

THE ANGEL AND THE STAR

change of tone and holding up her babe, "he seems stronger, he smiles at thee. Jehovah keep him safe!"

"For what?" he asked bitterly, but he laid down the staff and took the babe. Reverently lifting his eyes he invoked blessing, "Jehovah grant thee peace," and gave him to his mother. But the babe, to his father's joy, clung fast, till with gentle force the mother took it from his arms.

"Come to thy mother, child. Thy father must go to his sheep, to ward off the fierce beasts and the fierce robbers. And indeed, I often fear for thee, my husband, till I cannot sleep."

"What! what!" said her husband, his gloomy mood passing. "What of thy faith now? What of thy God and His angels?"

"Ah yes, thou hast well said. 'He shall give His angels charge over thee.' I will not fear."

"Angels again!"

"Yes, 'He shall give His angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways,' and so to His angels I confide thee."

"One angel at least I know, nay two," he said, kissing his babe again.

"Go, haste. I shall watch thee down the hill. And His angels guard thee safe."

She watched till he turned from the street into the path that led far out on to the sloping hills lying dim and distant, then turned with a sigh to her little home, her sick babe in her arms.

"Surely the day of the Lord cannot long be delayed," she said to herself.