

our social and religious life ; it leads to the performance of deeds which with glad hearts angels record. Such a deed, without reference to missionaries, did Rachel Levy perform. On a cold and bitter Christmas night she took to her bosom an infant whose mother died when the snow was falling. The child was a child of shame, and had but one relation whose protection it could claim—the Poor-House. The mother was a Christian ; Rachel Levy was a Jewess. But Charity, thank God ! is a heavenly, not a theological, crown.

‘What will become of my child?’ murmured the dying mother.

‘I will take care of her,’ said Rachel.

‘God bless you!’ were the woman’s last words. ‘God bless and reward you!’

She died with that prayer on her lips, in the light of the falling snow, and while the Christmas bells were ringing.

It is for this reason I have made Rachel Levy the heroine of my Christmas story.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCES MOSES LEVY AND HIS DAUGHTER RACHEL.



MOSES LEVY’S arm-chair was drawn close to the table, and Moses Levy himself was bending over a large and much dog-eared book, of ancient date, as its yellow leaves and antique binding sufficiently testified. Although the old man’s thoughts were not often fixed upon the ancient volume, he turned its leaves with care and reverence, and as he leant forward in the loose coat which he had worn for half a generation, his appearance was both picturesque and patriarchal. The furrows in his forehead were deep and strongly marked, his eye was clear, his face

benignant, and a long white beard flowed over his breast. Opposite, in strong contrast, sat Rachel Levy, his daughter, in a modern dress, and with a nineteenth century air upon her. It was in its outward aspect a singular association. For notwithstanding that Moses Levy’s coat was cut and sewn about a dozen years ago, it hung about his form in such old-time waves and folds that, observing them, your thoughts must insensibly have wandered into the centuries when his ancestors walked the marts in long gabardines, trading in money, after the fashion of his race ; and perchance to the days when the world was young, even to the time when Jacob tended Laban’s sheep, and tricked the simple ewes with ringstraked rods. Whereas Rachel was in every respect as to the manner born in this year of grace 1877—a modern miss, pure and