, "if you bring the hathan (bridegroom) you shall have double beer-money,—from me and Rachelen (pet name for Rachel)."

"You may be sure, Rabbi Sheah," said Jacob, "I shall not come back without him."

Joshua felt consoled; for he knew he could depend on the promise of his faithful servant.

CHAPTER VII

The Future Rabbi in Love

When rabbi Isaac with his family arrived home from the engagement he urged Phinehas to go at once to bed in order not to oversleep the morning worship in the synagogue. The son followed his father's advice,—but like Rachel, could not sleep.

The cause of his sleeplessness was quite different from Rachel's. She could not sleep because of her grief that her ideal of a life's companion was destroyed, but him kept awake his indescribable happiness.

All he once wished for was now more than fulfilled. He soon will have the rich Joshua Yirmiah's as father-in-law,—Eva, by the whole Jewish world known for her kindness, as mother-in-law,—and, above all, that girl with the angelic face, whose name is Rachel—a very attractive name to every Jewish child—as his wife.

It seems it was his reveries of Rachel that took all sleep from him. The whole night not once came to him a thought of the various occurrences of the day. He remembered neither the examination he passed, nor the successful speech he made—neither the palatable dishes at the engagement supper, nor the frolic behavior of the celebrators; for Rachel the central figure, had wiped them out of his memory.

If somebody had told him that he had fallen in love with Rachel, he would have denied it, because it is a sin to love a woman; nevertheless he was not himself any more;—he was changed.

Early in the morning while Phinehas was yet in bed his mother was the first one to greet him kissing him heartily, and praying down upon him heavenly blessings.

When he rose he found his good old father sitting before a heavy tome of the Thalmud and meditating; his forehead was beaming for intelligence and his face smiling for inward joy.

Father and son then went to the synagogue, where they were met with greetings of welcome. Nearly every one of the congregation came to Rabbi Isaac and Phinehas, and shaking hands with them said: "Mazel tobh (good luck)!"

This was one of the eight days of the Dedication feast, when the Jews all over the world are accustomed to read a portion of the Pentateuch, and some of the congregation are called, one after another, to the pulpit to listen to the reading of some verses of that portion. Rabbi Isaac would have been honored on that morning by being called first to the holy scroll, if there had not been some of the tribe of Levy, who still maintain some prerogatives in divine service. Thus they called first a descendant of Aaron, a priest, then a Levite, and after that the old honorable teacher.

In order not to touch the holy scroll with his unholy mouth or defiled hand, he took a corner of his fringe garment and pressed it upon the first words of the verses to the reading of which he was to listen; and after he kissed the holy garment, which through the contact with the holy scroll became more holy than before, said "with a full mouth and loud voice:"

"Blessed art Thou Jehovah our God, King of the universe, that Thou hast chosen us from all the nations, and hast given us Thy law.—Blessed art Thou Giver of the law!"

After the chanter finished reading Rabbi Isaac again touched the last words read with his fringe garment, kissed it, and spoke, this time with a tremulous but loud voice:

“Blessed be Thou Jehovah our God, King of the universe, that Thou hast given us the true doctrine, and hast planted among us life eternal. Blessed art Thou, Giver of the law.”

All answered, “Amen!”

After the reading of the Pentateuch Phinehas' uncle—his mother's eldest brother—was called to hold up the partly unrolled scroll before the congregation, in order that the faithful might have one more chance to look at the words of the holy writ before it is rolled together and returned into the ark of the covenant. With the help of his grandson, a youth of about fourteen, who was invited to assist him in rolling it together, Hannah's brother,—feeble in body, but strong in spirit,—lifted the heavy parchment scroll, and holding it up before the eyes of the children of Israel turned about, in order that all in the synagogue might be able to look at the holy writing.

Devotion causes increase of devotion. When the worshippers saw his painstaking for them they showed themselves appreciative. Bending forward toward the far off scroll they tried to see some words on it, and closed the procedure by chanting:

“This doctrine given to us is the true doctrine, coming from the mouth of God through Moses.”

After the scroll was rolled together a younger brother of Rabbi Isaac was invited to open the ark of the covenant, where many rolls of the law were treasured, and one of Hannah's cousins was honored with the invitation to place the just used scroll into the ark.

Thus the attention of the entire Jewish community of S. was taken up with the new occurrence in the teacher's family; and in a few days, in spite of lack of railroads, and notwithstanding the slowness of the post, every Jew of the neighboring villages knew that Phinehas, Rabbi Isaac's was engaged to Rachel Joshua Jeremiah's.

On the following Sabbath Phinehas was crowned with many honors.

After the last listener to the reading of the Pentateuch had made his closing prayer, and the holy scroll had been held up before the congregation and rolled together, and the chanter had recited one of the most holy prayers, the bridegroom was called to read a portion of the Prophets.

Not having been married yet Phinehas had no fringe garment of his own, and thus was compelled to borrow one, in order to be lawfully equipped for performing his functions. He thought to take the one his father was wearing, but promptly a rich young married man offered him his more elegant one, which Phinehas, thanking, accepted. He looked extremely spiritual while standing before the holy scroll wrapped in the snow white silken garment with the broad silver headpiece.

He chanted the scriptures so well, precisely after the accentuation, that the men enjoyed his reading this time as never before, and the women wished themselves sons with his accomplishments.

He was also asked to give a discourse in the afternoon, to which he gladly consented. The sexton gave it out with much force, and forgetting himself called Phinehas in his announcement "harabh (rabbi)."

Referring to the sexton's slip of tongue Hannah in the woman's apartment solemnly said:

"From his mouth into God's ears!—May he indeed be a rabbi!"

After the morning service another announcement was made, namely, that Rabbi Isaac had invited the whole congregation to "benediction" (to things benedictions are spoken upon, refreshments).

This was a very agreeable announcement to be worshippers, who had been now for three hours engaged in divine service without having their breakfast.

All followed the invitation; for the old teacher knew everybody and everybody knew him, and all were his friends.

The discourse in the afternoon was a success.

He closed his three hours long discourse about as follows:

“Son,” in the Hebrew is, “ben,”—and, “daughter” “bath;” the root of both these words means “to build.” Our holy language calls children by these names to teach that a woman who is fruitful, has children, is built up herself and is helping to build up our nation. Now, brethren and rabbis!—We celebrate today the commemoration of the conquest of our people over their enemies in the time of the Second temple. The Lord helped His people under the leadership of Judas Maccabaeus. They regained their liberty and rededicated the by the Gentiles defiled house of God.—We find ourselves now in the condition they were in before that glorious conquest. We are living now in exile, dispersed among the nations of the world,—without a temple, in which to worship,—without a priest to intercede for us,—and without an altar, on which to make sacrifices for forgiveness of our sins.—Shall we not strive for liberty and restoration?—Is He not able to help us now as He did then?—You say: “We do all we can do.—We pray three times a day to God for our return to Jerusalem, but He does not answer our prayers.”—Have you read Isaiah?—Do you know what he said in the name of the Lord?—Hear what he says: “When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you;—yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear;—your hands are full of blood.”—You ask: “When did we shed blood, when did we murder? I do not say you shoot or slay people, but I say, you commit suicide.—The first command in the Bible is, “multiply,” and in connection with this command our wise men teach that a man should

marry at least when he is eighteen years old;—that a Jew should send out his wife by divorce, if she should give him no children during the first ten years of their married life. But how pitiful it is that you find already old bachelors among the Jews in Germany. Our neighbor Rabbi Nahum told me he knew of a modern rabbi in Germany who had no children, though he and his wife were already old. It seems he was satisfied even to die without descendants. You see this man, whom apostate Jews call rabbi, loved his wife rather than God's bidding.

How then, sirs and rabbis, can we expect that the Lord should answer our prayers, since our deeds contradict our creeds.—“Return, O Israel, to Jehovah thy God, for thou hast stumbled through thy sins.”

And remembering the rabbinical advice never to close a discourse, talk, or even a conversation with ominous words, as, for instance, the above, “For thou hast stumbled through thy sins,” he made the finale by saying:

“Let us repent of our sins, and return to God!”—“And the Redeemer will come to Zion!”—“So may be His will!”—“Let us say, ‘Amen!’”

If you had asked Phinehas, whether he would put away his Rachel after having been married to her ten years, in case she gave him no children, he could not say conscientiously that he would. For he was so attached to her that he certainly could not imagine himself without her.

When his fellow students of the sacred literature envied him, they thought only of his external advantages,—of the five thousand roubles dowry, of his new clothes, and the golden watch and chain, which Joshua presented to him,—but they knew nothing of his inner life.

He himself thought he had something more precious than anything in the world, a beautiful kallah (crowned one, bride), and her name is Rachel—two thrilling words.

All scholars of S. admired Phinehas' rapid growth in learning, especially his ability to solve difficult rabbinical problems with a facility which set even the very scholarly rabbi of their community in the background. But they knew not of the inspiring object that was living in his heart, helping him to perform these miracles.

And, indeed, he himself knew not the cause of it; for he was so absorbed in reveries about the second person within him that he had no time to look into himself, and study the new chapter of the science of his own soul—life.

Though he was proud of his name, Phinehas, because he had it inherited from an ancestor who was a giant in the law, yet Rachel caused him to think of Jacob so much that he began to feel himself identic with the shepherdess' of the Bible gallant suitor. It often happened, when the name Jacob was called in his hearing, that he would look up, believing, though only for one instant, it meant him.

After all, he would not have exchanged places with Jacob of old, who—poor man!—had to serve for his Rachel fourteen years, while he, Phinehas, hoped to get Rachel straightway, and, besides is made rich for taking her.

That Joshua, Rachel's father, had red hair and a still redder beard troubled Phinehas a good deal. For there is a tradition among his kindred that Laban, the arch mother Rachel's father had red hair, and all who resemble in complexion Jacob's deceiver have also his character, and people must be on their guard when dealing with them.

Phinehas, therefore, used to fear he might lose his Rachel after all, and have to marry the crippled Leah. But though these thoughts would come to him often, they were never lasting, for he easily would see their fallacy.

“First,” used he to reason, “Rachel is the oldest, and thus must marry first. Besides, nobody of sense could think that Joshua would dare offer his cripple to a man of my ability and learning.—No,—no!” would he exclaim after thinking one way and another, “I,—only I, shall soon be united in wedlock with Rachel,—only with Rachel!”

CHAPTER VIII

Saint and Sinner Meet

The kind listener will recollect that Joshua had sent once before a messenger for Phinehas, but he came back with the intelligence that the bridegroom was not prepared yet to visit.

What preparations had he to make, as we know he was provided with all necessities for visiting by Joshua before the engagement?

The diligent student was preparing things which did not cost any money, nor could be bought for any price, discourses, which he thought to deliver at T. while visiting Rachel, in order that she might love him the more for it, and her parents might be proud of him the more. He thought—and it was very wise on his part—while in T. he would not have much time nor the patience for earnest study, and thus concluded to do it before he went there.

Thus it happened on that same day when Rachel's condition became so alarming that a doctor had to be consulted, that Phinehas was in such high spirits as never before.

He was rehearsing with a friend one of his learned discourses he expected to deliver at T. His friend was simply astonished at the inventive power of Phinehas, and could not help telling him his admiration for him.

While they were discussing on some points referred to in one of the addresses Rabbi Isaac came into the synagogue, walked up to the east wall, where Phinehas was sitting, and called him aside, which thing he never did before when he saw his son engaged in study.

Phinehas was first quite disturbed by his father's unaccustomed conduct, but when the latter told him that

Joshua had sent for him, because Rachel was desirous to see him he felt relieved. And though the break in his studies came so suddenly that he felt deeply disappointed, yet he joyfully consented to go at once to see his betrothed.

Phinehas closed the large, heavy Thalmud volumes, which he had been diligently handling for several days. He told his friend smilingly where he was going, and after exchanging the customary greetings of farewell Phinehas left the synagogue accompanied by his for his happiness so anxious father.

During the time Rabbi Isaac was in the synagogue Jacob, Joshua's servant, was walking impatiently before the teacher's house, in order to keep his feet warm.

Salensky, who was constantly watching the dwelling place of his Rachel's betrothed, saw Jacob, and walked up to him, trying to find out what business brought him to S.

"Nothing special," said Jacob, "the little girl is not well, and the doctor prescribed for her, hathan (bridegroom); I am now waiting for Rabbi Isaac, who went to the synagogue to see whether Phinehas would go with me or not."

Salensky, who was thinking to start for T. in the evening, in order to be present about eleven o'clock at Joshua's wagon house, was frightened lest the bridegroom might reach T. before Rachel left the house for the appointed rendezvous, which mishap might end in the overthrow of his plans. He was first perplexed for some idea how to act, but when he saw through the window of the hotel Jacob start, having the bridegroom behind in the sleigh, the thought came to him in any case he ought not to leave the whole field free to his rival. Thus he arose at once, harnessed his horse and hitched it to the

sleigh, and in company with two other men started for T.

He had a very swift horse, and overtook Joshua's team very soon. If Salensky had wished, he would have reached T. at least a half hour before Jacob; but as it is well known that persons who ought to be suspected are always trying to avoid suspicion, even if there is no reason for doing it. Salensky drove patiently behind Joshua's slower horses, in order not to awaken any suspicion in Jacob.—He was not at all afraid of the innocent bridegroom.

Jacob, one part of whose service at Joshua's house was to watch the excise agent, his going, coming, and whereabouts, had accustomed himself to know him by his steps, his drive, his cough, and knew well the ring of his horse's bell. Without turning, continually driving. Jacob called:

“Master Salensky!—Are you also driving to T.?”

“Certainly, I do,” and jokingly the agent added:

“I saw you start with Rachel's bridegroom, and it came into my head to visit Joshua. I would like to meet the young man. They say he is a great scholar; he might be able to make of me a rabbi, a righteous, which was the most cherished wish of my mother;—peace be to her!”

All laughed at the association of the two extremely different ideas, “Salensky, the wicked excise agent,” and “rabbi,”—except Phinehas, who could not hear what was said, being wrapped over head and ears with the large collar of a very large fur overcoat, which Jacob took with him to keep the young man warm.

The young Pharisee was surely satisfied not to be able to hear what the publican said.

The narrator believes here the right place to entertain the kind listener with a short description of marriage among the people in whose midst all that is told in these

pages occurred, as we have ample time while the acting parties are now driving on the road to T., and since we, though not enveloped in large fur coats like Phinehas, yet are not able to hear what they are talking.

CHAPTER IX

Two Ways to Marry

Marriage is to the good Jew just as great an event as birth and death, and weddings are celebrated accordingly.

The marriage day proper is a solemn holy-day to bride and bridegroom. It is to them just as much as the Day of Atonement to the whole Jewish congregation. Bride and bridegroom fast and confess their sins to God, Who is holding on that day special judgment on them, and pray for forgiveness.

On that day the bridegroom is regarded as the best man, and the bride as the best woman in the community. All men, young and old, rich and poor, wise and idiot, visit him, and all women of the community visit her.

After the visiting time is over the bridegroom is led by his father and some relative, especially appointed as a "leader," very often accompanied by the rabbi, and followed by a large number of the visitors, to the house where the bride, sitting among her visitors, is waiting for him "whom her soul loveth."

When the men, headed by the bridegroom, his father, and "leader," approaches the bride she drops her eyes, as if awaiting a great change in her life. Then the father and the leader, between whom the bridegroom is standing, hold out, the one at one end, the other at the other end, a silken kerchief spread between bride and bridegroom. The bridegroom then takes it and covers with it her head and face, signifying that her intended communion with him forbids her to uncover her hair before any other man. After this ceremony the bridegroom is led back to his headquarters.

When the women are left alone they cut off the hair of the bride, in order she might not unconsciously trans-

gress the law that prohibits her to allow her hair to be seen by strange men. She wears the kerchief until next day, when she exchanges it for a nicely embroidered piece of silk cloth fastened with ribbons to the front part of the head leaving the forehead bare, as the old-fashioned women used to do, or for a wig, as the modern Jewesses rather choose.

About vesper time the orator (badchen) appears at the headquarters of the bridegroom bringing with him a present from the bride for her future husband. It consists of a fringe garment, which he wears from that day every day at the morning worship,—and of a plain white robe to wear only on high religious occasions, and to be wrapped in when dead.

The orator speaks to him eloquently about these holy articles, and the bridegroom usually puts them on for the first time, and together with those present engages in the vesper devotions.

While the men are praying the women at the bride's apartments listen to the orator, who speaks especially to the bride.

After vespers the bridegroom and his suit start for the courtyard of the synagogue.

They walk slowly and thoughtfully, the "leaders" on both of his sides holding candles in their hands; and music follows the procession.

When the women hear the sound of the "To the canopy" the bride, led by father and mother or substitutes for them, and followed by a large number of her sex, starts also from her apartments, in the direction of the synagogue.

On the courtyard of the synagogue awaits them a canopy held by four men, one at each post. The bridegroom first takes his place in the middle of it, and the bride, unable to find her way because of the cover over

her face, is led to him. The "leaders" surround them, and the rabbi and public chanter stand near by.

On a hint of the rabbi the bridegroom takes a golden ring and says:

"Lo, thou shalt be consecrated to me according to the law of Moses and Israel," and puts it on her finger. The chanter then reads the "writ," in which their mutual relations and duties are described. The rabbi blesses and prays; and while the leaders and the parents, holding lighted candles, are walking in a circle around the young couple the chanter chants rituals.

Now are the two made one, and walk home together, and others follow their example. Husbands and wives walk now together to the banquet. Fast music is played, and people, hungry and tired, hurry to the wedding headquarters.

After they are seated around the richly spread table, a servant having a can of water in one hand and a basin in the other, and a towel on his shoulder helps the celebrators in washing their hands as bidden by their religion, pouring water three times over their hands held over the basin. A blessing is then asked, and they try to restore their weary bodies with good eating and drinking.

The orator, who generally instead of living of his art—partly through the smallness of the pay received, and partly through love for his art—lives on it, does not sit at the table. He standing in the middle of the room entertains the guests with humorous stories, or by declaiming poems composed by himself or others. He makes often extemporaneous speeches, taking for his subjects the bride whose beauty and virtue he would praise, and the bridegroom whom he would extol for his talents, and the distinguished guests of whose kindness and knowledge of the holy learning he would tell.

After the material part of the supper was consumed, and the orator had finished serving the intellectual, the spiritual part begins, supplied by the chanter of the community. He chants the rituals prescribed for after meals, his choir and those around the table accompanying him.

Later in the night many of the celebrators dance, the men in one room and the women in another. There is also opportunity given to the male relatives of the young couple to dance with the bride.

But how can the pious uncle or cousin do it, as it is not allowed even to touch the hand of a woman, how much less to put an arm around her waist?

The scholastic Jews found a remedy for it.

The bride stands there holding in her hand a kerchief, and the relative who is called by the orator to come forward and dance takes hold at one end of it and turns with the bride in a circle a few times.

At this dance—which is called “the lawful dance”—the orator has again occasion to show his brilliant talents. He makes witty speeches before calling the names of prominent men, telling of their goodness and praising their ancestors.

Sometimes he begins to rhyme to the highest admiration of all present.

He would say for instance:

“Take you the bow,”
“I take the fiddle;”
“Let dance just now”
“The good Uncle Yiddle.”

Yiddle (pet name for Judah) then would come forward, take one end of the kerchief, and turn with the bride. If he would be of a jovial disposition, he would jump and try to be enthusiastic.

Then the orator would rhyme again:

“Take you the fiddle,”
“Give me the bow;”
“Old Master Needle,”
“How you dance show.”

Rabbi Hayim whom the Gentiles call “Master Needle,” follows the command of the orator and dances with the young wife of his grand-son; but on account of his old age and feebleness he turns only once around and then makes place for the next one.

When the bride feels tired of the tasks of the day she is led by her “leaders,”—generally the wives of the leaders appointed for the bridegroom—to a room furnished with two beds. Later, “the man leaders” lead, or as it is very often the case, lure the bridegroom, unobserved by the unmarried into the same room.

The guests very often enjoy themselves the whole night.

A second day is as a rule celebrated, when presents for the young couple are brought or sent. The orator again has the charge to entertain the celebrators. He speaks and rhymes on the usefulness of the presents and praises the respective presenters for their liberality and thoughtfulness.

The greatest part of the marriage celebration usually ends with the second day, but there are some ceremonies performed on each of the following five days.

Thus a Jewish wedding is celebrated seven days, and is connected with much work and pleasure. But if a Jew does not care for either—it is generally a bad character—and gives a coin to an unmarried woman, and says to her before witnesses:

"Lo, thou shalt be consecrated to me according to the law of Moses and Israel,"—she is tied to him if she takes it willingly.

CHAPTER X

The Disaster

About nine o'clock in the night Joshua and Eva, sitting together and conversing about their daughter's condition, and discussing the time set for her marriage, and consulting with each other whether it would not be altogether better to hasten the wedding day, heard the familiar sound of their horses' bells. Eager to know whether the bridegroom had come, Joshua stepped out of doors, and waited for the arrival of his team. He had waited only a few minutes when he saw two teams coming into the yard, the one beside his own he recognized as Salensky's.

He was frightened seeing the excise agent around again; but when he saw the bridegroom rise out of the deep sleigh his attention was then turned away from the excise agent, who hurriedly had driven to the wagon house.

When Eva, who remained in the house, heard her husband exchange greetings with a stranger she understood that the bridegroom had indeed come, and hastened to open the door for his entrance.

"Blessed is he that cometh" (in the name of the Lord), said she to the guest. "I am very glad you came my dear child.—Let me help you unwrap; I am desirous to see your shining face again."

After he was seated the domestics came into the room. The men servants shook hands with the bridegroom, and said: "Peace be with you!" and the maidens said to Eva: "With love your guest!" on which wish she answered: "With love shall you live!"

Later the nearest neighbors came to participate in Joshua's happiness.

The unfortunate Leah was also there, but was standing in one corner of the room saying nothing.—It would

have been wicked for her to shake hands with the young man, and it seemed to her awkward suddenly to exchange courtesies with her mother.

"Here is Leah, but where is Rachel, the bride?" asked one of the neighbors.

"She is very bashful, answered Eva, it would not do to hurry her. When the strangers are gone she will come in."

"If so," said the neighbor, "let us all go,—to give the bride chance to see her bridegroom."

The strangers went away at once, leaving Joshua's family with the bridegroom waiting for Rachel.

Where was Rachel?

When Phinehas entered Rachel was in an adjoining room. She heard teams arrive, a stranger enter their house, but did not think this could be the bridegroom, as she knew only of the first message from her father to Rabbi Isaac, and the latter's reply that his son would visit T. in four weeks. In the melancholic state of mind, in which she then was, she did not care to know who the stranger was, but she accidentally overheard some words Phinehas spoke, and recognized the voice. Though she had heard it only once before, and that was in the speech at the engagement, she remembered it well, just as she could never forget his face and her disliking for it.

She was in despair, not knowing how to avoid meeting him.

"The time for Mr. Salensky's arrival has not come yet," she thought, "and may be he will not come at all, if he knows that the young man is here, for he will think his hope of rescuing me lost."

At last, in great agony she ran into her bedroom, locked the door, and went to bed just as she was with her clothes on. She covered herself with the feather beds,

and resolved not to rise as long the young man was in the house.

"Nothing shall cause me to come forth from my hiding place," said Rachel to herself, "neither hunger nor thirst;—if they want me to meet him, they must take me by force."

She had lain there scarcely five minutes when she heard a sonorous voice coming from the direction of the wagon house.

"It is Mr. Salensky," said she to herself;—"is he talking or singing?—He is singing.—I will listen."

Salensky was singing a familiar Jewish song, the refrain of which begins with the words: "Fly like a bird."

He sang only one stanza, but repeated the refrain several times emphasizing the first words, "Fly like a bird."

"He tells me I should fly to him; but how?—If I try to reach the wagon house by the ordinary way, I would have to pass through the room where he is now sitting from whom I am to fly."

A flash, —a revelation.—She rose and tried to open the window, but in vain; it was frozen and could not be opened.—A new inspiration;—she will break the window and jump through it, but there was nothing she could use as a tool to break it.—A new idea again.—She took off one of her slippers and knocked out the panes of the window, one by one.—But she was not better off even then; none of the vacated holes in the window frame was large enough for her body to go through.

Thus she stood before the paneless window frame, hopeless, allowing the severe cold to affect her, as if she cared not any more what might become of her,—whether she lived or died.

Salensky, who was just then standing in the yard and waiting for what might turn up, heard the clatter of

broken panes, and went in the direction whence, as he judged, it must have come, and suddenly he found himself in the presence of his beloved Rachel,—only the frame work of a window between them.

She seemed to him indeed like an encaged bird and he concluded to free her. He took hold with his strong hands at the wooden frame, and without causing any particular noise tore it out of its place in the wall;—and the scared bird flew to his bosom.

He then carried Rachel in his arms over the snow to the wagon house. Here he let her down upon the floor, and asked her, if she wanted to become his wife, and she answered, “yes.”

Then turning to the men he brought with him from S. he said in the ancient Hebrew:

“Be ye my witnesses!”

He then took out of his pocket a golden coin, and holding it in his hand turned to Rachel and said:

“Lo, thou shalt be consecrated to me according to the law of Moses and Israel!” and gave her the coin,—which she took willingly.

Meanwhile Joshua, Eva, and the bridegroom, had been waiting for Rachel quite a while. The father first became impatient, and began to seek her. He looked in all open rooms, but could not find her. Noticing the door of her bedroom shut he thought she might be there, and standing at the door called, “Rachel, Rachel!”—but received no answer. He then tried to open the door, but found it locked. Thinking she might be sleeping he called again louder than before, “Rachel, Rachel!”—but nothing was heard from within.—He became finally alarmed, took an ax and broke open the door.

How astonished was he to find the bedroom without a window.—On the round table before the hole where formerly was the window he found one of Rachel’s slip-

pers,—a sign that she had been there. He looked through the vacant place in the wall and noticed steps imprinted in the snow leading toward the wagon house. “But,” said he to himself, “they are not Rachel’s small, womanly feet;—they are the large foot prints of a man.”

Joshua at once changed into a madman. He ran through the sitting room, by his wife, by the bridegroom, crying: “Woe unto me, woe!—Woe unto me, woe!”

Eva, Leah, the little son were frightened, and followed him, leaving the aghast bridegroom alone in the house.

When Joshua reached the wagon house and found his daughter standing among the three men, without decent clothes, bareheaded, and with only one slipper, he cried out of pure agony with his whole might:

“What do you do here?—Robbers, murderers!—My life,—or yours?—What do I care for excise agents!—You have ruined my daughter, robbers, murderers!”

“Joshua Yirmiah’s,” began now Salensky, “you do not know what you are talking.—You may be sure that I love Rachel just as much as you do.”

“What did I hear!” exclaimed the angry father. “Did you say you loved my daughter? What right have you to love her? You Goy (heathen); what right have you to love a woman who is not married to you?—Robbers! Murderers!”

Salensky now took on the firm official tone, of which he always made use when talking in the name of the Czar:

“Gospodin (Master in the Russian) Joshua, son of Jeremiah, you must know your daughter, Rachel, is now my wife; I have consecrated her to me as such, before these two witnesses.”

When Joshua heard this he cried like an insane man: “You meshumad, and you meshumandeste (you annihilated man and you annihilated woman)!—Go out of my

sight.—I will not know you any more, meshumadeste!—You are to me dead and buried.—Go out of my house!” Eva, who at any time would have been willing to sacrifice herself for the happiness of her oldest daughter, seemed to suffer most. She wrung her hands, and beat her head against the wall of the wagon house, and lamented as over one dead.

When Rachel saw her mother’s sufferings she ran to her, embraced her, kissed her, and asked her forgiveness, telling her that it was not her fault, for she never could marry the student.

Joshua soon interrupted her.

“What do you say, meshumadeste?—You could not marry a pious young man as Phinehas, but you could marry a Goy (Gentile), a meshumad?—Go out of my house, you and your cursed husband,—go!”

“All right,” said Salensky. He then took off his large fur over coat, wrapped his bareheaded and barefooted Rachel in it, and after he had seated her in the sleigh drove out of the to him so familiar yard, never to see it again.

Returned to the house Joshua spoke not to any person, but pacing the floor from one wall of the room to the other frequently lifted both hands over his head, and wringing them cried bitterly:

“Woe unto me,—woe!”

Eva in her grief, contrary to the custom of the Jews, who would regard it as wicked, embraced the young man, and kissing him told what had happened.

For a while he stared at her, as if he were not able to understand what she said; but soon his eyes filled with tears, and burying his face in the cushion of the sofa on which he sat he groaned aloud.

He then took out of his waist’s pocket the golden watch, Joshua’s present at the engagement, and threw it

upon the floor, breaking it into small fragments. He also took from his neck the delicate golden watch chain and tore it in pieces. But when he began to tear his clothes from his body, Joshua, holding the young man's hands, reminded him of the great sin he was committing by destroying useful things, and the pious Phinehas yielded.

Eva sat on the floor and mourned for her daughter, whom she counted for dead. Her young son seeing the mother weeping wept also.

All were mourning, even the servants could not endure to see this sudden disaster without feeling deep pain over it.

There was in the house only one person who was not moved as much as we should expect,—the lame Leah.

The clock struck the midnight hour;—it struck one o'clock, two, three, but they continued to lament, as if there were no end to their grief.

One of the servants went and awakened some neighbors, and telling them what had happened asked them to come and help console the bereaved.

The neighbors came and tried their best to bring comfort to the mourners' hearts, but did not accomplish much.

Joshua ceased not from crying, "woe, woe," and Eva in the presence of those some of whom were her sympathetic friends, and some malicious enemies, with increased pain cried, "a hurban on me (disaster on me)."

Through some accident the attention of those in the house was turned to the young man, who lay motionless on the sofa, his face turned down, and his body rolled together in the fashion of a ball. They thought first that he was dead, however, when they turned him over so that they could see his face they found him alive, but he was idiotically staring at them, not uttering a word. They

thought, according to all symptoms, his speech organs were paralyzed, and called a physician.

The doctor expressed his opinion that his speech will return, but it would seem to him almost a miracle, if the sudden shock did not hurt the young man's brain or heart.

The day began to dawn. Joshua exhausted dropped upon a bed and fell asleep. Also Eva, still sitting on the floor and sobbing, dropped her weary head on her knees for rest, using her palms for pillows. The young man was the only one who showed no sign of recovery.

Early in the morning, Jacob made again the way to S. and back, bringing with him Rabbi Isaac and his wife Hannah.

Phinehas' parents tried every means to bring their son to his senses again, but were not able to do so; he looked at them with the indifference of a statue.

The old teacher, with tears wetting his wrinkled cheeks, turned his face from his son in despair. Hannah, to whom Phinehas was all in all, covering his face with kisses begged of him to say something, to speak, if only one word, but she like her husband before her had to give it up. A few minutes later you could see her in one of the side rooms pacing the floor to and fro, wringing her hands, and crying: "A break to me, a break to me; a thunder has struck me!"

After the morning service in the synagogue, Rabbi Shmarl accompanied by the chief rabbi of T. came. Rabbi Joshua awoke, and Eva rose from the floor, and the rabbi talked to the mourners. He reminded them of the holy doctrines bearing on the condition they were in.

He recalled to their mind the exemplary Rabbi Nahum Gam-Zu, who was so called, because in all circumstances of his life he used to say, Gam zu (This also) is for good."

The rabbi was yet talking when at once the attention

of all was turned to the apparently paralyzed young man. He stirred a little; and a few minutes later he sat up; and in consideration of the presence of the rabbi and Rabbi Shmarl, to whom the law, "Thou shalt rise up before a hoary head," is to be applied, he rose on his feet. He then called for a cup of water, and after he had wetted his fingers said "with a full mouth and a loud voice" though vehemently sobbing:

"Blessed be the just judge!"

All answered aloud, "Amen!"

For joy that Phinehas had recovered they repeated to each other:

"This also is for good,—this also is for good."

CHAPTER XI

“Behold It Was Leah”

Quite reconciled with the dealings of the Lord, Rabbi Joshua took courage and went to the place where Rabbi Isaac was sitting, laid his hand on the other's shoulders, and looking into his face, with unsteady voice and eyes full of tears said:

“Rabbi Isaac, what shall we do now?—We have lost a child;—our dear Rachel is dead. But I have always regarded your son, since I have known him, as mine own, and it would pain me, if I had to lose him also. If you go away today with Phinehas, I and, I am sure, Eva would feel, as if we lost two children in one day.”

Rabbi Isaac listened to the unhappy father with close attention; and though he understood at what he was aiming, dared not interrupt him with any proposal or remark. So sublime sounded to him Joshua's present outpouring of his soul.

“Thus I think, Rabbi Isaac,” continued Joshua, “it would be both profitable and pleasant for all concerned, if you would agree to leave your son with us here. I will supply him with all necessaries of life that he might be able to study our holy law without being fettered by the cares of this world.—Let us look upon our case, as if Rachel had died after marriage.”

“Of course,” responded Rabbi Isaac, “if you are willing to do this, the Lord will surely bless you for it. You will certainly be entitled to a share in my son's learning, and you will receive in heaven the reward for it.” He slowly and meditatively added to what he had said before:

“Of course I shall have to lose him one day, may be soon. He is a marriageable young man, and may soon marry and go to his father-in-law.”

So speaking Joshua's face was covered with gloom, and he dropped into silence for a while, but soon rallied, and continued:

"Why do we try to look into the hidden future? It is enough for us to act according to our present knowledge."

While he was talking Rabbi Shmarl watched him closely and was impressed with the thought that Joshua was very attached to the young man, and drew the correct conclusion that the longer Phinehas stayed with him, the more difficult would be their parting.

The sympathy the match maker had for Joshua brought him to a very bold idea.

"Brothers and masters," exclaimed he excitedly, "I have a plan, and, as I think, a good one. Rachel is lost,—dead, and we are not able to raise her; but Rabbi Joshua has another daughter;—why not give her to Phinehas? She has a defect, we all know that, but she is a modest girl, and will make some day a righteous mother in Israel. May be the Lord has ordained all that happened last night, in order that the down trodden Leah might be exalted.

"Rabbi Isaac, what do you think of it?"

"I have seen the girl; it is not as bad with her as I thought before I saw her," answered Rabbi Isaac. "She is only a little lame, but otherwise healthy looking. Still I would not approve or disapprove; it is a delicate matter; I think Phinehas must decide for himself."

The match maker then turned to Hannah asking her opinion.

She began to weep and dry her wet eyes with her handkerchief, and grievously said that she never thought her darling son, such a scholar, would have to descend so low as to marry a cripple, whom even a good shoemaker would not take. "But," she closed, "I am willing,

if God has so ordained, to say with Rabbi Nahum Gam-Zu,—‘gam zu (this also) is for good.’”

Rabbi Shmarl then went to Phinehas, who was sitting at one end of the sofa with drooped head.

“You did hear, my son,” addressed him Rabbi Shmarl, “what we were talking?”

Phinehas did not answer.

“Phinehas, my boherl (elect one), I know your delight is in the law of the Lord, and your desire is to study it day and night.”

Phinehas nodded, affirming the match maker’s statement.

Rabbi Shmarl then continued:

“But you must consider that your father is a poor old teacher;—he cannot give you anything; on the contrary, he needs to be helped, if possible, by you. Thus you will have to depend on alms,—on what other men might give you. It is true, Rabbi Joshua is willing to keep you, still he is only a stranger to you now.”

Here Joshua interrupted Rabbi Shmarl hastily.

“Rabbi Shmarl, do not talk so; I shall never feel a stranger to Phinehas; he will be to us now instead of two children; he will be our consolation for the loss of Rachel.”

“God bless the righteous!” exclaimed Rabbi Shmarl, “I never saw a man like Rabbi Joshua. I tell, you my child, it would be a great honor for any Jewish child to be Joshua’s son-in-law. Now, say, my dear boy, would you marry Leah, in order to be tied to this house,—to such a generous man as Rabbi Joshua, and such a kind-hearted righteous woman as Eva,—by the cords of relationship?”

After a few seconds of silence, waiting for some response from Phinehas, the match maker continued:

“Phinehas, you are a scholar;—you are wise;—you

must consider, after you have been with Joshua, the Lord knows how long, that you would commit a sin, if you would allow his daughter to be given to a man ignorant of the law. You know well the saying of our wise:

"'If a man gives his daughter to an ignorant man it is just as bad as if he had given her to be torn to pieces by a lion.'"

Phinehas has not yet changed his position on the sofa; he sat there yet with drooping head, not speaking a word.

Rabbi Shmarl felt compelled to make his inquiry more direct:

"Phinehas, my son, would you be willing to marry Leah?—say 'yes' or 'no.'"

And Phinehas nodded "yes."

"Who will give me a kerchief?" cried aloud the match maker, "I left mine at home."

When Eva saw that the men were going to perform the ceremony of agreement she said:

"Do not hurry, Rabbi Shmarl; let us call Leah and ask her. Of course, there cannot be any doubt about her approval, still, as it seems that the new generation has new ideas about marriage, let us hear what she has to say. Our Rachel's misfortune makes me now more cautious, as the saying is:

"'A person once scalded with hot blows on cold.'"

And: "After loss comes wisdom," threw in a neighbor woman.

Hannah:

"An addition to all my troubles! To ask Leah whether she would be satisfied with Phinehas! What has she to boast of? Probably of her lame foot?"

"Wife," said Rabbi Isaac, "I cannot understand you. You have been reading the Yiddish Pentateuch these many years, and you do not know that Rebekah was asked

whether she was willing to go with Abraham’s servant to marry Isaac.”

“It was Laban—may his name and memory be blotted out—who did the asking. I never knew a Jewish daughter who was asked whether she was willing to marry a certain man. I was not asked whether I would marry mine Isaac; I was satisfied with my parents’ choice;—may they have a bright paradise!”

Meanwhile Rabbi Shmarl got a kerchief, and holding it in his raised hand cried:

“Silence!—Silence!—Masters!—Silence!—Let the rabbi decide.”

Rabbi:

“Rebekah’s case teaches us that we must have the consent of the bride before marriage, but there is certainly no sin in asking the approval of the intended bride before the engagement.”

Leah was then called and asked whether she was willing to be married to Phinehas.

“Yes!” exclaimed she boldly. She looked very surprised, as if she never thought of such a fortune coming to her.

Rabbi Shmarl then once more gave one end of the kerchief to Joshua and the other to Rabbi Isaac, and taking it back cried:

“With mazel!—With mazel!”

Some of the women fell in with Rabbi Shmarl, but correcting him said:

“With more mazel!—With more mazel!”—meaning to express their wish, that the bereaved family may have with this engagement more luck than they had with the first one.

After the enthusiasm of “mazel tobh (good luck)” wishing was over Joshua took up the attention of all in the room by addressing Rabbi Isaac,

"Last night," said he, "just before your son's arrival I was talking with my wife about our Rachel's wedding. Of course it would have been wiser to talk about her burial; but ignorant as I was of Satan's workings in my house I told Eva it may be best to have the wedding soon, if possible this week. I have always been an opposer of putting off marriages. Now Rabbi Isaac, after we have your consent that Phinehas should marry Leah, I would not wait long for the wedding. You know the proverb: 'A beaten dog show no stick.' I am afraid lest Satan might lay some stumbling block in the way."

"You are right, Rabbi Joshua," said Rabbi Isaac, "do just as you think it best."

"I propose, therefore," continued Joshua, "that you and your wife should not leave T. until our children are married. Am I not right, Eva, my wife?" queried Joshua, turning from the old teacher toward the place where Eva sat.

"May the Lord add his blessing!" answered Eva, who had meanwhile brightened up, and was now busying herself with keeping Hannah in good spirits.

"Let us now come to a close," continued Joshua after he had turned back to Rabbi Isaac. "Today is Wednesday;—stay with us over Sabbath (Saturday) and let us celebrate the wedding on Sabbath eve (Friday). We can not be hindered in executing our purpose through lack of means, for the Lord has given me the means to provide at once all that is necessary for giving a child in marriage. Besides, Leah has inherited the whole bridal outfit from her sister Rachel. May the Lord help us this time! May He bless our children that 'they may see children and children's children grow up unto the knowledge of the law, unto marriage, and unto good deeds.'"

"Amen!" responded the men.

“May it be so! From his mouth unto Thy ears, Daddy Father in heaven!” prayed the women.

Rabbi Shmarl hastened away and after a few minutes came back with a bottle of liquor and honey cake. The first glass was given to the Rabbi, who also asked the first blessing. Not all could drink the sharp liquor, which, as they thought, was made for the Russians, but all enjoyed the sweet cake.

While eating the bereaved Eva felt quite comfortable, and even Hannah gradually became reconciled to the thought that her son Phinehas, the great scholar, who is more angel than man, was to marry Leah, the cripple.

Later in the forenoon the visitors went to their respective homes, except Rabbi Isaac and his wife who consented to stay with Joshua until after the wedding.

On the following Friday the wedding took place. It was not in the full Jewish sense celebrated. Only the most necessary ceremonies were performed, and the same without much feeling. Neither bride nor bridegroom were extensively visited. Oratory had no place at that wedding, and music was used only for leading the small procession, consisting of the fathers and mothers of the couple, and of the nearest relatives, to the synagogue and back.

There was no banquet given, only an ordinary supper for the relatives and the poor of T.

The bride and bridegroom sat side by side at the table, but spoke not to each other. Phinehas looked like a convalescent after a severe sickness.

Joshua and Eva sat near the young couple. They ate, but seemed not to know what they did. Joshua was so overwhelmed with grief that he scarcely could prevent his tears from mingling with his meat.

Neither Rabbi Isaac nor Hannah sat at the table; he was sick and she was nursing him.

On the following day, the Sabbath, the young couple were "led" to the synagogue. First was the old Rabbi Isaac called to listen to the reading of the Pentateuch, then came Joshua.

Phinehas was invited to read a portion of the Prophets. He did not chant it as nicely as he did on the Sabbath after his engagement to Rachel. While he was reading the closing "benediction" his voice trembled, and trying to suppress his feelings he became at last inaudible so that the audience not hearing the closing words was not able to respond with "Amen." Returning from the pulpit to his seat at the east wall he could not withhold any longer and wept bitterly. The men in the synagogue were deeply moved, and in the woman's apartment was not one dry eye.

On the first day of the week, unlike all other newly married men during their honeymoon, who usually spend most of their time in the society of their young wives, Phinehas went to the synagogue, and threw himself with all energy into the study of that literature which the scholars call for its vastness "Yam Hthalmud (Ocean of the Thalmud)."

He continued its study day and night for years; but the unnaturalness of his diligence taught every wise observer that his object was not as much to know the depth of that ocean as to drown his grief in it.

The End

POSTSCRIPT NO. I

Poor Phinehas

Poor Phinehas was not able to drown his grief, but drowned himself in the sacred ocean of the Thalmud.

It was reported several years ago that he had been living for years, separated from Leah, in his native village S. He avoids society, and occupies himself, not with studying, but with unintelligible reading of the Thalmud. His once brilliant mind is dimmed. He is lost.

POSTSCRIPT NO. II

O Rachel, Rachel!

The rabbi of T. once received a letter from a rabbi of some large city in Poland, in which he was urged to seek pardon for a young widow, whose name was Rachel, from her father, a certain Joshua son of Jeremiah.

It was told in the same letter that she was living with her little child in great need and loneliness.

Joshua did not pardon her, and nothing has been heard from her since.

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