

of Deity and of a future state were tolerably distinct, his ideas of death and the powers of darkness were of the crudest sort. That there was a hostile power, dark and malignant, he fully believed, but he had no clearly-defined opinion of the future state of those who died in ignorance or crime. The fabric built by the Egyptians and Greeks upon the early notion of annihilation to the wicked had not been constructed, and probably if Al Ammin had leisurely given his views upon the subject he would have concluded that the spirits of wicked men wandered restlessly to and fro after death, seeking rest and finding none.

But at present he could not frame an opinion leisurely, and he only thought in a confused way that he was dead and in the hand of the Spirit of Evil, descending to the covered state—the place of darkness, punishment or whatever it might be that awaited the wicked. For he had not a doubt of his own unworthiness. He had been instructed in the way of knowledge, had had imparted to him the grand secrets of life, and had had revealed to his wondering gaze in letters of fire the awful and unpronounceable name, whose representative even he might utter only at extremest need. But then he had not kept his post; and he could not distinguish between unfaithfulness to his king and unfaithfulness to his God. His life had been spared, but he had never from that day dared to present himself among the assembly of the sons of light, or to claim by word or gesture part or lot in the great brotherhood. As his involuntary fault had cut him off from the favor of the king so he thought it cut him off from intercourse with the fraternity and from the favor of Deity.

It was, therefore, with a feeling of entire acquiescence in the doom he expected that he marched along the dark and stony pathway he found himself treading, the iron grip of the skeleton figure still upon his arm, and the chill of death striking to his very marrow. The way was long. At times a faint trickling of water was heard, but, save that and the noise of their sandals upon the stony floor, no sound fell upon his ear. At length his conductor stopped him and hoodwinked him carefully. Then he led him on again, now up a steep incline. After a toilsome ascent, they came to level ground once more, and Al Ammin felt the air purer and it seemed less confined. Here his guide in a whisper commanded him to kneel, and as he did so left him. For a few minutes he knelt engaged in prayer, and then a hand took his hand, and a loud voice cried

“Al Ammin, faithful unto death, arise!”

At that instant a flood of light filled a place, a flood of exultant harmony rolled and reverberated along the arched roof, and as soon as his dazzled eyes could take in his surroundings, Al Ammin discovered that he was in the cave on the mountain side surrounded by members of the ancient order. Explanation was necessary to make him understand that he had been watched during his interview with the king by his brethren, who knew all the arts and contrivances of the new hall wherein they had been wont to meet since the completion of the garden, that they had opportunely turned the lights down and had conducted him by a trap door through a secret passage in the rock to the old cave in the mountain. He learned, further that the new king, persecuting the order of which King Shedad was Grand Master, had made of its members active enemies, and that the elders among the brethren were even then met to devise ways to restore the rightful king to his throne.