

—his heart is stirred with joy,—again with doubt ; going to a stair which leads to an upper chamber he calls aloud, “Elkana.”

“I am here,” is the reply, and in a second or two, an old man with hair and beard as “white as snow in Salmon,” comes down the stair.

“Elkana, there is no oil in Nathan's lamp ;” Jacob points to the lamp as he speaks, “when the Rabbi David was last here he left in my charge, the flask with the oil for replenishing the perpetual lamp ; will it be sin if I use this oil for Nathan's lamp ?” He speaks with hesitation, yet there is an earnestness of purpose in his eye and voice.

“Nay, my son,” the old man replies, “it will not be sin, the oil is needed for an act of mercy ; I have suffered much in a dream this night because of Nathan. The angel of the covenant protect the lad.”

“Come then, Elkana, you will hold the candle while I pour the oil in the lamp ; I do not believe I will ever see Nathan's face in the flesh, but Esther is sorely troubled because of my neglect, and would have no rest to-night should the lamp be unlit.”

Jacob takes the lamp and goes into an inner chamber, taking a key from his vest, he opens the cupboard where lies the flask of oil left by the Rabbi David. Jacob's hand trembles visibly as he pours the oil in the lamp and he murmurs audibly, “If this be sin, let the sin be upon my head alone, let my house be scathless.”

“It is no sin, my son, to use the oil,” the old man says in a solemn voice, “but it would be great sin not to use it ; my spirit tells me the lad needs the light even now.” While