

of her vow. Certain it is that thirty collars and chains of solid gold were found on the day after her departure, hung up within the blackened walls of the Court of Israel. These the superstitious soldiers refused to touch, and for many months they remained there, a last, vain offering to the unknown God of the Hebrews.

In a certain quiet village—which, notwithstanding its proximity to Jerusalem had escaped the horrors of the war—the long, level rays of the setting sun shone brightly on the moss-grown thatch of a cottage, set on the green mountain-side like a nest. In the frost-bitten garden, shaded by two gnarled and ancient almond trees, a woman walked amid the dead stalks of the lilies. At morning and at evening for many long months she had prayed for death; but the Death-angel was weary with his labors and came not.

It was now winter. Below in the ruinous khan of Bethlehem the grandchildren of the innkeeper were hanging up green garlands of the olive and the fir in the manger where the carpenter's son first saw the light. There was no one to say them nay in these days. They stopped in their joyous labor long enough to inform two wayfarers that the widow of Samuel was yet alive and dwelt in her house in Aphtha.

It was a man who asked for this information, and his face shone with joy as he rejoined his companion who waited, modestly-veiled, in the courtyard of the inn.