

**DAVID THE GIANT KILLER,
AND OTHER TALES OF
GRANDMA LOPEZ**

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David the giant killer, and other tales of Grandma Lopez by Emily Solis-Cohen

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EMILY SOLIS-COHEN

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SHE WENT IN UNVEILED BEAUTY FOR THE FIRST TIME (PAGE 188)



David The Giant Killer

AND OTHER TALES
OF GRANDMA LOPEZ

BY

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WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALFRED FEINBERG



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TO MY GRANDMOTHERS

PREFACE

BIBLE stories are told once and for all in the pages of the Bible. Were it not that the tale is there given in its simplest form, leaving the reader to provide the background from knowledge or imagination, there could be no possible excuse for the re-telling. Grandma Lopez has permitted herself the license of the story-teller, even to filling in the gaps by the exercise of her own fancy. Thus she has described the early life of the prophet Elijah, about which nothing is known, and in so doing she frames a variant of the legend that makes Phinehas, son of Eleazar the priest, live again in the Tishbite. Equally fanciful is her suggestion as to the etymology of the Masoretic *Tishbi*. She has a feeling that the appellation is characteristic, rather than geographical, and that it relates in some way to the work of the prophet who brings back God to Israel and Israel to God, and whom both sacred Scripture and legend acclaim as peculiarly the Restorer of fertility, of health, of life, of freedom, of nationality. Perhaps also she remembers the last verse of the last chapter of the last of the prophetic books (Malachi iii, 24), and various ex-

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pressions of prophets near to Elijah in time or character (Amos, Hosea, Joel), as well as Elijah's own utterance on Carmel (i Kings xviii, 37), and his prayer over the son of the widow of Zarephath (i Kings xvii, 21). Secure in the limitations of her knowledge, she can blissfully ignore difficulties that would deter a better Hebraist.

Though she is not a Hebrew scholar, the old lady knows her prayer book and *Parashàh* book fairly well, and, having an intimate acquaintance with the English versions of the Bible and the Apocrypha, she has come to use their phrases freely, not only in direct quotations, but also in piecing together appropriate passages from various books to fill out narrative, description, or conversation. In the entire course of her stories she has tried to use words which would jar as little as might be with the diction of her models. Nor has she felt that she was talking above the heads of her grandchildren. "Children possess an unestimated sensibility to whatever is deep and high so long as it is simple likewise."

Grandma Lopez loves the traditional ceremonies and forms of her faith, and her family count them among the common features of life, but there is no attempt in this book to describe all the ceremonies and customs that form a part of the Jewish life of the Lopez household. Only such have been touched