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EDITED BY THE REV. W. M. NOBLE, B.A.

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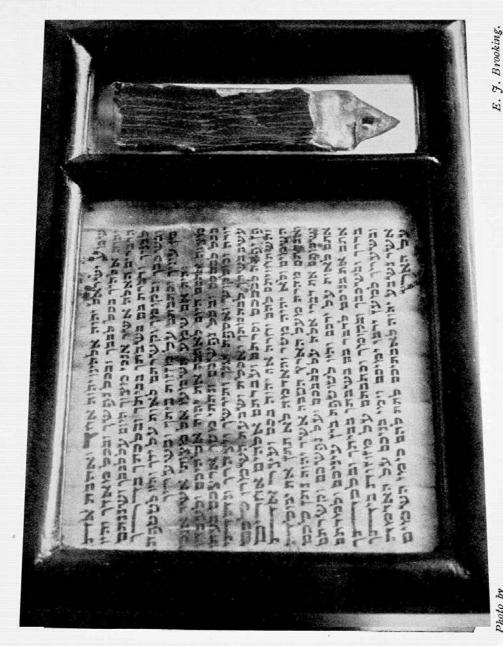


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THE MEZUZAH FOUND AT WISBECH.

### A MEZUZAH FOUND AT WISBECH

During the painting of the house in the occupancy of Mr. Tansley, High Street, Wisbech, Butcher, the workmen found affixed to the right doorpost of the back room, (which door opens into the back yard,) a tincase. This case had been covered and hidden by successive coats of

paint, and contained a folded sheet of parchment.

This interesting find is a "Mezuzah" (doorpost) or "Sheman," and points to the fact that the house was once the home of a Jew. The "Mezuzah" is a name given to a rectangular piece of parchment inscribed with the passages, Deut. vi. 4-9. and xi. 13-21 written in twenty-two lines. The parchment is rolled up and inserted in a wooden or metal case or tube. This is affixed in a slanting position, to the upper part of the

right hand doorpost.

On the outer side of the top of the parchment is inscribed the name of God, (El. Shaddai): an opening is left in the case opposite the word, which opening is protected by a piece of glass or horn. The material on which the "Mezuzah" may be written is as carefully prescribed as that for a roll of the Law, but while a scroll must always be written from a copy, the "Mezuzah" may be written from memory. selections mentioned above must be contained therein. and if even one letter is missing the "Mezuzah" may not be used. Generally the text is written in 22 lines equally spaced. The pious touch and kiss this part of the "Mezuzah" as they pass through the door. The "Mezuzah" is obligatory for every building used as a dwelling, and its fastening to the doorpost is accompanied by the usual formula of benediction: "Blessed art Thou Our God, King of the world, who hast sanctified us by Thy Commandments and hast commanded us to fasten the Mezuzah."

On entering and leaving the house, the pious touch the Mezuzah with the hand (at Shaddai), and recite the prayer: "May God keep my going out and my coming in from now on and evermore."

The Mezuzah brings blessings to him that touches it: but it must not be touched with unclean hands. It is inspected from time to time to make sure of its correctness. It may not be given to a non-Jew, lest it should not be treated with respect.

The obligation of the Mezuzah is derived from the words, "and thou shalt write them on the doorposts of thy house and within thy gates."

W. T. R. CROOKHAM,

Vicar of Wisbech.

May, 1907.

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