

comes from the door, which he leaves partly open; an uneasy look on his face he is striving to hide.

"What matters it, Esther, if for one night the lamp should not be lit? For twenty years the oil has only been wasted, and will be, should you light it for twenty more; Nathan will never come home; I told you so when you consented he should go."

"I have never lost faith that he will come home," Esther replies, "and should he not, I will keep my vow, but how shall I keep it to-night? Do you think if I melt some of the sheep's fat it will burn in the lamp? Miriam, bring me some fat, we will try it."

The girl stands as if irresolute. Esther sees her hesitate and says, "You fear to go alone in the darkness; go, Jacob, with Miriam, she knows where the fat is laid."

"It is useless," the old man replies without moving, "fat will not burn in such a lamp."

"Come, Miriam, I will go with you myself; we must try," Esther says firmly. As she passes the half open door, she looks out into the dark night with a shudder, and pausing for a moment, says, turning towards her husband, "did you see how dark it is, Jacob? This is surely the darkness that may be felt, I do not think the hart could find his way to-night."

Jacob does not answer in words, but his face betrays intense emotion. He goes to the door by which his wife and niece left the room, and closing it, returns to the table where the empty lamp lies. He is strangely agitated, his nerves are strung to the utmost tension. He bends over the lamp and prays in words inaudible to human ear; suddenly he stands erect, his eye flashes,